

Fall Recruitment 2020

It's almost Fall, which means it's time to welcome more youth and families into the BSA. No doubt, this will be a unique year. COVID-19 has created some real challenges for recruiting, but families need the ideals of Scouting more than ever, so it's important that we do all we can to reach out with an invitation to join.

To support your recruitment efforts, we've developed this playbook to help guide you to the tools and resources you can use to support your recruiting efforts.

Playbook Contents

This playbook is one of many tools available to help you engage your community in an exciting conversation about Scouting this year—both with long-time members of the BSA family, as well as families who may be new to Scouting.

- Brand Guidelines
- BeAScout.org: Update Your BeAScout.org Pin and Win
- Key Messages: Youth and Families need Scouting Now More Than Ever
- Volunteer Communications
- Social Media
- Earned Media – Communicating with local media
- Promoting Your Virtual Event
- Family Fun Fest: BSA's National Open House
- Even More on Recruiting from the National Recruitment Webinars

Brand Guidelines

For tips and directions on how to make your recruitment material consistent with our organizational branding, check out the BSA Brand Guidelines playbook here

<https://scouting.webdamdb.com/bp/#/folder/4778201/94435363>.

Creative materials (logos, fliers, posters, social images, etc.) are available on the [BSA Brand Center](#).

New Scout Talk videos can be found here: <https://scouting.webdamdb.com/bp/#/lightbox/1411584/>.

You can find even more resources on [Scouting Wire](#). An in-depth brand guidance training is also available on the [BSA Brand Center](#).

Council Website Template

Web presence is as important as ever. When prospective families search for local ways to get involved in Scouting, that's your opportunity to put your best foot forward and make a great first impression! To help your council show off just how bright you shine, we've created a [BSA WordPress theme for](#)

[councils](#), available on the [Brand Center](#). Check it out and see if this template would be a good fit for your council this recruitment season!

Update Your BeAScout.org Pin and Win!

Updated BeAScout pins are crucial to the success of this recruiting season, and to help encourage units to take this vital step, we're giving away some great prizes.

Units that update their BeAScout pin anytime between June 1, 2020, and Sept. 30, 2020, will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a \$500 [Scout Shop](#) Gift card, or one of five \$100 Scout Shop Gift cards. See the full rules for the giveaway [here](#).

For units that need help updating their pins, they can find a complete set of step-by-step instructions on how to update the BeAScout pin in [this guide](#), and/or [this "Setting Up Your BeAScout Unit Pin" instructional video](#).

For details and resources for online registration, visit <https://www.scouting.org/resources/online-registration/>

As we move into join-Scouting season, now is the time to remind units to be Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, and Kind by doing a Good Turn and updating their pin so people who are looking for a great Scouting unit can find them!

"View the Easy-to-Share Info About the Giveaway" button linking to <https://scoutingwire.org/update-your-beascout-org-pin-and-your-unit-could-win/>

Key Messages

The messages below can be used to answer questions like...

- *Youth and Families Need Scouting Now More Than Ever*
- *How does virtual programming work?*
- *What about outdoor activities? Will social distancing still be enforced in these situations?*
- *COVID-19-era Scouting*
- *Why get involved in Scouting now?*

Youth and Families Need Scouting Now More Than Ever

These are difficult times, and there is plenty of uncertainty. School, work, shopping, socializing – everything seems different. Even Scouting looks a bit different.

But Scouting itself hasn't really changed. It's still about providing fun, engaging activities that build character, leadership and fitness in young people.

In a time that seems to be pulling us apart – Scouting connects families and communities.

Scouting unites communities and provides character and leadership development to youth, ensuring those very communities served by Scouting will grow stronger together for years to come. The values of Scouting as detailed in the 12 points of the Scout Law – trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent – remain relevant today, and are more important now than ever before.

We believe our programs are uniquely able to develop character and leadership skills in young people, and we are proud to be able to make them available through virtual means that are determined by each unit, based on what works best for the families involved.

By growing the Scouts BSA and Cub Scout programs, even more youth will have access to the character development and values-based leadership training that Scouting provides, and even more parents will be provided with tools to help manage—and even augment—their children's learning from home. Scouting is a great aid for parents to help their children develop character and leadership during a time when uniting people and developing a sense of community is more important than ever. While families are trying to balance working from home and managing their children's long-distance learning, Scouting is here to help!

For a list of program resources that are ideal for Scouting Commissioners, as well as others, please visit <https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/program-support-resources/>.

Remember all the resources offered through BSA that can help parents, especially those balancing a career and childcare from home. Skills and activities, instructional YouTube videos on BSA channels, and digital publications such as the [Boys' Life Mini-Mag](#) can all help young people stay occupied with constructive fun.

To find a pack or troop near you, visit [BeAScout.org](https://www.beascout.org) – and know that troops are forming as we speak. So, if you don't see a troop in your area, reach out to your local BSA council for additional information.

How virtual programming works

Depending on the conditions in their community, a unit may decide to meet virtually. Each unit decides the best way for their group to meet. This could mean meetings are held via Zoom or Facebook Live. To see a set of recommendations for conducting virtual meetings safely, please see the [“Digital Safety and Online Scouting Activities” Safety Moment](#).

Additionally, staff, volunteers, and community partners from 50 councils across the country worked together with the National Council to produce video resources for all required and elective adventures in the Cub Scout program. These videos are available at <http://scouting.org/DLvideos> for our Scouting volunteers and staff.

Meetings can also be held in a way where social distancing and safe health practices can be used. This is up to the unit and local rules and guidelines. No matter how a unit decides to meet – the aims of Scouting are the same!

COVID-19-era Scouting and Outdoor activities while social distancing

Without a doubt, these are challenging times for everyone. To ensure everyone’s safety, many units are meeting virtually now, but this doesn’t mean we can’t plan all the same fun adventures of Scouting in a safe, socially distant setting. Scouting offers recommendations and key resources at <https://www.scouting.org/coronavirus/>.

The BSA’s response to the coronavirus pandemic continues to be informed by the guidance of official bodies, including the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), whose framework for mitigation for community groups is based on the level of community transmission of COVID-19.

The Boy Scouts of America is advising local councils to consult with their local and state health departments, as well as local chartered partners, in order to implement the appropriate protocols to help keep our members, volunteers, and employees safe. Units should look to their councils for guidance on whether to conduct in-person meetings and activities again. If a unit’s local council is allowing in-person activities but has restrictions in place (e.g., no more than 10, social distancing of 6 ft. etc.), the unit must meet and abide by those restrictions – even if the unit is traveling out of council/state.

We are taking similar steps as a national organization as we continue to evaluate the current environment with the best interests of our members, volunteers, and employees in mind.

Whether your community is still under stay-at-home orders or has begun a gradual re-opening process, our priority remains the same—the safety of our youth members. This means making sure that units have the resources they need to continue to operate and progress through the program. This also means BSA is still enforcing all youth safety guidelines and procedures. All the same rules still apply, they must just be applied in a virtual context (as they normally would anyway). See the [“Digital Safety and Online Scouting Activities” Safety Moment](#) for guidance, and please refer to the full scope of BSA’s Youth Protection policies, as necessary: <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/yp-faqs/>

Volunteer Communications

It's important to empower our volunteers to share their enthusiasm for Scouting, and in times of virtual recruitment, it's a priority to show them how much they matter in the Scouting movement. By reaching out to them directly and offering specific resources, we can help to rally their support in our virtual efforts.

LETTER TO VOLUNTEERS

Dear Troop Leader,

With many communities practicing social distancing—or even stay-at-home orders—it's no secret that introducing more families to Scouting will be different this recruitment season, but no one rises to meet a challenge like Scouters! Now, more than ever, the world needs Scouting, and the organization is at a pivotal moment to grow and find new opportunities to unite our communities.

There is no question that the impact of COVID-19 has created a unique and unprecedented challenge for recruiting new members to the Scouting movement, which is why we're counting on Scouters like yourself to help communities unite and show families that Scouting can create opportunities to connect, learn, and grow through virtual programming.

We ask that you continue to invite families to join Scouts and encourage your friends and neighbors to join local units in Scouting from home so more youth can benefit from this incredible program, as well as connect more families, many of whom need the sense of community created by Scouting. Whether it's through a friendly conversation, or a post on your social channels, your efforts make a difference.

If you'd like tools to help with your promotional efforts, or guidance on how to start a troop in your area, we've got you covered! Resources such as photos, infographics, informational videos, and FAQs can be found on the [BSA Brand Center](#).

We know that with your help, we will continue to deliver the benefits of BSA's programs to more youth than ever before at a time when the values of Scouting are needed most.

Thank you again for all you do to support Scouting. Your work is valued and appreciated. Because of you, we know families throughout our communities will unite through Scouting!

Sincerely,

[Name]

Social Media

Encourage everyone you know to use their social networking channels to spread the word about Scouting's virtual programming and to share how Scouting has benefitted their families through these challenging times. Focus on the value of BSA's programs and how they can impact and unite communities, whether meeting in person or virtually.

Use BSA social media images and videos from the [BSA Brand Center](#), tailored for use on social media platforms respectively.

TOPIC IDEAS

- *How to Join Scouting:* Post information on Facebook encouraging parents to consider Cub Scouting and Scouts BSA for their daughters and sons as an aid to distance learning. Link to your troop's pin on BeAScout.org for more information.
- *Local Virtual Joining Events/Launch Parties:* Create Facebook events and posts with information about local joining opportunities to ensure families know when and where to go to learn more and/or sign up for Cub Scouting. Be sure to include the URL!
- *Your Personal Positive Scouting Experience:* The best way to get more young people into Scouting is to show them what it's like to be in it. Share photos and videos on Facebook and Instagram from Scouting activities you've been able to do from home, along with a caption that sums up the action and the benefits gained from the experience. Encourage families in your area to share their stories, too!
- *Family Fun Fest or other BSA virtual event activities:* Show your social networks all the fun to be had through virtual Scouting events by sharing posts about how you and your family are gearing up for the festivities and interactive fun. Of course, don't forget to invite families you know who might also enjoy these events and tag your posts with #FamilyFunFest. You can also share videos and photos of how your family participated during virtual events. See you for Family Fun Fest on September 12! Head to <https://www.scouting.org/familyfunfest/> for more information.

Reach More Families Using Geofencing (boosting) on Facebook

Geofencing on Facebook has proven to be a powerful tool in recruiting families by delivering information about the event to people in the vicinity. To increase the number of people you reach, you can "boost" the event by paying as little as \$1 a day.

To find out more, [see this presentation](#). There are links to specific instructions on the last slide.

HASHTAGS

- #VirtualScouting
- #FamilyFunFest
- #FamFunFest
- #ScoutingAtHome
- #ScoutsBSA
- #ScoutMeIn
- #BeAScout
- #BoyScoutsofAmerica

LINKS

- www.beascout.org (to find a local pack, troop or crew to join)

PRE-DRAFTED POSTS

Use your social channels to connect with parents, other local organizations, or new families by sharing a short testimonial about the program.

Not sure what to say in your social media posts? Need more posts to supplement what you're already using? Below are some pre-drafted posts to help you—whether you're just starting out on social media or want to build on your exiting progress. Simply copy, paste, customize, and share on your social channels!

- Whether exploring the great outdoors or learning in our own home, Scouting helps families like mine build adventures wherever we find ourselves. Scouting gives kids the skills they need to help themselves—and others—to succeed.
- Scouting will help your kids see that nothing is impossible when you're Prepared for Life. Learn more at BeAScout.org
- Cub Scouting gives kids the tools they need to succeed now and for a lifetime. Find out more at BeAScout.org
- As families are spending more time together at home, Scouting provides the perfect activities to supplement distance learning for kids. The best part is, the entire family can participate together! Visit BeAScout.org to learn more.
- Your child will have fun, all while building character and developing values that last a lifetime. Say "Scout Me In" and join the fun! Visit BeAScout.org to find a unit near you!

Don't forget, sharing joining opportunities via geofencing and Facebook events can be very effective. Need help or want to learn more about geofencing? Look no further than this Scouting Wire article: scoutingwire.org/using-tools-like-geofencing-and-nextdoor-events-to-promote-scouting/.

Earned Media (Public Relations)

If you have a good relationship with your local media, you can reach out to connect and generate additional awareness about how local units are finding ways to meet, learn, and serve communities through virtual or socially distant means. Then, keep the momentum going by inviting media to attend virtual launch parties, activities, and other action-oriented or educational events.

MEDIA TIPS

- Identify and prepare youth and their families for media interviews. You can work with the families to make sure Zoom calls are scheduled for times that work best for parents who may be working from home.
- Always offer reporters the chance to speak with current and future Scouts since these youth can best convey their enthusiasm for the program.

- Provide reporters with b-roll (video) from the BSA Brand Center.
- Position official BSA signage and imagery in areas that are likely to be photographed or filmed.
- Get a signed Talent Release Form from the guardian of anyone under 18 who may appear in photos or videos.
- Avoid using Scouting lingo such as “Patrol Method” or “Webelos,” which members of the general public may not be as familiar with. Instead, use terms such as adult leader or Cub Scout.
- Make sure all written and spoken communications adhere to our brand guidelines.
- Focus on the value of our program and how it can be used as a tool to help meet children’s distance learning and activity needs, as well as how Scouting can work to unite communities.

Promoting Your Virtual Joining Events

External: Reaching out to prospective new families is how we expand the Scouting community.

Of course, you can always use paid ads on social media (which can be very effective), but this step doesn’t necessarily need to cost you anything. Because you’re promoting a virtual joining event, the possibilities are endless! The first way to do this is to post to units’ social media pages about the event, encouraging them to invite friends to participate virtually and share it with their friends. Next, be sure to post to social media groups for community pages, school groups, parenting-focused pages, HOAs, and so on. Finally, don’t forget community or neighborhood-oriented apps, such as Next Door. You can also request your charter organizations to post information for the event on their own social media pages, if appropriate.

Just Because Your Event is Virtual, Doesn’t Mean Your Marketing Tactics Have to Be

Be sure to use the following to let people know about your event!

- Yard signs
- Posters
- Email
- Door hangers
- Fliers on pizza boxes and other food delivery services in your neighborhood.

Internal audiences: Reaching out to existing members—youth and adult—is just as important as seeking new members.

Remember to notify internal audiences through the avenues that work best in your council. Whether through Facebook groups, email, newsletters, or posting fliers around your community (so long as you live in an area that has begun re-opening), no one knows your community like you do, so be sure to notify them appropriately. Also, it’s a good idea to create a Facebook event for your virtual festivities

where anyone who is interested can find all the info they'll need to participate. This may also give you a relative idea of how many participants you might expect (although, not exact).

[In your announcement/invitations, be sure to include:](#)

Date, time, schedule (topics, special guests), supply lists so families can participate alongside the virtual event, target age, any relevant hashtags, links to resources (if applicable), link to your council's website, and of course, the URL for where to watch the event.

Be sure to include a call-to-action for viewers to join in on the fun by sharing photos of their participation and experiences on social media. Be sure to link to your council's social media handles and pages, and include relevant hashtags.

[Recruiting with Schools? Yes, Even in a Virtual World!](#)

Scouting has partnered with educators to help build better kids for decades. Just because schools may be meeting virtually, doesn't mean that we can't partner with educators.

Reach out to your local schools. Ask how you can help, and ask if they will help share join Scouting materials for your pack:

- Fliers (print or electronic)
- Videos on Zoom or in-school networks
- Drive-thru Joining Events in the School Parking Lots
- Messages on the moveable letter signs at the schools
- Special email messages about joining sent to families
- Invitations to special Scouting joining events
- ... And more.

Keep in mind – educators are working to keep students and faculty safe. Respect their positions – and ask how your unit might help in a way that is safe! A Scout is helpful.

Drive-Thru Recruiting

Yes, Drive-Thru Recruiting. Chances are your local school will not let you use the school gym or cafeteria to recruit as in years past. So, what do you do? Hold a Drive-Thru Recruiting Event.

It works just like a recruiting event indoors, except it's held in the parking lot. Families drive up to get all the details – just like an in-person event. Plus, units can use the online registration features so it can all be done from a mobile phone.

Family Fun Fest: BSA's National Open House for Scouting!

If you haven't already heard, BSA is hosting Family Fun Fest-- a national virtual event to kick off recruitment season on September 12! This event is for families with Scout-aged kids who are looking for new ways this fall to prepare their kids for life. In the spirit of recruitment season, this is an important opportunity to get the word out to families who could benefit from Scouting, so encourage everyone in your units to share these events within their social media networks, or to even reach out directly to other families!

For the full details on Family Fun Fest, visit scouting.org/familyfunfest, where you can register for emails so you'll get updates and be entered for [a chance to win some great prizes](#).

You can also get in on the fun ahead of time by downloading the [Family Fun Fest Adventure Log](#) to get the word out.

We can't wait to see you September 12th – so we can show America how to Scout On!

National Recruitment Webinars

Check out the Recruitment Webinar Series. Recordings of the popular webinars from Summer 2020 showcase best practices, interviews with experts, tips, tricks, and much more! Find them here - <https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/>