

Council Key 3 Orientation

The council Key 3 consists of the council president, council commissioner, and Scout executive. They meet informally as necessary to ensure proper coordination of the work of the council. They furnish liaisons between the commissioner staff and the various committees of the council. They may also provide proposals and recommendations to, but in no way usurp the authority of, the executive board or executive committee of the board.

Agenda

Responsibilities of the Council Key 3

Guidelines for Council Presidents

Guidelines for Council Commissioners

Local Council Representatives

National Annual Meeting

Other Resources

Sample Agenda, Council Key 3

Responsibilities of the Council Key 3

President

Ultimate authority for conducting the affairs of the Boy Scouts of America lies with volunteer Scouters. The council president is the top volunteer leader of the corporation.

The council president gives leadership to the establishment of effective operation of Scouting consistent with the *Charter and Bylaws of the Boy Scouts of America* and provisions of governing documents by the council. The president serves as chair at meetings of the council, its executive board, and its executive committee. He or she serves as an ex officio member of all committees of the council executive board.

The council president works closely with the other council officers and the Scout executive in planning and carrying out Scouting; providing necessary materials and financial resources for council programs; directing, supervising, and evaluating other volunteers; and establishing effective relationships with chartered organizations and throughout the community.

The council president is primarily an administrator and a personnel specialist who helps recruit strong men and women to council leadership, fires their enthusiasm, and welds the individuals into a strong working team.

The council president has a deep sense of accountability and dedication to the purposes of Scouting, the achievement of annual objectives, the strategic plan, and for the financial sustainability and growth of the council.



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Commissioner

The council commissioner leads the unit service function of the council by guiding district commissioners who recruit, train, and guide a staff of unit commissioners in their respective districts.

This Scouter also acts as the “morale” officer of the council and as its inspirational leader, and promotes the quality of Scouting within Scouting units.

The council commissioner works in close cooperation with the Scout executive. He or she supervises the activities of the commissioner staff, presides at councilwide meetings of district commissioners, and conducts commissioner conferences annually.

This person helps maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America by unit leaders and oversees the unit charter renewal plan of the council so each unit reregisters on time and with optimum membership. The commissioner reports on unit conditions to the executive board and works with the council president to secure help from council committees in meeting unit needs.

Scout Executive

Although ultimate authority of the Boy Scouts of America is vested in volunteer leaders, a vital part of the movement is lodged in a comparatively small but well-trained group of professional Scouters. The Scout executive, as the chief executive officer of the council, is the principal adviser as well as the director of the professional and office staff members.

The Scout executive is trained and commissioned by the Boy Scouts of America, and works in cooperation with the region and national office. This person is selected by the council executive board, and serves under its direction.

The Scout executive is the top operating professional, corporation secretary, and executive secretary for all council committees, and may delegate part of this responsibility to members of the professional staff. He or she appoints and supervises all employees of the council subject to the approval of, and under the direction of, the council executive board.

The Scout executive recognizes and is committed to the predominant and vital role of volunteer Scouters at all levels in fulfillment of their responsibilities. He or she maintains standards and continuity of the operation of the Scouting organization and programs.

Guidelines for Council Presidents

Congratulations

The Scouters who elected you as president of your council paid you a great honor and at the same time handed you substantial responsibility. But greater than either of these is the opportunity they gave you for affecting the lives of thousands of youth. There are many who would tell you that of all the opportunities that can come to a person for the investment of talent in service and humanity, Scouting has the potential for paying the greatest dividends in the shortest period of time.

You are one of just under 300 council presidents in the Boy Scouts of America. With the others of this small group, you help direct the destiny of a great movement that helps mold the future generations of our nation.

The Council President as a Leader

The president is the top leader of the council and the primary volunteer leader of an organization promoting and extending a program for boys and young men and women over a large geographical territory. This top leadership responsibility is shared with the Scout executive and council commissioner.

The president, as the principal lay leader, acts as chair of the executive board. The administrative and financial phases of council operation come closely under the president's and the board's supervision.

The president is an administrator with the ability to recruit strong people for council leadership positions. The president needs to be a good partner to the Scout executive.

Getting Started

As with any new responsibility, there are things to learn and things to do first. Your indispensable guide will be the Scout executive, who is in the best position to know all aspects of the council and its operation as well as the people involved.

You might ask, “What should I do first?” A new president usually takes these steps first:

1. Get better acquainted with and consult with the Scout executive about your orientation. Establish a convenient time for brief but regular get-togethers with your Scout executive.
2. Meet and get acquainted with the council commissioner and other council officers. Your first meeting might be over lunch or dinner. Discuss a few of the current goals and deadlines for the council, as well as progress in the strategic plan.
3. Make filling key committee vacancies and replacing inactive committee chairs your highest priority. Work with the Scout executive to develop an action plan for this recruiting task.
4. Place priority Scouting dates in your calendar, including meetings of the council executive board (where you preside), and an occasional annual event such as the council annual meeting, council recognition dinner, and the National Annual Meeting.

If you don’t already have one, you may want to set up a Scouting file as part of your personal files. Your Scout executive will help you assemble the necessary materials. This might include copies of the following:

- Your local council’s articles of incorporation and bylaws
- Map of the council showing the council territory and district alignment
- Council strategic plan
- Council annual plan
- Council budget
- Roster of the executive board with addresses and phone numbers
- Organization chart of the professional staff
- Executive board and executive committee meeting minutes

You should know the traditions, customs, and policies that are important in your council and also be familiar with the council properties, trust funds, articles of incorporation and bylaws, and insurance program.

Volunteer-Professional Relationship

One unique characteristic of the Boy Scouts of America is the effective relationship that has developed and is maintained between professionals and volunteers. The ratio is significant; there is on average only one professional for every 400 volunteers. This is what characterizes the Scouting movement as being primarily volunteer.

The professional provides guidance while the volunteer provides leadership and renders service. With the president and the Scout executive, this relationship becomes extremely important. Each has separate and distinct responsibilities, and yet, to be effective, they must complement each other.

It is important that the president and the Scout executive develop a working relationship in which each is utterly frank with the other. The president should expect the Scout executive to share any reactions that might be helpful in doing a better job as council president. Likewise, the Scout executive will expect the president to offer suggestions on how to be a more effective Scout executive. This is an equal relationship and should not be considered an employer-employee arrangement. Above all else, these two must face up to the facts.

The Scout executive will protect the president’s time so the hours he or she gives will be of maximum effectiveness to the council. With the president’s consent, any request for the president’s appearance at meetings will be cleared through the Scout executive so minor matters will not burden his or her time.

The president should understand that the direction of the council staff must come from one source, the Scout executive. As the president sees things that he or she feels should be done by the staff, he may freely discuss them with the Scout executive. The president should occasionally meet with the staff and come to know them by name with their responsibilities.

The president and Scout executive should agree to communicate at regular intervals to make plans together and keep each other informed of what the other is doing. They will establish agendas and expectations for the board and other key council meetings. They will also arrange to have immediate access to each other in times of emergency.

It is the commissioner that acts as a liaison between professional staff and volunteers at the unit, district, and council levels. The council commissioner, as part of the council Key 3, works together with the council president and the Scout executive at the council level. It's important that the council commissioner develops and keeps positive working relationships with professionals in order to assist them in their duties. The council commissioner also works directly with the council president.

The Council President and the Public

By your position as head of the council you will find yourself, knowingly or unknowingly, involved in public relations. Your statements will often be taken as reflecting the official interpretation of Scouting, both locally and nationally, rather than as your personal opinion. For this reason, you should check with your Scout executive before making any public statement. Familiarize yourself with rules and regulations, local and national charter and bylaws, and other national policies so you can properly interpret Scouting and how it is to be operated.

Emergency Public Relations

With our vigorous, active program involving millions of youth and adults, we must always be prepared to handle emergencies and have a procedure to handle media relations.

Working with your Scout executive, here are some helpful guidelines for handling communication of a crisis or emergency with the media and the general public:

1. **Have a crisis communication plan.** The Scout executive has access to a template, available through the National Council, that can be used in the development and regular update of a crisis communication plan. Part of the plan should be to have all spokespersons media-trained before they are confronted with a crisis.
2. **Once a crisis occurs, know who the spokespersons are.** In most cases, the Scout executive will be the spokesperson, but confer with the key leadership of the council to determine who the appropriate spokesperson will be.

The Council Financial Program

The council financial position requires the president's continuous attention. The president must be close to the preparation of the budget and especially concerned with the provisions made for the salaries of council employees.

In councils that are affiliated with one or more United Ways, the president should be cognizant of the amount that will be requested from each United Way, the manner in which the presentation to the United Way will be made, and who will make it. In many cases, the president will be personally involved in the budget hearing.

In Friends of Scouting (FOS) campaigns, the president will work closely with finance committee and staff personnel in setting up the fundraising organization. When approaching the executive board, he or she will encourage each member to participate substantially.

The president will be concerned with the financial management of the council as revealed in the monthly finance statements, and should be familiar with the internal controls that are used to keep expenditures within budgeted limits. The president will be alert to avoid incurring debts and accumulating deficits so the council will be solvent at all times. He or she makes sure the council uses its property assets efficiently and in such a way that these assets do not jeopardize the council's ability to provide basic field service.

Participation of the Council President

The following are considered to be sufficiently important to justify the president's personal attention. Occasionally, a special situation will develop that could necessitate the president's participation.

- The BSA National Annual Meeting
- The council annual meeting
- Annual recognition dinners

- Executive board meetings
- The annual council salary review meeting
- United Way fund budget presentations
- Area conferences

The following are optional and could involve the occasional personal participation of the president. However, except in unusual circumstances, these should not supersede those listed above.

- District committee meetings
- Council commissioner staff meetings
- Council operating committee meetings
- Council finance committee meetings
- Council camporees and activities
- Executive staff meetings
- Boy Scout summer camp (at least one visit annually)
- Cub Scout resident and day camps

Guidelines for Council Commissioners

A Scouter Extraordinaire

As council commissioner, you are truly a Scouter extraordinaire—a model of exceptional Scouting service throughout the council. You lead a large corps of commissioners who will help all units become successful and provide an increasingly better Scouting program for the youth of your council territory. Because of you, your enthusiasm, and your administrative ability, thousands of youth will be touched by Scouting values.

Getting Started

For new council commissioners, there are things to learn and things to do first. Your special guide will be the Scout executive and/or the professional designated by the Scout executive as adviser for commissioner service in the council. A new commissioner usually takes these steps first.

1. Get better acquainted with and consult with the Scout executive about your orientation. Establish a convenient time for brief but regular get-togethers with your Scout executive.
2. Meet and get acquainted with the president and other council officers. Discuss a few of the current goals and deadlines for the council.
3. Make filling key commissioner vacancies and replacing inactive persons your highest priority. Work with the Scout executive to develop an action plan for this recruiting task.
4. Serve as officer of the local council, a member of its executive board and executive committee, and as a National Council member representing the local council.
5. Keep the president and executive board informed of the council's units' conditions and successes, and problems in delivering the Scouting program.

Priorities for Council Commissioners

The council commissioner is responsible for regular visits to all units throughout the council by a unit commissioner. These visits are for the unit commissioner to assist the unit leaders in their goal of delivering the Scouting program. The unit commissioner acts as a counselor, adviser, mentor, service representative, and doctor.

How Does a Council Commissioner Achieve Success?

1. **Vision.** Give all commissioners a vision of what it means to provide exceptional commissioner service to Scout units throughout the council.
2. **Quality district commissioners.** Work to upgrade the quality of people serving as district commissioners and uphold a high standard for their performance.
3. **A complete staff.** Ensure adequate recruiting in all districts to achieve and maintain an adequate number of unit commissioners and one ADC for every five unit commissioners.
4. **Continuing education.** Be sure districts not only provide opportunities for immediate commissioner orientation and frequent basic training, but also provide monthly learning experiences for all commissioners. Upgrade the quality of your annual council commissioner conference. Be sure the conference includes the best in training sessions, fellowship, inspiration, and information on the latest in Scouting. Get together with other councils to support and provide quality training opportunities.
5. **Preventing dropped units.** Be sure each district has a commitment and a strategy to provide prompt, intensive, and persistent care when major problems occur that could threaten the life of a unit. Develop a no-lapse/no-drop commitment in the council and each of its districts.
6. **Membership validation.** Twice a year, make sure that all districts formally evaluate all units, and set plans that will assist those units that are underperforming.

Key Resources

Administration of Commissioner Service, No. 34501. This valuable tool guides district and council commissioners and their assistants (and their staff advisers) in leading a successful unit service team. It addresses the responsibilities of commissioner leaders and the people they lead. It details commissioner recruiting, training, evaluation, meetings, and many other topics.

Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit Service, No. 33621. Consider this handy book the commissioner's best friend, the book every commissioner should own. It's packed with essential information on commissioner style, commissioner lifesaving, commissioner responsibilities, and dozens of other topics on providing unit service. It's the definitive reference on unit charter renewal.

Commissioner Helps for Packs, Troops, and Crews, No. 33618. A practical how-to reference book chock-full of handy tips on helping units upgrade unit program. It suggests specific commissioner actions to help unit adults meet specific program standards and objectives. This book also includes unit commissioner worksheets and unit self-assessment forms for packs, troops, and crews.

Council Commissioner Manual, No. 522-015. An all-purpose, comprehensive guide for council commissioners in how to serve as a council Key 3 member, support district operations, and provide quality unit service to help units succeed. This includes new UVTS 2.0 and Journey to Excellence information, as well.

Key Calendar Items

The following meetings and events are key commitments for the council commissioner:

- The BSA National Annual Meeting
- The council annual meeting
- Annual recognition dinner
- Executive board meetings
- Council commissioner cabinet meetings
- Annual council commissioner conference
- Area conferences
- Occasional visit to a district commissioner staff meeting

Local Council Representatives

Each local council is represented at the National Council. Through elected National Council representatives, the duly elected president and council commissioner are automatically elected as representatives. The number of National Council representatives is based on the size of the council's traditional membership.

These representatives should be elected with the understanding that their primary responsibility is attendance at the National Annual Meeting of the BSA, and sharing their experience in their local council. They are also expected to attend the annual meeting of their region.

National Annual Meeting

The National Annual Meeting of the Boy Scouts of America is normally held in May and is the occasion for the submission and adoption of reports, election of officers and board members, the conferring of Silver Buffalo Awards, and the holding of workshops on various subjects selected primarily to benefit local councils.

The council president, council commissioner, and Scout executive head their delegation, which should include the other council officers and committee chairs in addition to local council representatives. Spouses are encouraged to attend, and special features are planned for their enjoyment.

Other Resources

1. Council Executive Board Orientation notebook and DVD, now also online. This has a series of 18 modules, each of which should be used as a part of your board orientation, and regular training features at board meetings. It can also be found online in a digital format by going to MyBSA>Resources>Mission Impact>Organizational Solutions>Council Resources. Your Scout executive can provide this for you.
2. *Orientation Guide for Council Officers and Executive Board Members*, No. 33161. This is a resource for new executive board members and officers. It is a standalone piece of literature that can be ordered through your local Scout shop or found online. Your Scout executive can provide this for you.
3. Philmont Training Center has a course every summer to train the council Key 3. It is a unique experience to attend this training to learn about how a Key 3 can work more effectively in the mountains of New Mexico. Your Scout executive can provide more information on how to participate in this experience.

Sample Agenda
Council Key 3

Date _____ Location _____ Start time _____ End time _____

1. Council volunteer personnel needs:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
2. Finance—Review the Journey to Excellence criterion and provide plans to improve:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
3. Membership—Review the Journey to Excellence criterion and provide plans to improve:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
4. Program—Review the Journey to Excellence criterion and provide plans to improve:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
5. Unit Service—Review the Journey to Excellence criterion and provide plans to improve:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
6. Leadership and Governance—Review the JTE criterion and provide plans to improve:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
7. Review the council's strategic plan and list areas that need attention:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
8. Agenda items for the upcoming board meeting:
 - A.
 - B.
 - C.
9. Adjournment