

Flight Plan

2026-2027 Unit Recruiting



RECRUITMENT PLAN

The key to a successful sign-up event is thorough planning. You will need to work closely with the school or community center you are using, organize volunteers, and be prepared with any necessary materials such as information fliers, sign-up forms, and even treats. Planning should begin at least eight weeks in advance of the event. Below is a suggested outline for planning your event.

- 1 Get Help**

Many hands make light work, so if you haven't done so already, assigning a unit membership chair and pack sign-up Coordinator is a great first step to a successful recruiting season.
- 2 Set Goals**

Work with your chartered organization to discuss Cub Scout sign-up plans and set goals for your pack. How many youth and families do you want to sign up for Scouting? How will you do that?
- 3 Get Trained**

Attend the Council **Mission Control Launch** event and your district follow up training.
- 4 Reserve Your Spot**

Sign-up events typically take place during the back-to-school recruiting season. For that reason, holding the event at a school is usually the best option. Typically, the school's scheduled back-to-school night is where you will be able to meet with the most families. Contact your local school principals or superintendents to discuss your Cub Scout sign-up event and get permission to attend.
- 5 Highlight This Year's Theme**

Having a theme and incentive for a sign-up event is a great way to capture the attention of parents and incentivize them to sign up on the spot. These programs typically take form as a separate event to be held several weeks after the sign-up event. This year's theme is "Mission Control". Hosting a rocket launch and space-themed event will help you stand out in a crowd and get families excited about scouting.
- 6 Promote**

Your pack sign-up coordinator should organize the sign-up event team for your unit, usually five to six people to act as "station chiefs." These are simple jobs that anyone can fill, but it's best to use parents of current Cub Scouts who can talk from the heart about what Cub Scouting means to their family and their kids.
- 7 Organize Volunteers**

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- 8 Have Fun**

Keep the event fun and exciting. This not only makes it better for the parents attending, but also will make it easier for you, the organizer. Speak from the heart, don't stress, and just enjoy the opportunity to introduce new parents to Cub Scouting.

PROMOTING THE EVENT

Families today are overwhelmed with advertising and marketing messages. To ensure families get the message that it's time to sign up, use various methods of communication throughout this playbook and be sure to have a plan. You should start to build the buzz at least six weeks out from your sign-up event(s). The council and district will help get the word out, but the majority of your success will come from unit marketing.

How much access you have to promote Scouting in your schools will help you decide the best ways to market your sign-up event. Here are some suggestions – but these are just thought-starters. Don't limit yourself. The more ways you reach parents, the more success you'll have.

IN-SCHOOL PROMOTION

If you have full access to promoting your event at the schools, you can employ any of the following best practices.

- Distribute sign-up event fliers the week before the sign-up event
- Posters and yard signs around school
- School rallies or Scout talks at the school
- Back-to-school open house events, school carnivals, and conferences
- Electronic backpacks
- Invite current youth and parents to attend lunch at school in uniform
- Videos on in-school video networks
- School newsletter or website
- School marquee signs

SCOUT TALKS

Scout talks can make a huge difference when signing up new Cub Scouts! Schools that provide access to Scout talks are the way to go. A Scout Talk is simply visiting each classroom and getting the children excited about Scouting.

The Scout talk is where youth excitement is created. The district's Cub Scout sign-up training will help give you the skills to put on an effective Scout talk. Scout talks work best by going class-to-class and giving a five-minute promotion on the fun that Scouting has to offer. If this scenario is not feasible then a school assembly will work; however, classroom talks are best. When speaking with the school, thank them for working with us in the development of youth and their community.



Action Item: Consult with your district executive if you should need assistance with your Scout talks. These energetic in-school presentations will dramatically increase the success of your recruitment!

OUT-OF-SCHOOL PROMOTION

Here are several ideas for promoting the event outside of the schools. These tactics can be done either in tandem with your in-school promotions or on their own if you are not able to get full access to the schools.

- Ask current members to use social media to let their friends and family know about sign-up event nights
- Personalized invitations, emails, and personal phone calls to prospective parents
- Door hangers and door-to-door invitations
- Recruit-a-friend and other peer-to-peer recruiting initiatives
- Fliers and Scout talks at after-school programs or churches in the community
- Church and community websites, calendars, and bulletins
- Press releases
- Billboards, posters, and yard signs in the community (businesses, churches, etc.)
- Community fairs, parades, and other events

HOLDING THE EVENT

(SIGN-UP EVENT OPTION A)

Many units and districts are now holding come-and-go events, which are strictly sign-up events. These are faster for today's busy parents. The key to making them successful is preplanning. The following is an outline of how to execute this type of event.

This model features five stations that give parents information about Cub Scouting, get them signed up, and provide everything they need to know, including when the first meeting is, who the leaders are, and more.

SIGN-UP EVENT STATIONS

If you have full access to promoting your event at the schools, you can employ any of the following best practices.

- Station 1: Welcome/Sign In
- Station 2: What We Do
- Station 3: Registration Form
- Station 4: Check Out (complete applications)
- Station 5: Den Leader Q&A



Action Item: Make sure that each station sign is clearly visible to help make sure things go smoothly!

1

Information Station 1: Welcome/Sign In

This is the first place potential Cub Scouts and their parents will stop. Here they sign in while the greeter provides a brief overview of the process.

- Greet every family that comes to your station and ask them to sign in. Provide them with the "Welcome to Cub Scouts" brochure
- Tell each family that there are five stations that they will visit to complete the sign-up process and that it will take 20-30 minutes

Materials:

- Station 1 sign and "Welcome" sign
- "Welcome to Cub Scouts" brochure
- Sign-in sheets, pen

2

Information Station 2: What Cub Scouts Do

This is where you will share the excitement of Cub Scouting and your pack activities. Introduce the leaders and talk about what makes your pack special. Leave plenty of time and be prepared to answer any questions.

Materials

- Station 2 sign
- Pack calendar and event fliers
- Handout with meeting times and locations
- Listing of pack and den leaders with contact email and phone numbers.
- Scout Shop Guide to the Uniform
- Scouts' Life mini mags

HOLDING THE EVENT

(CONTINUED)

3

Information Station 3: Registration

This is the sign-up station where the station chief helps parents complete the actual application.

- Have BSA Youth Application forms ready to be completed and have pens available.
- Have copies of “What Other Costs Are There?” and give these out.
- Be prepared to answer questions about pack fee payment plans and/or financial assistance.

Materials:

- Station 3 sign
- BSA Youth Applications and pen
- Pack leadership handout
- “What Other Costs Are There?” handout

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Information Station 4: Check Out

Leaders at this station are responsible for final “check out,” including payment.

- Make sure the applications are properly completed.
- Collect the proper fee amount for BSA membership fee and Boys’ Life (if added).
- Forms and payments should be collected, signed by the Cubmaster, and put in the envelope.

Materials:

- Station 4 sign
- Calculator
- Envelope for applications and fees

5

Information Station 5: Den Leaders / Questions & Answers

Leaders at this station make sure parents know when and where the first meeting is and answer any other questions parents may have.

- Make an effort to have as many den leaders and assistant den leaders on hand to talk about their dens and give families a chance to get to know them.
- Answer questions about the type of activities their child will be doing.

Materials:

- Station 5 sign

AFTER THE SIGN-UP EVENT IS OVER

Turn in the applications and money. Unit leaders and the Join Scouting coordinators should review and complete applications after the Join Scouting event. Applications, registration fees, and one copy of the attendance roster are to be turned in to the district executive within 24 hours of the event.

Welcome your new families and members. Don’t wait! Be sure to invite all families to first-night den and pack events the very next week. These meetings are a chance to make a great first impression, have fun, and involve new parents in the life of the pack. Den leaders should make welcome phone calls to the parents of the new Cub Scouts and/or send welcome email messages with meeting dates, location, pack calendars, and any other important information.

Follow up with those families who did not sign up. This is where the sign-in sheet comes in handy. Check your applications against the sign-in sheet and call those families that did not join. Address any concerns the person may have and offer to drop an application by their home, or invite them to the first meeting or your council’s recruiting event so they can see Cub Scouting for themselves.

HOLDING THE EVENT

(SIGN-UP NIGHT OPTION B)

BEFORE THE MEETING (20-30 MINUTES)

- Set up tables and chairs. Laptops if available help with the online sign up process
- Welcome Packets –applications, Scout Life, Parent Brochure, etc.
- Pens
- Unit information page: Calendar, Leader Directory, etc.

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS (5 MINUTES)

- Lead the Pledge of Allegiance
- Key Pack Leader introductions

WHAT IS SCOUTING (BASIC VERSION—10 MIN)

- Youth development program that builds character & confidence
- Family-oriented; all members of the Scout's family encouraged to participate when/where possible
- Fun with a purpose—youth will have fun while learning leadership skills
- Briefly describe upcoming Pack activities and a recent activity over the summer
- Leadership structure of the Pack

VOLUNTEER COMMITMENTS (10 MINUTES)

- Call one new den up to the front, have each youth say what Scouting activity they are looking forward to the most
- Tell the parents of the den that these youth are ready to begin their Scouting journey, so they need coaches, mentors, adults to lead them.....we call them Den Leaders
- Ask which parents are committed to help them on their journey and would like to volunteer
- (for Kinder and 1st grade, be sure to cover the adult Partner 18 years or older)
- Complete Application – have simple recognition for all newly-recruited leaders whose applications and fees are turned in
- Repeat this process for each grade level, if needed

YOUTH/ADULT REGISTRATION (5 MINUTES)

- Discuss Pack and BSA registration fees, insurance, and Scout Life option
- Collect all applications and prorated fees, at a minimum
- Discuss fundraising opportunities to offset scouting expenses

REMINDER ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Parent Orientation Meeting – date, time, location, and FUN!!!
- Other key upcoming dates

TROOP OPEN HOUSE

The troop open house allows a troop to swing open its doors and roll out the red carpet to welcome guests. It provides a forum to show off Scouting activities and the troop's accomplishments. It is an effective tool to reach youth who have never tried Scouting. Hosting a troop open house is a five-step process that has been tried and proven in troops throughout the nation. Each of the following six steps is vital to the event's success:

- 1 CALL**
Call your local middle school and set up a time when you can present scouting to the students.
- 2 PRESENT**
Present a school rally to your local middle school(s).
- 3 INVITE**
Send the parents of interested youth a personal invitation to the troop open house.
- 4 FOLLOW UP**
Follow up with a call.
- 5 HOST**
Host the troop open house for youth and their parents.
- 6 ACTIVITY**
Organize a troop or district activity to involve new scouts right away.

A steady flow of youth into a Scouts BSA troop is essential to maintaining the troop's health. Plus, new Scouts bring energy and enthusiasm to the troop program! To avoid the pitfall of shrinking membership, a troop should add at least 10 new Scouts every year. Having a year-round growth plan in place will help attract new Scouts.



Action Item: The first step for any recruitment effort is to appoint a troop committee member to serve as the troop membership chair. This person will develop and implement a year-round growth plan that incorporates all methods of recruitment, working closely with Cub Scout packs in the community, the district membership committee, and the unit commissioner.


Present a School Rally to Middleschoolers


- Cooperation of schools is essential to gain access to Scout-age youth. Contact school administration to schedule presentation time during school with small groups of students.
- Plan the presentation to highlight Scouting's activities, high adventure, and outdoor experiences. Display hands-on visuals such as backpacks, canoes, and tents, and allow the youth to check them out up close. Dress in outdoor wear to complete the setting. Allowing some experienced Scouts to assist in the presentation could help the youth visualize themselves as Scouts. The presentation should be no more than five minutes.
- Following the introductory presentation, give each youth a survey and ask them to check the high-adventure experiences that interest them. Explain that Scout troops do the kinds of activities listed on the survey.
- While the youth are working on their surveys, promote your upcoming open house. Explain that you will follow up with their parents if they mark that they are interested in joining. Collect every survey and check to ensure that each is complete with the youth's full name and contact information.
- If the school cannot allow assemblies with youth, suggest the alternative plan of having the school distribute the High-Adventure Survey. Be sure to pick up the completed surveys soon after their distribution.


Please scan the QR code to download the High-Adventure Survey.





SAMPLE HIGH ADVENTURE FORM







High-Adventure Survey

Check the adventures you would like to do:

- Camping
- Swimming
- Horseback riding
- Canoeing
- Fishing
- Rock climbing
- Rafting
- Backpacking
- Cycling
- Snowboarding
- Sailing
- Archery

Many Scout troops do all of these things and more!

Are you a Scout? yes no

Would you like to be a Scout? yes no

Your Name _____ Grade _____ Age _____

Parent's Name _____ Parent's Phone # _____

School _____ Parent's Email _____

Send the Parents of Interested Youth a Personal Invitation to the Troop Open House

The next step involves following up on the initial contact with youth who indicated their desire to join a troop. The Scoutmaster should send a personal message to the parents of each interested youth, spelling out the values of Scouting and extending an invitation for the youth and his parents to visit the troop at its upcoming open house. Include a brochure that describes Scouting's values to provide further information.

Timing is important. Send an email or text as soon as possible after the survey is completed; schedule the troop open house for the week after the family receives the invitation message.

SAMPLE LETTER:

Dear parent:

Your child has taken a step toward building a solid future; are you willing to support their growth?

Recently, your child indicated their desire to try their hand at such high-adventure activities as backpacking, cycling, camping, swimming, canoeing, rock climbing, and horseback riding. Our Scout troop participates in these activities, and we would like to invite your child to join Scouting America.

Scouting has a reputation for helping youth develop self-reliance, strong character, respect for others, good citizenship skills, and physical and mental fitness. For more than 100 years, our programs have instilled in young people the values and knowledge that they need to become leaders in their communities and in their countries.

Please join our troop for our open house at _____ (time) on _____ (date) at _____ (place).

You'll get a firsthand look at some of our troop activities, and you can visit with our Scouts and their adult leaders. Take some time to look over the enclosed brochure and bring any questions or concerns to the meeting.

I look forward to meeting you!

Sincerely,

Scoutmaster, Troop _____

Telephone no. _____

FOLLOW UP WITH A CALL:

On the day or evening before the open house, each prospective Scout's household should receive a telephone call from a member of the troop, ideally the Scoutmaster, who sent the message. As you make the call, keep in mind that the youth has already expressed his interest, so direct the call to a parent.

To help put the parents at ease, ask the following questions:

- Did the family receive the Scoutmaster's message?
- Does anyone in the family have previous Scouting experience?
- Do they have any questions about Scouting or the troop open house?
- Do they know the time and location of the troop open house?
- Ensure parents that you look forward to meeting them and will meet them at the door to greet everyone.

Host the Troop Open House for Youth and Their Parents

The troop open house can be conducted as a district-wide event for a number of troops, or an individual troop can conduct one independently. The important idea to remember is that Scouting is showcased, and each guest is made to feel welcome.

Involve all troop members in the open house from the planning stage. Remind each Scout of the importance of building their troop; be receptive to their ideas. Begin making plans for the open house as early as possible, following these suggestions:

- Prior to the night of the open house, involve the troop in sprucing up the meeting place. Treat the task as a “spring cleaning” since the troop will be welcoming guests.
- Prepare a display of troop activities, photos, and awards that the troop has earned.
- Assign greeters to be at the door to welcome guests as they arrive. Be sure to have adequate seating.
- Have a printed agenda and a copy of the troop’s calendar at each seat.
- Make assignments for each part on the agenda well in advance. The senior patrol leader should be the emcee of the meeting.
- Prepare refreshments for your guests if you desire.

The troop open house should follow an agenda to help guests gather a broad range of Scouting information (sample below). The youth is introduced to basic Scouting skills while an adult troop leader informs the parents about Scouting’s values and its positive effect on youth.

During the open house, Scouts and Scouters should do everything possible to make their guests feel comfortable and to answer each question as it arises. Be sure parents know they may ask questions at any time. The guests should be allowed to participate whenever possible.

At some point, the Scoutmaster should explain that both the youth and his parents may join the troop. Have applications available for both Scouts and adults.

SAMPLE AGENDA

Pre-Opening

- Conduct a simple action game for early arrivals.

Opening

- Hold the flag ceremony.
- Welcome the guests.

Activity Time

- Scout skill demonstration like one of the following:
 - Scouts quickly and skillfully join four Scout staves together with six round lashings.
 - Scouts quickly and skillfully put up a self-standing flagpole.
 - Scouts quickly and skillfully put up a dining fly, using Scouts seated in chairs to substitute for tent stakes.
- Parent orientation
 - Explain the ideals and values of Scouting.
 - Introduce the troop leadership and its organization.
 - Distribute the troop calendar.
 - Explain the summer camp opportunity.
 - Thoroughly explain the costs of troop membership.

Joining Process

- Youth and parents complete applications to join Scouting.
- Announce information about the next troop meeting.

Closing

- Scoutmaster’s Minutes
- Closing ceremony

Refreshments (optional)

Organize a Troop Activity to Involve New Scouts Right Away

During the initial contact with Scout-age youth, we promised that Scouting is action-packed. Youth will expect that adventure soon after they become Scouts, so schedule an exciting activity soon after the troop open house.

Here are a few suggestions:

Troop Campout

New Scouts joined with the expectation of going camping, and they should be given this opportunity for outdoor activity as soon as possible after the troop open house. Begin planning the activity well before the troop open house so that the event is in place when the new Scouts join.

Lock-Ins

Lock-in events also have proven successful in some districts. Lock-ins, which are especially effective in colder climates, are more like “camp-ins” rather than the usual campout. They can be set up at the local YMCA or school gymnasium. Program possibilities could include swimming, sports, movies, refreshments, and a little sleeping.

Two-Deep Leadership

According to Scouting America Youth Protection policies, two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or older are required at all Scouting activities, including all meetings. There must be a registered female adult leader 21 years of age or older in every unit serving females. A registered female leader 21 years of age or older must be present for any activity involving female youth or female adult program participants (including Cub Scout den meetings). The chartered organization is responsible for ensuring that sufficient leadership is provided for all activities.

Get New Scouts Involved

New Scouts should be introduced into the mainstream of troop activities as soon as possible after they join the troop. Assign them to a new-Scout patrol and get them started on earning advancement. The Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmaster, or troop guide should take responsibility for helping new Scouts get a good start.

ADDITIONAL RECRUITMENT METHODS

Use door hangers with Scouting for Food, Popcorn, other unit fundraisers

Unit Events

Park Recruitment Days

Pack Ice Cream Socials

Summer/Spring Break Experience: Launch Events

Fishing Derby, Shooting Derby, Rocket Launching

Penny Stuffers (local advertisement stuffers)

National Recruitment Video

Local Recruitment Video

Pizza box flyers (other restaurants that are willing to throw in an advertisement)

Local Flyer distribution (places families go to. Pizza/Ice Cream/Snow Cone Yogurt Shops etc.)

Join Scout Night events at sporting areas (soccer/baseball/basketball/etc.)

Unit self-marketing via Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, Tik Tok, etc.

YouTube Ads

Calendar of Community Events: Parades, service events, etc.

Spirit Day at Chick-fil-A or other businesses

Utilize NextDoor app

Partnering with college/civic/business/community organizations

Partnering with high school groups/organizations- adult education

Troop Open House Calendar

Open houses can be done at any time throughout the year.

One Month Before	Person Responsible
1. Set a date and plan a troop open house for the following month.	Scout Master, Troop Membership Chair, Senior Patrol Leader
The Month Of	
1. Conduct a school rally introducing middle school youth to Scouting. Have them complete the High-Adventure Survey	Scout Master, Troop Membership Chair, Senior Patrol Leader
2. Follow up with interested youth by sending a personal invitation to the troop open house and making a personal telephone call to their parents.	Scout Master
3. Hold the troop open house to welcome potential Scouts and their parents.	Scout Master, Troop Membership Chair, Senior Patrol Leader
4. Plan a troop activity to get new Scouts involved with the troop shortly after they join.	Scout Master, Troop Membership Chair, Troop Guide, Patrol Leaders' Council
The Following Month	
1. Sponsor a troop activity for new Scouts.	Scout Master, Troop Membership Chair, Troop Guide, Patrol Leaders' Council
2. Work closely with new Scouts and parents during their transition to the Scouts BSA troop, ensuring their needs are met and that their move has been natural and fun.	Troop Membership Chair
All Future Months	
1. Work on rank advancement with new Scouts.	Scout Master, Senior Patrol Leader, Troop Guide
2. Encourage each troop member to attend summer camp. Conduct summer camp orientation to encourage full troop involvement.	Scout Master, Troop Membership Chair