

# Forming New Units

A guide to starting new packs, troops, crews, and ships





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## First Thoughts

### **Working together, we can serve more youth and grow the Scouting America movement!**

This guide empowers volunteers and professionals to create new packs, troops, crews, and ships. It is a one-stop resource that can be used on mobile devices or computers. Scan the QR codes or click on the links for information and take it with you.

### **Find a way**

There are many ways to start a new unit. Some steps outlined in this guide may be done in almost any order or skipped, depending on the circumstances. Use your judgment about the best path for each situation. Be proactive and make it happen. **Find a way!**

### **Teamwork is vital, especially to the volunteer-professional partnership**

A team can accomplish more than an individual. Forming and stabilizing new units demands professionals, commissioners, the district committee, and select volunteers to communicate and work together. The district Key 3 need to know about every effort to form a new unit. Success comes from working as a team.

Professionals will add more units by working with, encouraging, and enabling commissioners and other district volunteers.

Volunteers should feel comfortable taking the initiative, especially if they are aware of an opportunity or have an idea to form a new unit. Volunteer Scouters are needed at nearly every step.

### **Why new units?**

While growing existing units year-round is crucial, creating new units is essential for Scouting America to make a bigger impact. More units will attract more youth and adults, expand Scouting's reach, drive substantial membership growth, improve the satisfaction of volunteer and professional Scouters, and enhance Scouting America's profile.

Although this guide focuses on forming new units, Scouting America volunteers and professionals also work year-round to strengthen existing units and help them serve more Scouts.



## Organizing a Unit

### Ideas for new units

Ideas for new units can come from enthusiastic volunteers, research about community needs, or from the community. There is no one-size-fits-all method.

Create heat maps of the packs-to-schools ratio and packs-to-troops ratio.

Troops have adults with experience in Cub Scouts who can help.

#### Identify the Need and Viability of a New Unit



### Start by engaging a team

To kick off and stabilize a new unit, assemble a team of volunteers and professionals. The members depend on the situation:

- Who has valuable relationships?
- Who can invest time and energy?
- Who has important knowledge?

Volunteers and professionals should feel free to ask for help and offer help to each other.

Be flexible—the team may change as the project unfolds. For instance, a commissioner might not help with research but should engage with potential unit parents and volunteers early. Building long-term volunteer-to-volunteer relationships is a crucial task.

#### William D. Boyce New-Unit Organizer Award



### Building relationships and being clear about the value proposition are key

Use the seven-step system in the linked document to build rapport, explain the value Scouting America offers, and form the unit.

#### Seven-Step Sales System



### The four phases of unit formation may be done in any order or at the same time

- **Identify Adult Leaders:** Find capable leaders, train them, and give them the necessary resources and support.
- **Choose Registration Path:** Decide whether to find a chartered organization or register the unit with the council, if the Scout executive permits council-registered units.
- **Recruit Youth:** Attract youth to the new unit. Engage families at fun unit-led activities. The events can be something friends would do outside of Scouting. Hold inviting activities at schools, churches, community festivals, or on your own. Use all available resources to promote the activities.
- **Complete Paperwork:** Ensure the administrative requirements are met. (See page 11.)



#### Minimum Requirements to Form a New Unit



**Remember, we are not just creating units; we are shaping futures!**



## Identify, Train, and Support Adult Leaders

### Identify prospective leaders early

Successful units begin by recruiting and training leaders.

Identifying potential unit leaders early helps units form and thrive. Willing leaders with the right qualities and time are essential.

When unit volunteers help create a unit, their commitment to quality programming and the unit's success grows.


Recruit at least two women leaders for units serving female youth.

Have adults complete the required applications. (See page 11.)


**Characteristics of Unit Leaders**




**Recruiting Unit Volunteers**




**Scouting Forms**



**Keep Adult Supervision In Mind**



**Minimum Requirements to Form a New Unit**



**Remember, every leader plays a vital role in shaping young lives!**





## Support New Leaders

### Early engagement matters

Even before the unit forms, potential leaders and Scout parents will have questions and doubts.

Promptly responding to questions and concerns:

- Reassures them
- Communicates respect
- Builds their confidence
- Helps them feel part of something greater than themselves

Affirming prospective and new Scouters will strengthen and stabilize the unit and retain dedicated adults and youth.

District committee members should reach out to new unit volunteers instead of waiting to be contacted.

### Meet the commissioner or support team members early. Person-to-person support

New leaders and influential Scout parents should be connected as soon as possible with a commissioner or another district volunteer. The district commissioner is often the best starting point.

Other Scouters may orient and support new leaders if commissioners are unavailable or if another volunteer is a better fit.

Establishing this relationship early fosters trust and confidence.

### Introduce leaders to the Scouting community

As the unit forms, introduce new leaders to district and other, more established unit volunteers.

District new member coordinators, district leaders, and commissioners should play a major role in this effort.

District volunteers and Scouters from other units can provide insights, resources, and ideas for running meetings.

Roundtables are ideal for sharing information and resources, making connections, and showing new leaders that they are not alone. Other council and district activities, such as camporees, also provide excellent opportunities. Conversations at roundtables can address new leaders' concerns and questions and help build community.

### Communication matters

Ensure new unit leaders and parents receive council and district communications via email and social media.

Keeping them informed about events and training is essential.





## Support New Leaders (cont.)

### Training

Leaders need practical and official training to deliver the program to youth effectively.

Training builds confidence.

District committee members should be proactive and not wait to be contacted.

Highlight how tools like [my.scouting.org](https://my.scouting.org) and Scoutbook help leaders.

Commissioners and other district volunteers who support new leaders need to teach (using the EDGE method) the practical aspects of running a unit. Topics include integrating new youth and adult members, recruitment, planning and running meetings, outdoor programs, service projects, chartered organization relationships, and unit fundraising.

Ensure leaders complete:

- [Safeguarding Youth Training](#) (mandatory)
- [Position-specific training](#) for their roles and responsibilities
- Hazardous weather training (mandatory for direct contact leaders)

Online training is available 24/7 at [my.scouting.org](https://my.scouting.org) => Scouting U.

The district should provide in-person training at district-wide sessions or special unit-level sessions. Encourage ongoing training without overwhelming new Scouters.

**Safeguarding Youth Training**



**Position-specific Training**



**Cub Scout Leader Resources**



**Troop Leader Resource Hub**



**Venturing Resources**



**Sea Scouts Leader Resources**



**Scouting U Training**



**For more information on supporting new units, see *Thriving Units: A Pathway to Stabilize and Sustain New and Struggling Units***



**Remember, we are building a Scouting family — one leader at a time!**



## Chartered Organization or Council-Registered Unit

Most units are formed with chartered organizations. Many chartered organizations provide facilities, but some do not.

Registering a new unit directly with the council is the fastest way to start, if the Scout executive approves.

The new unit can stay council-registered or transition later to a chartered organization.

Council-registered units will still need a meeting place.

## Chartered Organization and Facility Provider

The process laid out in this guide applies to finding chartered organizations or meeting facilities.

### Wide variety of options

Chartered organizations or facility providers come in various forms, including:

- Non-profit or for-profit organizations
- Religious institutions
- Community groups
- Social organizations
- PTAs/PTOs
- Businesses

Some provide robust support, including members, financial resources, and meeting spaces.

Others offer fewer tangible resources but remain valued partners.

## Six-step process to find a chartered organization or facility provider

Current or new chartered organizations may form new units. The pages ahead explain each step in more detail.

- Assess opportunities: Identify prospects and research them.
- Contact prospects: Reach out to potential chartered organizations.
- Understand needs and goals: Learn what the prospect wants and build a relationship.
- Present options: Share unit options that fit their needs and goals.
- Secure commitment: Ask for their agreement to partner with Scouting.
- Ongoing cultivation: Continue nurturing the relationship.

**Remember, chartered organizations are our Scouting allies!**





## Assess the Opportunities, Identify Prospects, and Contact Them

- Identify prospective chartered organizations, learn about them, and meet with them. Look for underserved areas and under-represented faiths and civic organizations, etc.
- Set up a meeting. Send a follow-up email.
- Plan the first meeting.
- During the first meeting, build a relationship and learn more about the organization and its youth-serving goals. Find out whether Scouting America and the organization might make good partners.
- The team should work together to plan the follow-up meeting and prepare a presentation and conversation based on the needs, goals, interests, and desires of the prospective chartered organization or facility provider.
- Recruiting an organization to provide facilities follows a similar process as recruiting a chartered organization. For further insight, refer to the QR code on Facility Use Arrangements.




**Sample Introduction Emails**



**Identifying and Researching Prospective Chartered Organizations**




**Setting Up a Meeting**




**Preparing for the First Meeting**



**Conducting the First Meeting**



**Preparing For and Conducting the Second Meeting**



**Facility Use Arrangements**





## Recruit Youth

### Plan for growth

**Prioritize** recruiting youth, their families, and adults.

A stable, high-quality unit requires growth.

Conduct peer-to-peer recruitment and normal friend activities and participate in fall and spring recruitment campaigns.

### District support

New unit leaders and volunteers need support from experienced Scouters from the district, other units, and the district professional with recruitment efforts.

District volunteers and other experienced volunteers may need to lead the effort.

**Remember, we are building a vibrant Scouting community!**

## Make Sure the Unit Can be Found

### BeAScout.org

Ensure the BeAScout.org information and pin are active and accurate as soon as possible after the unit is formed.


Use the “Coming Soon” feature to generate interest.

### Monitor inquiries

Regularly check the invitation and application manager on my.scouting.org (Key 3 or proxy).

Respond promptly to inquiries and new Scouts.

**How to Create a BeAScout Pin**



**Remember, we are making Scouting accessible to all!**





## Introduce the Unit to the Community

**The new unit needs support. Some potential sources:**

- The people who recruited the new leaders, youth, chartered organizations, etc.
- Chartered organization
- Commissioner team
- District membership team
- District new unit support team

**Target audiences:**

- Schools: school nights for Scouting, meet the teacher nights, and school talks where available
- PTA/PTO meetings
- Churches and community: Participate in meetings and events
- Neighborhoods: Connect with local groups
- Youth sports: Be present at sporting events
- After-school programs: Explore partnerships
- Community events: fairs, parades, and other gatherings

### Peer-to-peer dynamic recruiting

Encourage registered youth and adults to invite their friends to join them at a fun event. Scouting is more fun with friends.

### Leverage social media

New unit leaders and parents can effectively use social media to spread the word and tell the story about the unit and generate interest.

## Recruit a New Member Coordinator

Having Scouts and Scout parents or volunteers focus on welcoming, onboarding, and recruiting new families is essential.

A dedicated point of contact prevents anyone from “falling through the cracks” during the exciting process of building a new unit and growing.

Follow up with families who signed up but have not attended and with families who came to a meeting or two but have not returned is essential.

**New Member Coordinator**



**Recruiter Strip**



**Peer-to-Peer Dynamic Recruiting**



**Recruitment Material and Policies**



**Remember, community engagement is key!**

**Remember, everyone needs to feel welcome!**

## The Paperwork Must Be Done

Paperwork might not be exciting, but it is essential for getting the unit started. Collecting it early speeds up forming the unit, starting the fun, and recruiting more Scouts and adults.

### Professional-volunteer Scouter partnership

The professional Scouter should work closely with new unit leaders and the chartered organization.

Their joint effort ensures that all necessary paperwork and payments are obtained promptly.

If a professional Scouter is unavailable, a volunteer might be able to help with the paperwork.

### Required documents

**New Unit Application:** Although available online (via the QR Code and link on this page), the New Unit Application must be submitted on paper. Do not forget the unit fee.

#### Member registrations:

- Paper Forms:
  - New leaders and Scouts in new, forming units must turn in paper forms.
  - Obtain these forms from the council or via the QR Code or link labeled New Unit Forms.
  - Collect registration, *Scout Life* subscription, and any council fees simultaneously.
- Online registration: The most efficient method—use computers, tablets, or phones.
- Annual Charter Agreement, unless it's a council-registered unit. Choose the appropriate agreement based on the situation:

- Standard chartered partner relationship: Use the Annual Charter Agreement.
- United Methodist Church (UMC) affiliation: Opt for the UMC Affiliation Agreement or UMC Facilities Use Agreement.
- Catholic Church affiliation: Use one of the affiliation or facilities use agreements.
- Council-registered units: Choose the Annual Registration Agreement.
- Facilities Use Agreement: Select the relevant one.

### New Unit Forms



### Online Registration Guidebook



### Minimum Requirements to Form a New Unit



### Recruitment



**Remember, each piece of paperwork helps to build a strong foundation for the new unit!**

**Remember, councils and districts must actively support fledgling units during their high-risk period.**




## Stabilizing New Units


Every new unit requires the assistance of a commissioner, other district volunteers, or an experienced unit leader to get started and become stable. Districts must invest the time and effort needed to support each new unit for as long as it takes.

**Remember, newly formed units need strong support to become stable and last.**

**Unit and Membership Renewal**



For more information on supporting new units, see *Thriving Units: A Pathway to Stabilize and Sustain New and Struggling Units*



**Remember, a stable unit changes lives!**

