



## Cub Scout Membership Growth Plan

### The Promise Of Scouting

For more than a [hundred](#) years, leaders like you have been the key to delivering the timeless values and endless adventure of Scouting to the children and families of the greater Los Angeles area. Sure, there's band-camp, lacrosse, and Fortnite, but Scouting is the only program that provides the guidance that families need to raise children to be responsible, active citizens, and ethical leaders. This is not just idle talk, Scouting is a volunteer-led movement and without you, it wouldn't exist.

### Why Does Recruiting New Members Matter?

Before we dive into the technical details of running an effective recruiting effort, let's review why recruiting matters:

- **More members make it easier for units to fund their Scouting activities through fees or fundraising**
- **More members increase the talent pool of adult leaders** – association with adults is not a bug of the system; the Scouting program is designed for Scouts to participate alongside their parents to learn by their example and with their guidance
- **More members help fill District and Council programs and camps generating the revenue necessary to fund operations** – more than 75% of our revenues are raised in this way
- **More members make it more fun** – and really, isn't this the most important reason of all?

### This Is Our Mission

It's fair to say that without a growing cadre of Scouts and leaders, sustaining Scouting is impossible. For this reason, the Council has designated increasing our membership as one of our key strategic goals for this year.

And this goal is ambitious:

- Achieve 20% Cub Scout membership growth
- Grow to 60 new girl troops
- Continue to offer Family Scouting in 75% of our packs

### So What Do The Experts Think About This?

As knowledgeable and experienced as the Council big-wigs might be, we readily acknowledge that we don't have all of the answers. For this reason, this plan was created by consulting Scouting staff, the Council Key 6, District Membership leads, and all the Council leaders who attended the Council Quarterly Strategic meetings in December and February. In addition, a survey on membership went out to every unit key 3 in the Council.

This valuable feedback was collated and distilled into several key findings:

- **Our Council membership goals are achievable** – the clear consensus is that with a clear and well-executed plan we should be able to achieve our Council goals
- **The most effective type of recruiting is by word-of-mouth** – happy Scouts and parents are our best recruiters
- **In-person recruiting events works best** – kids and parents need to experience Scouting to understand it
- **We need to market Scouting** – a great program is meaningless if the community doesn't know about it

### But First Some Things Will Need To Change

Many of you have been recruiting for years and you're happy with your process – and that's great! But the consensus view was that our overall concept of recruiting could use some adjustments:

- **Recruiting happens at every level of Scouting** – from Scout, to leader, to unit, to district, to council, to board; we all have a part to play to ensure that we have a successful recruiting effort

- **Recruiting happens year-round** – our traditional spring and back-to-school recruiting drives will continue, however, units, the districts, and the Council will focus on integrating recruiting opportunities into the program all year long
- **Recruiting works best in person** –we offer a real-world adventure that has withstood the test of time; when we recruit, we'll work on showcasing this as much as possible
- **Recruiting is part of the program** – besides word-of-mouth our best sales tool is the fun and adventure of Scouting; the units, the districts, and the Council will work on offering Scouting activities as part of the program to interested youth and families
- **We're not going to recruit boys and girls, we're going to recruit the whole family** – association with adults is one of the methods of Scouting and without it Scouting can't function

### Okay, So How Do I Start?

So how do we go about recruiting new families to Scouting? Let's recall that Scouting has been around for more than a hundred years – this means many of your questions already have answers! The purpose of this guide is not to create a brand-new method of doing things, but rather to explain the general concept behind why we do things the way we do and to connect you with the tools and resources that you will need to carry out your plans.

We will cover the basic process for a successful recruiting effort:

1. Build your team
2. Know and understand your opportunities and obstacles
3. Create a plan
4. Determine what resources you will need
5. Do it!

#### Step 1: Build Your Team

Many hands make light work and failure to plan is planning to fail. Without a team of leaders willing to design and carry out a plan, consistent membership growth cannot happen.

When you create a recruiting team that involves the whole pack, you lessen the burden for participants, create a system for generating new ideas, and begin to train parents that adult association is an important part of Scouting.

A simple team structure would be:

- **New Member Coordinator** – this individual will lead the overall recruiting effort and will serve as a liaison between the Pack, the District, and the community
- **Marketing** – responsible for promoting the effort through e-mail, social media, flyers, and word-of-mouth
- **Registrar** – will oversee the logistical details required to enroll new members
- **BeAScout Administrator** – will ensure that the unit's BeAScout recruiting details are up to date and will respond to queries from interested parents. [BeAScout](#) is an online referral tool that allows families to find units in their area – if interested, they can [inquiry](#) about joining directly online and can even enroll! It's a proven and effective way to recruit families in a connected and socially-distant world.
- **Event Chiefs** – individuals who can help during your in-person recruiting events
- **Unit Commissioner** – your commissioner is there to help identify needed tools and resources, so don't hesitate to ask for guidance
- **District Support** – know who to contact in your District for guidance, recruiting supplies, and training

### Key Resources

- ★ Go here to download the [Adult Recruitment Approach](#) for ideas on how to recruit adult leaders
- ★ Get the thorough rundown on how to use BeAScout [here](#).
- ★ Check out the [Marketing Webinar](#) page for videos on recruiting and other relevant topics

## Step 2: Know and Understand Your Opportunities and Challenges

Once you understand the general process and have a team in place, you'll need to know and understand your current situation.

- **Is your Pack large enough to be fun and function efficiently?**
- **Is your Pack growing or shrinking?** If you're unfamiliar with these numbers, your District Membership team can help you gather them.
- **Do you need help identifying new sources for members?** Again, your District Membership team can help.
- **Are you using a BeAScout pin?** [BeAScout](#) is the easiest way for families to learn about your unit. Make sure your details are current and that you highlight the things that make your unit special.
- **Do you have a Pack that the whole family can join, for example one that accepts both boys and girls?** Cub families will gravitate toward programs that maximize the fun for the whole family while minimizing their time and travel commitments.
- **Do you have a den for every grade?** Kids join to have fun with their friends – make it easy for them to meet new friends by having enough Scouts of their age in the Pack.
- **Does every den have at least six to eight active Scouts?** Remember that dens that are smaller or larger than this don't function as well.
- **Does your pack hold a back-to-school recruiting event?** Recruiting at schools is a tried-and-true method for recruiting families. Back-to-school barbecues at a local park with Scouting activities also work well. Be creative and make the effort fun for the whole Pack, while encouraging your families to bring guests and siblings.
- **Does your pack hold any other recruiting events?** Keep in mind that recruiting happens best in person where Scouts and families can enjoy Scouting directly. Encourage your Scouts to invite their friends to Pinewood Derby, outings, or other fun activities – the Scouts get to earn their Recruiting patch and prospects get to experience the fun of Scouting. Make this a ongoing effort throughout the year.
- **Do you have an effective means of communicating to prospective members, for example a Facebook page?** Interested families will often research units by visiting Facebook – an active page with posts that show fun Pack activities is a very effective way to find new recruits. And the site builds itself – just encourage families to post pictures of fun Pack activities.
- **Do you have a process for peer-to-peer recruiting for your families and Scouts to use?** Research and experience show that the most effective type of marketing is by word-of-mouth from Scouts and parents. Encourage and welcome guests to your activities.
- **Are you taking advantage of Camperships or other financial resources from the Council?** Don't let finances keep a family Scout from Scouting, financial help is available for those who need it.

Once you have this information, set a goal! How many Scouts and families would you like to have in your Pack as of December 15.

### Key Resources

- ★ Review the official [BSA Social Media Guidelines](#)
- ★ Refer to the [Social Media Playbook](#) for effective ways to use various social media channels
- ★ View the short [video](#) on how to create a unit Facebook page
- ★ Refer to the video and slide deck on School Access and Peer-to-Peer Recruiting [here](#)
- ★ Visit the [Scouting Financial Assistance](#) page to learn about the financial support that is available to families
- ★ Review the District and Council calendars ([links](#)) for fun activities that your Pack can participate in

### Step 3: Create Your Recruiting Plan

In-person recruiting events are the most important part of your recruitment plan! There are multiple ways to conduct one but generally speaking sign-up events are:

- Held at the school or institution where the Pack primarily recruits
- Separate from a “normal” Pack meeting; it’s an event focused exclusively on recruiting new families
- Short – most families should be able to attend and exit a sign-up event in under 25 minutes

The primary objective is to engage families in such a way that they join **at the event**. Sign-up events should accomplish the following:

- Inform families about Scouting and your Pack
- Should have fun activities for the Scouts to see Scouting in action
- Have displays of the uniform and Pinewood Derby cars, and set up a tent – help families and Scouts see Scouting in person
- Give families an opportunity to join

Once your sign-up event is complete, remember to touch base with your District Membership team to let them know how many families attended and how many signed up. If you didn’t use online registration, make an appointment with your servicing Unit Resource Coordinator to turn in paper applications and membership fees.

Determine which events you will open to guests throughout the year and devise a fun way to communicate the news to your parents and Scouts. The Recruiting patch and treats or toys are a fun way to motivate your Scouts to invite their friends.

And remember to keep an eye out for events hosted by the District and Council that allow Scouts to bring guests.

#### Key Resources

- ★ Review the official [Sign-up Night Unit Playbook](#) for a detailed breakdown of everything required to host a successful in-person recruiting event
- ★ Check in with your District for yard signs, flyers, peer-to-peer cards, guidance, and training
- ★ Get all of the electronic photos, artwork, flyers, social media bling, and templates that you need [here](#)
- ★ Check out the [Marketing Webinar](#) page for videos on recruiting and other relevant topics
- ★ Explore the Council and District [calendar](#) for fun events for your Pack – the calendars are updated throughout the year so make sure to check them regularly
- ★ A best practice is to use the BeAScout online registration tools to collect the National registration fees at the sign-up event. This way, families know that they’re members of the BSA and are likely to return to future meetings. You can collect prorated Council fees and unit dues at the Pack’s new parent orientation meeting. Visit [here](#) for the full details on how to use BeAScout for recruiting and enrolling new members. Or ask your Unit Commissioner for guidance on training and help available from your District.

### Step 4: Determine What Recruiting Resources You Will Need

The less time you spend re-inventing the wheel, the more you time you can devote to having fun with your Scouts. Scouting has a ton of resources to make your job easier:

**BeAScout** – BeAScout allows prospective families to search for Packs near them. Families can then send a note through the system to the Pack seeking further information. BSA has provided a BeAScout account to each Pack. To help attract attention, make sure your BeAScout listing, or “pin”, is up-to-date and attractive. Your Cubmaster, Committee Chair, and Chartered Organization Representative can delegate access to the pin. Designate a BeAScout Administrator to keep the pin fresh and have at least one person who can monitor requests for information from prospective families to ensure that they are answered promptly. If an inquiry goes unanswered, it will be reassigned to another unit. BeAScout works! Especially now, this is an easy way for families to join your Pack.

**Flyers** – Your District Membership team will contact you in August to obtain information about your sign-up event to include date, time, location, and point of contact, as well as how many flyers you will need. Given four weeks’ notice, the Council will print out enough flyers for each grade at the school which your unit serves and your serving

Executive will deliver them to you two weeks prior to your event. Please plan ahead so you can take advantage of this generous offer!

**Peer-to-Peer Cards** – Personal referrals are the most effective method of building your Pack! Your District Membership team can provide you peer-to-peer cards for each youth member of your unit. These cards help families invite friends and acquaintances to join in the fun. If the school allows it, encourage each youth to write the name of a friend on 2-5 cards. Ask the parents to also write their contact information on the card and then give the cards to the youth to pass out at school the next day.

**Kickstart Your Adventure Cards**—Hand these out to all new families that attend your join event and help them fill in the pertinent information (unit number, den number, district, etc.) Be sure to connect them with a mentor family that night. Finally, check all of the items that the family will need to purchase at the Scout shop and let them know of the 25% off coupon for their entire purchase on the reverse side.

**Social Media “Geofencing”** – Geofencing is the process of serving targeted internet advertising to prospective families in your area. Your Unit Resource Coordinator will use the information provided on the flyer to create geofences around your Pack’s meeting place to provide additional advertising for your sign-up event. In this way, families near the sign-up event will receive ads promoting your event. You can amplify the effect of geofencing by encouraging your Pack families to use their social media platforms (such as Facebook and Instagram) to invite people as well. A video overview and slide deck on geofencing can be found [here](#).

**Marketing** – This year, the Council is committed to increasing the marketing of the Scouting program. If you have positive stories about Scouting’s impact, please share them with the District Membership team so Council can spread the good news through local newspaper and television coverage. And of course, if you have leaders in your unit who are interested in sharing their marketing and public relations expertise, please let your District Membership team know!

**Roundtables and More** – It may seem old school and quaint but gathering virtually and in person is a powerful way to learn new skills and meet other leaders who can help and guide you. Sharing best practices often helps our units to grow and thrive, so plan to have your team members attend roundtables, webcasts, specialized trainings, and other District activities. Develop a relationship with your Unit Commissioner, who can share information between units to ensure that we learn from each other’s’ successes and challenges.

**Recommended Membership Growth Timeline** – Scouting happens year-round, so mark your calendar to stay on schedule and stay stress-free.

January – Determine which dens are no longer full or dens that could be split if more members join

February – Meet with school principals, set date for spring recruitment, ensure that all leaders are signed up for the appropriate training they need, determine summertime plans

March – Hold Spring recruitment event, help transition Webelos to Scouts BSA troops

April – Conduct adult leader/parent surveys to plan for next year

May – Attend Council Program launch to gather materials for next year’s program

(Council Cub camps are in July & Aug)

July – Hold Back-to-the Pack planning session

July 15 – Agree on unit recruiting goal and share with District Membership Chair

July 15 – Send District Membership Chair event information to set up geofence for unit activities and virtual sign-up event

August 31-September 4 – Hold sign-up event (virtually) and register new families

September – Continued recruitment

October – New member engagement event, follow up sign-up events, hold new parent orientation

October – Begin recharter/recommitment process

November – Finalize and submit recharter paperwork

December – Turn in any final applications to meet your unit’s recruitment goals

### **Step 5: Do It!**

There is a story about Robert Baden-Powell, one of the founders of Scouting, spending hours a day playing in the woods, learning birdsongs, and practicing woodcraft skills. A great time for sure – except that he was supposed to

be in school! Baden-Powell grew up to be one of England's greatest heroes, but he never forgot the lessons he learned while exploring those woods. And when he adapted some of his ideas so they could be taught to children, he was determined that his program would be nothing like school. The magic of Scouting is that it isn't school— of course Scouts learn by listening, observing, and even reading, but most importantly they learn by doing. So let's follow their lead – the best laid plan is useless if it's not implemented – let's do it.