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TROOP/CREW/SHIP RECRUITMENT GUIDE

FALL 2018



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA
CRADLE OF LIBERTY COUNCIL

COLBSA.ORG/RECRUIT

Welcome

The goal of the council membership committee, comprised of volunteers and professionals from our districts, is to help units grow in membership, retain members, assist in the Webelos-to-Scout transition, build new units, and foster community relationships.

This is an awesome responsibility to keep Scouting thriving and cannot be accomplished alone. With the help of our chartered organizations, community resources, unit leaders and district/council volunteers, we are on the path to achieve our goals. Youth membership in the Cradle of Liberty Council is growing and will continue to grow as we work together to offer every eligible youth the opportunity to join our great programs.



February 2019 will bring the official start of **Scouts BSA** and an opportunity to serve even more youth through the time-tested programs of Scouting. For more on Family Scouting, please visit colbsa.org/family.

A strong unit program is crucial to inviting and retaining new families into Scouting. Any recruiting strategy needs to work in tandem with a well-planned and funded program. While planning for your upcoming Scouting year may seem daunting or time consuming, it doesn't have to be. And "Being Prepared" ahead of time will ultimately save time and headaches for you and your fellow busy adult leaders who volunteer their time to make a difference.

The planning process for each level of Scouting programs differs slightly based on who's involved and their level of involvement, but consists of the following basic steps:

1. Decide what activities are going to happen.
2. Build a budget based on what those activities are going to cost and other associated costs of running a Scout unit (national registration fees, insurance fees, etc.).
3. Develop a fundraising plan to offset the cost to families and determine a per-Scout fundraising goal.
4. Communicate the plan with your families (and prospective families, too.)

Please use this membership guide as a resource to help your unit plan and achieve its membership objectives. It's a map to Scouting success and is sure to lead you on the right path.

colbsa.org/recruit | membership@colbsa.org

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Important Questions to Ask

Your answers can lead to your unit's success!

- *Does our unit have a planned program and calendar for the upcoming 6-12 months?*
- *Does our unit have an information/fact sheet?*
- *What does our unit have planned for spring and fall recruiting?*
- *Where do our members come from?*
- *Where do we plan to recruit?*
- *How do we plan to recruit?*
- *Who is helping our unit recruit?*
- *Where can our unit look for help?*
- *How many new members do we need?*
- *Who has contacted our dropped Scouts?*
- *What is our unit membership plan?*
- *Who is our unit membership chair?*

Who Can Help?

District Executive, Senior District Executive, or District Director:

This is your Scouting professional who, along with your district membership chair and commissioners, can help identify the resources and know-how to help your unit be successful. They help increase the district's membership, financial resources, and programs. They work with volunteer committees and community leaders to identify, recruit, train, guide and inspire them to become involved in youth programs.

District Membership Chair:

This volunteer focuses on membership growth and retention for all units in your district. They set membership goals, cultivate interest of Scouting within the district and help units with membership opportunities. Please visit colbsa.org/recruit for contact information.

Unit and District Commissioners:

These leaders help Scouting units succeed. They coach and help maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America. They support the membership process through the Journey to Excellence program (scouting.org/jte) and timely charter renewal.

Unit Alumni:

What better place to look than within your own ranks? Alumni from your unit know the benefits of Scouting and can be a great supporter to help recruit, serve as leaders and get adults and youth involved.

Chartered Organization:

Your chartered organization already knows the value of Scouting. They can be a great resource to help you get the word out and recruit youth and adults.

Unit New Member Coordinator

Sustaining strong membership in a unit depends not only on having new members join the unit, but also on engaging youth and their families in the unit experiences so that **they feel welcomed and want to stay**. The role of the *New Member Coordinator* is to ensure that both keys to success take place.



The New Member Coordinator (NMC) position has been designed to:

- Be a FUN and engaging position.
- Form relationships with new members and their families.
- Use a team approach by encouraging more than one NMC in a unit, allowing them to tailor their work to individual interests/expertise, as well as to recognize the particular needs of the unit.
- Fit every type of unit, every age level and every program.
- Be recruited and supported by key unit leadership.
- Be provided with training both online and face to face.
- Be mentored by the district membership chair and become part of the district membership team.
- Be visible and easily identifiable at unit gatherings by their Welcoming smiles and their BSA “Welcome” logo that they display and wear on an activity shirt, on a hat or vest or in some cases, a pin on a field uniform.

Please visit scouting.org/nmc for more information and resources.

Is Your Unit on the Map?

BeAScout.org is THE tool for families to find your Scouting unit and register online, so it’s critical to make sure your unit’s BeAScout pin is accurate. Your unit should also enable online registration if it hasn’t already (see the next section for details).

Who Can Update Your Unit’s BeAScout Pin?

Your unit’s “key-3:”

- Unit Leader (Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Crew Advisor, or Skipper)
- Unit Committee Chair
- Unit Chartered Organization Representative

How Do They Update Your Unit’s BeAScout Information?

A member of your unit’s key-3 should login to their account at my.scouting.org. There are links to help if you have forgotten your username or password. Step-by-step directions and screenshots are available at colbsa.org/recruit.



Online Registrations

The Boy Scouts of America offers an online application process for youth that can be completed from start to finish without a single piece of paper changing hands. (Nationally, this system can be used to register adults as well, but due to the Pennsylvania Child Protective Services Law [colbsa.org/palaw], our council does not currently use online registration for adult leaders.)

This is a giant leap forward in allowing prospective families to register in a way that's convenient for them, and it creates a more efficient and user-friendly registration experience for units, districts, and councils.

In order to enable online registration for youth, a member of your unit's key-3 needs to complete the items on the checklist below. Read-only access can also be granted to the registration inquiry or unit membership chair roles. To have the appropriate access, your role, council name, and a valid email address must be listed correctly in your my.scouting.org profile.

- ❑ Review the online registration overview at scouting.org/onlineregistration (you can also get to this information and download the *Online Registration Unit Guidebook* at colbsa.org/recruit).
- ❑ If you don't already have a login account, create one at my.scouting.org.
- ❑ Add myscoutingtools@scouting.org to email's safe senders list.
- ❑ Update your my.Scouting Tools profile (page 4 of the *Online Registration Unit Guidebook*) and do the following:
 1. Ensure the proper unit(s) is listed in your profile. If not, check with your unit to ensure your registration paperwork has been processed. You may also call your district professional or the council support team for assistance at 610-688-6900.
 2. Ensure your "positions" are listed correctly for each position you hold within Scouting. If not, check with your unit or contact the council for assistance.
 3. Verify that your email address is listed correctly. If not, please make the appropriate edits.
- ❑ Ensure the "Contact Us" info is correct in your unit's pin in the BeAScout system. To edit pin information, please follow the instructions on page 5 of the *Online Registration Unit Guidebook*.

Once online registration is active for your unit, members of the unit key-3 should:

- ❑ Check their emails for a daily summary of actions to take. If you receive an email it means a lead or applicant on your dashboard needs a response.
- ❑ Take action within 24 hours of receiving new leads or new applications. Keep in mind that families who are excited about joining are waiting for your response.

Resources to Support Your Recruitment

The Cradle of Liberty Council provides its units with promotional materials free-of-charge to support recruitment efforts. Contact your district membership chair or professional and provide your unit's recruitment event information (date, time, location, contact name/phone/email) and we'll customize and print fliers for distribution in school take-home packets and at school talks, where allowed. Your unit may also post fliers or posters in other locations where you've secured permission. Your unit may also submit its recruitment event information at colbsa.org/recruit (please allow at least five days for production). You may also use the online Marketing Toolkit to customize and order unit recruitment materials.

Materials will be available for units at the **Council-Wide Roundtable on Saturday, August 25, 2018**. If a representative from your unit can't make it that day, contact your district membership chair or professional, or order materials through the Marketing Toolkit.

Items Available:

- Fliers (8.5x11")
- Posters (11x17")
- Postcards
- Business Cards
- Book Marks
- Interest Cards
- Envelopes
- Sign-in Sheets
- Fold-up Flyers
- Yard Signs
- Mini *Boys' Life*
- Youth Applications
- Adult Applications



Other Resources

- Join: BeAScout.org
- Council Membership Landing Page: colbsa.org/recruit
- BSA Marketing & Membership Hub: scoutingwire.org/marketing
- Unit Program Planning: colbsa.org/plan

Marketing Toolkit

The Cradle of Liberty Council and our generous supporters at Print for Good™ have developed the Marketing Toolkit to help your unit create printed recruitment materials such as fliers, postcards, or business cards. You'll need to create an account by visiting colbsa.org/recruit and selecting "Council Marketing Toolkit Sign-Up." Once in the workplace, you will be able to browse materials by program, choose from preexisting designs, and then customize for your unit and event. Once you are satisfied with your product submit it for approval and the Cradle of Liberty staff will produce it for you.

Community Event Opportunities

Many units have experienced success in spreading the word about Scouting and signing-up new Scouts by having a presence at community events, many of which are free or low-cost. Examples include:

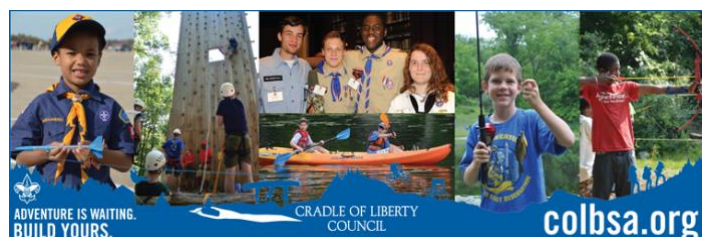
- School Parent Info/Back-to-School Nights
- PTO/PTA/Home & School Assoc. Events
- Parades
- Township Days
- Block Parties
- First Fridays
- National Nights Out
- Festivals
- Bike Rodeos
- Fire Safety Expos
- Events offered by other community organizations
- Events offered by your unit's chartered organization

Make a list of the dates for upcoming events in your neighborhood or community and see which events members of your unit are available to attend. Set-up a table and have pictures of your Scouts participating in fun activities. Plan some hands-on activities to help bring families to your display and distribute give-away items to help engage potential new members. Don't forget to collect contact information from parents or sign-up new Scouts right on the spot!

The Cradle of Liberty Council also offers Scouting-branded materials for your unit to reserve for community events (subject to availability) including:

- **6' x 2' Banners**
- **6' Teardrop Banners**
- **Table Covers (suitable for 6' or 8' tables)**
- **10' x 10' Pop-Up Tents**

Visit colbsa.org/recruit to check availability and reserve these items.



Conducting A Membership Inventory

(To be conducted sixty days prior to the charter renewal date as well as during the month of December)

Purpose:

1. Provides a roll call in which each unit member is contacted to determine quality of program received, to follow up on absent and inactive members, and to see if everyone is registered.
2. Invites each member to continue the program for another year and thus increases tenure of members. The membership inventory is a part of the unit's charter renewal and will assist the unit in building strength with a quality program. It should be conducted sixty days prior to the unit's charter review meeting. Membership inventory is also held again in December to be sure all members are registered by year end.

Instructions:

1. Select a unit adult to lead the inventory.
2. Invite your commissioner to assist.
3. Using the member roster from My.Scouting, the commissioner and unit adults conduct an inventory of youth and adults who are still active.
4. All inactive members are listed and assigned to various persons who will visit them or contact them to attempt to reactivate them. Be sure to brief the visitors/callers on what to say when they make their calls.
5. Agree on a plan to recruit new youth and adults so the unit can reregister with no loss in membership. One of the criteria for the Journey to Excellence Unit Award is to renew the unit's charter on time.
6. Now make every effort to recruit additional youth and adults.
7. Be sure to register any youth who are participating but are not yet registered.
 - If an individual is interested in being a leader, checkmark the "Interested in Helping" column on the Parent Attendance Sheet. This will ensure they will begin to receive essential resources.
 - Turn in the new youth applications and fees to the district volunteer. Every application has multiple copies, so your unit will be able to keep a copy for your records.
 - **Make sure that someone (Scoutmaster, advisor, committee chair, etc.) calls the district professional that night to report how many youth were recruited.**

Recruiting Event Planning Form

Plan your work before you work your plan!

Name of Event: _____

Type of Event: _____

Event Location Name: _____

Event Location Address: _____

Date: _____ Start Time: _____ End Time: _____

Who's responsible for planning: _____

Goals:

Event Details:

Was this event successful? _____

What would we do differently next time?

Troop Recruiting Calendar

A year-round guide to help your troop successfully recruit

August

- Get contact information about Webelos Scouts
- Plan a joint Scout troop/Webelos den camping trip for October
- Share upcoming events with Webelos den
- Select a den chief for each Webelos den

September

- Send a letter of introduction from the troop to all Webelos Scouts
- Put Webelos Scouts on the troop mailing list
- Continue planning the joint camping trip for October
- Announce a recruitment drive in the troop
- Ask Scouts to invite their non-Scout friends to the next troop meeting

October

- Conduct the joint camping trip with the Webelos den
- Recognize those who have recruited a new Scout

November

- Attend a Webelos den meeting to teach them how the Scout troop works
- Continue to recognize top recruiters

December

- Set a date for Webelos and their parents to visit a troop meeting in January
- End the recruitment drive and honor the new Scouts and top recruiters
- Conduct membership inventory before turning in charter

January

- Host Webelos and their parents at a troop meeting
- Plan to attend Blue and Gold banquets
- Attend a meeting of first-year Webelos Scouts to introduce them to Scouts

February

- Finalize list of boys crossing over into the troop
- Follow-up on boys who have not yet decided to crossover
- Recruit parents of new Scouts to become troop leaders
- Set a date and plan a troop open house for March

March

- Invite interested youth to the troop open house
- Hold the troop open house to welcome potential Scouts and their parents
- Plan a troop activity to get new Scouts involved with the troop shortly after they join

April

- Conduct a troop activity for the new Scouts

May

- Work closely with new Scouts and parents during their transition to the troop, ensuring their needs are met and that their move has been natural and fun
- Work on rank advancement with new Scouts

June

- Ensure that all new Scouts attend summer camp
- Discuss membership in your unit planning meeting

July

- Work closely with new Scouts and parents during their transition to the Scout troop, ensuring their needs are met and that their move has been natural and fun
- Work on rank advancement with new Scouts
- Participate in a community event

Unit Membership Worksheet

Unit #: _____

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| STEP 1: Current number of Scouts on your official roster | | |
| STEP 2: Number of Scouts on your roster who aged out | | |
| STEP 3: Number of Scouts who dropped out of your unit or are inactive – do not intend to recharter | | |
| STEP 4: Number of Scouts who moved away or plan on transferring to another unit | | |
| STEP 5: Add lines 2 through 4 and enter that value here → | | - |
| STEP 6: Subtract line 5 from line 1; this is your current “ACTIVE” membership | | |

What's Next?

| | |
|--|---|
| STEP 1: Enter the number of Scouts on your previous end of year roster | |
| STEP 2: Multiply line 1 by 1.1; this is your base growth goal | |
| STEP 3: Bring over your “active” roster total from the census worksheet above | - |
| STEP 4: HOW MANY TO RECRUIT TO MAKE BASE GROWTH GOAL Subtract line 3 from line 2 | |

SET A GOAL!!!

If the last line above is a negative number, then you're already growing! Time to think big and consider how many additional youth you want to recruit.

Other Goal Setting Ideas to Consider:

How many by grade – do you have patrols that are un-even or maybe too big and need to split – if only there were a couple more Scouts? Work that into your goal.

Unit Membership Plan

Unit #: _____

Our Unit Membership Point of Contact is: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

We Currently Recruit From

Our Goal is to Recruit _____ New Youth into Our Unit

This Goal Allows Us to Grow By _____%

To Meet This Goal, We Will Have the Following Recruiting Events:

| Event Date | Description | Location |
|------------|-------------|----------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

We Also Plan on Utilizing the Following Contact Methods to Reach Our Goal:

Troop Recruiting Tips

You should constantly recruit older Scouts!!!

Recruiting is a 12-month opportunity. If you think you're only going to recruit in the fall or at crossover, you are missing a great opportunity. You should remember that every time your Troop holds an event, you should make it a bring-a-friend event.

A Scout troop grows in two different ways:

1. Webelos-to-Scout Transition

- A year-round process where Webelos den leaders and troop leaders help guide boys to selecting the best Troop for their long-term participation. Boys should visit multiple Troops when possible. Over 90% of Boy Scouts were Cub Scouts. Den chiefs can be helpful here!
- Providing opportunities for Webelos dens to camp and participate with the troop is always great, but troops should also go to the Webelos den to help them with program.
- Following a 5th-8th grade rally showcasing the fun and adventure of Scouting, troop leaders need to call families to provide a personal invitation to attend a Troop Open House.

2. Adding new boys to your troop. Remember, new boys can be added any time.

A Scout troop should have a recruiting plan to actively recruit all year. Here are some tips to help get your troop started:

- Try peer-to-peer recruiting
- Tap into other youth organizations, such as church youth groups
- Find recruiting tools online and through your council
- Make sure parents get involved. Parents have contact with other adults who have kids that are the same age as their own children are, so it makes sense for them to approach those adults and invite them to a meeting or campout.
- Visiting and aiding Cub Scout packs to build a relationship
- School visits
- Use your First Class requirement in fun and innovate ways
- Create a social media campaign
- Hosting a Troop Open House
- Community outreach
- Newspaper articles
- Community events

Troop Open House

The Scout 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 five steps is vital to the event's success:

1. Present a school rally to fifth- and sixth-graders.
2. Mail the parents of interested youth a personal invitation to the troop open house.
3. Follow the invitation with a telephone call to the parents.
4. Host the troop open house for youth and their parents.
5. Organize a troop or district activity to involve new Scouts right away.

Youth join Scouting for the fun and outdoor adventure. Parents want them to join for completely different reasons—character building and leadership training. Following this plan for conducting a troop open house will help you address the wants and needs of both youth and their parents. Use the Troop Open House Planning Sheet in this brochure to track your progress.

Present the School Rally

1. The Boy Scouts of America recommends that recruitment efforts be concentrated on fifth- and sixth-graders in early spring, as they approach Scout age. Several resources can be used to spark their interest, including introducing youth to Scouting with an interactive presentation.
2. 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 boys.
3. 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.
4. Following the introductory presentation, give each youth a High-Adventure Survey, No. 34241. Ask them to check the high-adventure experiences that interest them. Explain that Scout troops do the kinds of activities listed on the survey.
5. While the youth are working on their surveys, announce that you would like to invite them to join a Scout troop. Explain that they will receive an invitation to join a Scout troop in their community 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.
6. 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.

Invitation and Follow-Up

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 letter 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. Mail the letter as soon as possible after the survey is completed; schedule the troop open house for the week after the family receives the invitation letter.

Model your letter after the following sample:

Troop Open House

Dear parent:

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

Recently, your son indicated his desire to try his hand at such high-adventure activities as backpacking, cycling, camping, swimming, canoeing, rock climbing, and horseback riding. Our Scout troop will participate in these activities and even more in the coming year, and we would like to invite him to join the Boy Scouts of 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 almost a century, our programs have instilled in young men 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 letter. 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 letter? 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

1. The troop open house can be conducted as a districtwide event for many 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.
2. 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:
 - a. 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.
 - b. Prepare a display of troop activities, photos, and awards that the troop has earned.
 - c. Assign greeters to be at the door to welcome guests as they arrive. Be sure to have adequate seating.
 - d. Have a printed agenda and a copy of the troop's calendar at each seat.
 - e. Make assignments for each part on the agenda well in advance. The senior patrol leader should be the emcee of the meeting.
 - f. Prepare refreshments for your guests if you desire.
 - g. The troop open house should follow an agenda, such as the one in this brochure, to help guests gather a broad range of Scouting information. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 Troop Open House Agenda

Assign To:

- 1 Preopening
— Conduct a simple action game for early arrivals. _____
- 2 Opening
— Hold the flag ceremony. _____
— Welcome the guests. _____
- 3 Activity Time
A. Skill time for youth
— Hot spark
— Knot relay
— Tent pitching
B. 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. _____
- 4 Joining Process
— Youth and parents complete applications to join Scouting. _____
— Announce information about the next troop meeting. _____
- 5 Closing
— Scoutmaster's Minute _____
— Closing ceremony _____
- 6 Refreshments (optional) _____

Venturing & Sea Scouting Year-Round Recruitment Calendar

January

- Host an event for crew/ship alumni who may be visiting from college

February

- Venturing officers' association meeting

March

- Council activity—Venturing age specific

April

- Venturing officers' association – Bonfire/elections
- VOA Weekend
- Remind crews you need the name and contact information for their open house chairman and Advisor.

May

- VOA Training Weekend
- Plan the upcoming program year
- Identify the open house chairman and Advisor and have them begin planning

June

- Semiannual crew health review
- Basic training for Advisors
- VOA BBQ

July

- Venturing officers' association meeting
- Newly trained and motivated open house chairman recruits and trains (and motivates) the crew open house committee and sets the date for the first crew open house planning meeting.

August

- Crew plans an open house that will excite potential members

September

- Crew plans an open house that will excite potential members.
- Open house chair holds any needed committee meetings and prepares the crew for open house.

October

- Venturing officers' association meeting
- Basic training for Advisors
- Open house chair holds any needed committee meetings and prepares the for open house.
- The open house committee and officers conduct debrief sessions on open house. They also have a plan to ensure new members get involved.

November

- Venturing officers' association meeting
- Recharter

December

- Venturing officers' association meeting
- Semiannual crew health review
- ILSC Training (VOA)

Crew & Ship School Based Recruiting

Some crews and ships have an opportunity to market and recruit in middle schools, high schools, private high schools, community colleges, universities, and other schools. Here are some helpful hints for school-based recruiting:

- Make sure the school leadership (principal, district superintendent, president, etc.) understand what Venturing/Sea Scouting is and what it offers their teens and young adults.
- Build a relationship with that leadership. Let them know about the successes of existing crews—such as a teen earning the Silver/Quartermaster Award, doing a valuable service project in the community, mentoring a boys and girls club, teaching, receiving a scholarship, and learning a new skill (such as becoming a trainer for the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency to educate others about drug-free sports as part of the Quest Award or going on a challenging trip). School leaders like to hear successes related to their students. Draw a connection between that success and Scouting. Do this regularly and consistently. It works. Pictures work well, too.
- Demonstrate Venturing and Sea Scouting’s value and opportunities by having crews/ships do demonstrations or projects for schools. For example, a crew could teach several American Red Cross courses at a school or demonstrate a unique sport they learned in Quest, such as fencing. A ship could offer a basic water or boating safety course to students.
- Invite school leaders to activities so they can see their students in action.
- Have Venturers/Sea Scouts present testimonials you can share with school leaders. Once you have approached a school and prepared the way, you can ask for the following:
- Print a flier with information that students can pick up at the office, library, cafeteria, or other location.
- Have Venturers/Sea Scouts set up a recruiting table in the cafeteria or other location or on club days.
- Have a crew/ship do the flag ceremony at a school sporting event.
- Start a crew/ship as a school club.
- Start a crew/ship in junior ROTC classes, sports trainers group, etc.
- Put up posters announcing open houses.

Successful Crew & Ship Open House

The primary way for Crews and Ships to recruit is through open houses, so planning and running quality events is one of the most important aspects! Here is a list of things you need to know and do before you can prepare your open house:

- Know why we do open houses.
- Know what a great open house looks like.
- Be motivated and enthusiastic about open houses yourself.
- Believe that teens can successfully run great open houses.
- Start planning early.
- Have all the necessary support materials.
- Be able to train and motivate everyone to achieve success.
- Follow through.

- Recognize your members for their successes.
- Build on one year's experience to improve for the next year.

Why Hold an Open House?

- It can be the annual crew program kickoff for a new year, rejuvenating existing members and therefore keeping them involved for another year.
- It provides an opportunity for leadership within a crew if youth run the event.
- It provides a review of the crew's past program and hints of future programs so crew members feel good about themselves and their crew. It can give Venturers a new perspective on their involvement in Venturing.
- Youth recruiting other youth is the most successful method of growing membership.
- Crews take ownership of their recruiting; friends recruit friends.

Keys to a Successful Open House

- Plan early (you start in April or May; youth start in June or July) and make your planning high quality.
- The open house should be led and run by youth (emphasize their responsibility for success).
- Involve adults who want to help youth be successful rather than run it themselves.
- Write a good invitation-to-join letter from the crew.
- Provide good, detailed directions to the open house so attendees won't get lost or discouraged from attending.
- Have friendly and welcoming faces at every turn. Eliminate the fear factor. Place plenty of welcoming and directional signs.
- Make potential members believe they made the right decision to attend the meeting.
- Provide hands-on activities instead of just a lot of talking (for example: 30 minutes of activity and fellowship, 20 minutes of talking, and 10 minutes to register). The Advisor/Skipper should limit his/her talking, as well.
- Plan a getting-oriented-to-our-crew/ship weekend or activity right away.
- Make parents, families, and friends feel welcome.
- Send reminders to members to ask their friends to attend (this is where most new members should come from).
- Get everyone involved in the open house.
- Keep it short: no more than one hour.
- Show pictures and videos of activities.
- Give a folder to new members that includes a calendar, application, pen, and anything else of interest. Make it easy for them to join.
- Recognize open house chairs for their successes by giving them movie tickets, gift certificates, products, etc. Send thank-you letters.
- Create an atmosphere in which youth can't wait to do the next open house.
- Work to use social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Snap Chat and YouTube as part of the communication promotion process.

Sample Crew & Ship Open House Agenda

- 1. Before the Meeting** The open house committee arrives at least one hour before the open house. All other members arrive at least half an hour before the open house. All hands-on activities are set up at least half an hour before the open house. All equipment such as a TV/projector, welcome kit, name badges, sign-in roster, registration table, etc., are set up at least half an hour before the open house.
- 2. Greeting** Have signs in the parking lot directing guests to the entrance. Have greeters outside the entrance and just inside the entrance. Have greeters at all turns and at the door to where your open house is held. Once guests are inside, all crew members are greeters.
- 3. Hands-On Activity/Icebreaker**
- 4. Welcome** The youth leader welcomes everyone and introduces officers and Advisors.
- 5. What Is Venturing and the Purpose of a Crew? What is Sea Scouting and the Purpose of a Ship?** Consider creative ways to have your officers and/or members explain what Venturing/Sea Scouting is and what a crew/ship does. Tell about program planning, officers, leadership opportunities, the youth/adult relationship, etc.
- 6. About Our Crew/Ship** Share, in a creative way, what you think your crew is and some of the activities your crew has done. This could be accomplished with slides or a video. Share your future plans for trips, activities, and your superactivity.
- 7. Questions and Answers** Give potential members and their parents an opportunity to ask questions.
- 8. Advisor's Comments** (Short) The Advisor/Skipper wraps up any area not properly addressed earlier and talks about adult supervision and adults' roles. He or she invites parents to talk further during the registration process.
- 9. Invitation to Join** Invite visitors to join. Explain registration costs, insurance, the code of conduct, policies and bylaws, and other pertinent crew information. Explain line by line how to complete the registration form. Tell new members to turn in registration forms and fees to the secretary at the registration table during the hands-on activities.
- 10. Hands-On Activities Again and Registration Process** This is another opportunity for potential members to experience a little of what you do. At the same time, they can register at the registration table.
- 11. Refreshments** Refreshments are optional, but often popular. They could be pizza, ice cream, cookies, soft drinks, etc. Have them at the same time as the hands-on activities or whenever else you want.
- 12. Cleanup Committee** This group of youth and adults reviews the event after it occurs and ensures that every youth that attended is followed up with, to welcome them to the group, see if they have any questions, and encourage them to register if they have not done so.

Venturing Officer's Association (VOA)

The Cradle of Liberty Council Venturing Officer's Association exists as a collaboration of all Venturing Crews in the council, and can be a helpful resource to both crews and ships, both in program as well as recruiting.

The VOA meets the first Tuesday of every month. Sharing trip and recruiting ideas, making friends, and planning the VOA weekend are just a few of the activities youth can participate in! Venturing Adults are welcome to attend as well because there is an advisor meeting happening at the same time.

Visit the website for the latest information on the upcoming year!

officers@colvoa.org www.colvoa.org Facebook & Twitter: @COLVOA

Free Recruiter Strip



Recognize currently registered Scouts who recruit a friend(s) with a Recruiter Strip for their uniforms. Include any Scouts who recruited a new Scout since July 1, 2018. Submit names of recruiters and the Scouts who were recruited

through the online form at colbsa.org/recruit and we'll get you the patches free of charge! Must submit by **November 30, 2018** in order to receive patches. Patches will be mailed to unit leader of record in December. Only registered Cradle of Liberty Council youth are eligible to receive a patch.

Notes