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# Connecticut Yankee Council Scouts BSA Recruitment Guide

**2023 Scouting Year**



*Serving the Scouting Communities in Southwest Connecticut*

# Welcome

Thank you for volunteering as part of your Scouts BSA Troop. The work you do in your troop will have a lasting impact on the lives of the scouts in your troop. They will learn skills that they will take with them throughout the rest of their life.

We have put together this guide to aid you in building a recruitment program that will help you grow your unit. We have surveyed the top recruiting units within our council to allow for their expertise to be used within your unit.

Recruitment is one of the most important parts of a unit's program. Without an effective recruitment program your unit membership will decrease over time and could potentially threaten your unit's existence. However, with a robust recruitment program will keep your unit healthy and growing and will establish a great jumping off point for the rest of your units' program. Your unit should focus on recruiting three distinct groups: Cub Scout Cross overs, Youth not currently in Scouting and Adult Leaders. This guide will give you the tools you need to recruit all three groups.

This guide covers all the steps you will need to take to have a successful recruitment program. It is our hope that this document will provide you with great ideas and resources that are available to you that you may not have known about. If you still have any questions or recommendations for additions to this document, we would like to hear from you. Our goal is to make the recruitment process and easy and effective as possible

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# Recruiting Essentials

We know as a Scout leader your time is valuable. While we go into detail on everything in recruitment, we know that you might not have the time to dive deep on all these topics, we wanted to summarize the most important points for you.

1. Although crossovers will likely continue to be your best source of new scouts, it is vital that every Scouts BSA unit develop their own recruitment program to bring new youth into Scouting. The best way to do this is by planning a highly compelling and fun Bring a Friend event. This should be a special event that is hands-on, exciting, and fast-paced like what you would do when you host potential Webelos crossovers.
2. Parent to Parent recruitment is another key way to get new Scouts. The parents of your Scouts are some of the biggest advocates of our program. Having your parents talk up our program to their parent friends is a recipe to bring in new scouts.
3. After Bring a Friend and word of mouth marketing from your parents, your next most effective recruitment method is to target youth in 5th-8th grade. The best means of marketing is through school district email distributions and flyers at school, but it is also advisable to use social media posts, yard signs, articles in local papers, etc. Again, organize a compelling activity and invite them to try out Scouting.
4. Don't forget to recruit adults. Failing to recruit adults can make it difficult for you to run a great program. There are several strategies you can use to get more adults help depending on your situation such as incrementally asking someone to do a little bit more.
5. In order to get Scouts to want to come to your troop, you need to have a great crossover experience for them. Make your troop a welcoming place for the Cub Scouts. Invite the Cub Scouts to several activities such as an open house, outdoor activity, campout, or camporee. You should also consider having your troop have a presence in the pack, such as having den chiefs or assisting with pack meetings or activities. This will give the Cub Scouts a familiarity with your unit and make them more likely to join your unit.

# Recruiting Youth

## *Recruiting Cub Scouts*

A robust Cub Scout recruiting program is the mainstay of many Troops recruitment efforts. We will detail some of the programs you could consider in recruiting Cub Scouts in the coming sections, but your approach should be holistic.

Making your troop an integral part of the Cub Scout Pack is a great way to get the Cub Scouts familiar with your unit and make them more likely to cross over to your unit. You can do this in several ways. The most effective of these is having den chiefs. This will have the Cub Scouts working directly with your Scouts on a weekly basis and will begin to form a bond with your scouts. You might also consider other ways to make yourself part of the Pack such as helping out at pack meetings or events such as the Pinewood Derby.

## *Recruiting New Scouts*

Recruiting new Scouts is an area that troops often neglect but is an important tool in order to keep a troop healthy. Reaching these youth are not as easy as recruiting Cub Scouts. You will need to do much more marketing to this group, and guides for doing this are outline in the coming sections. Your focus for this group should be on youth from 5<sup>th</sup> grade through 8<sup>th</sup> grade, as this is the group you will are most likely to get to join your unit.



# Effective Recruitment Events

The first step in planning out your recruitment is determining what events you would like to have. This is one of the most important steps because having fun and engaging recruitment activities is the best way to ensure that you get new kids excited about the scouting program.

After surveying the top recruiting units in the council, we have compiled a list of recruitment activities that they have found to be effective in recent year. Having some fun recruitment activities is a sure-fire way to get youth to want to join your troop. Ideally you would have a few different recruitment events during your recruitment season so that those who are on the fence will have more of an opportunity to learn how much fun scouting can be.

## *Open House*

An open house is a great way to get youth interested in joining your unit. This would be setup like a regular meeting but would focus on having the potential new recruits being engaged in learning scout skills and fun activities. Many units have found that setting up different stations that scouts can go to at their own pace. Some stations you might consider would be knot tying, camp cooking, fire building, and scout games.

## *Camporee*

District hold camporees at least once a year, and many encourage troops to invite arrow of light scouts to join in with the troop. The arrow of light scouts are allowed to compete with the patrols. This gives them a great chance to get to experience a wide variety of activities and work as a team alongside the members of your troop.

## *Outdoor Event*

Youth interested in scouting are interested in being in the outdoors. There are a multitude of things that you can do with your potential new recruits including: climbing, fishing, hiking, and BMX biking. Just make sure that whatever you do that it is something that will match the skills of the new recruits or have scouts available to work with the new recruits.





## Campouts

Camping is the most important part of the Scouts BSA program, so why not invite a webelos or arrow of light den to attend campout with your unit? This will give them as close to the full scouts BSA experience as you can. Just make sure that whatever you do on this campout is appropriate for the cub scouts. A listing of activities allowed can be found at <https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-685.pdf>



# Marketing

Marketing can make or break your recruitment event. Without a proper marketing plan, you should not expect to get a high volume of new scouts at your recruitment events. To reach a family, you will need to reach out to them multiple times, 3-5 times on average. Since so many touch points are needed to reach a family, you will need to employ a variety of strategies to reach these families targeting both the youth and their parents. The council offers a lot of free recourses for you in your marketing efforts. Below are some of the top ways that your unit can market its recruitment events.

## BeAScout.org

BeAScout.org is the national database where anyone interested in scouting can go to find out information about all the units in the area. This site includes information about your meeting location, Unit leader name and contact information, unit website and genders the unit serves. The information that is displayed for your unit site can be edited by a key three member (Scoutmaster, Committee Chair and Charter Organization Representative). This information can be edited through their account at my.scouting.org under the organization manger tool under your unit.

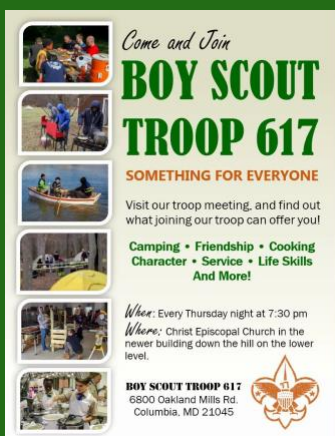


## Unit Website

If your unit has a website, it can be a great marketing tool for your unit. By including pictures of some of the fun activities your unit does, a calendar of upcoming events, and information about where and when you meet, you can target those families who are curious about the scouting program.

## Flyers

Flyers are possibly the most effective marketing you can do. While a paper flyer is the most effective as a kids will get excited about receiving a well-designed flyer, a digital flyer can be effective as well. Ideally you can partner with your local school to have flyers sent home in students backpacks, but having the school email out a digital flyer is a good alternative. If your school does not allow either of these, then you might talk with local community centers and churches to distribute flyers as well. The BSA has a lot of high-quality photos and pre-built flyers for you to use at the brand center, <https://scouting.webdamdb.com/bp/#/assets>. The council will also design flyers for your recruitment event and/or print flyers for you in any quantity you need.





## Social Media

Social media has quickly become a great tool to promote your unit. Your unit can use social media tools such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Tick Tok can all be great ways to get the message of your recruitment event out.

Facebook offers you the best opportunity for social media marketing. Your unit can set up a Facebook page that people can discover on their own. You can also make an event on your unit's page that will allow people to find out about your event more easily. For even more exposure you can boost your event for just a few dollars. This will allow you to pick a target location (centered around your recruitment event) and a demographic (parents of scouts BSA aged children). An added way to get even more exposure is to work with the council to make them a co-host, if this is done the council will pay to boost your event as well.

Additionally, many schools have parent groups, post information about your event on these groups as they are all your target audience. Most towns also have Mom, Dad and community groups that are also good options to post about your recruitment events.

Facebook is a great platform for adult leaders to advertise to parents. Units should poll their youth members to see which social media platforms they use regularly. The adults and youth can then discuss as a unit if those platforms could possibly be used for youth members to advertise to other youth (while maintaining YPT guidelines and having 2 adults moderating the communications put out by the youth).

## Yard Signs

Yard signs are a good way to get some passive exposure. The best place to put them are at schools, ideally right next to the parent pickup and drop off area as there will likely be parents sitting idly to look at your sign. However, you might also consider placing them at busy intersections in your town as well.

These signs can be picked up free of charge from the council office. The space for event details is limited, so be brief while making sure the text is big enough to be read from a car. You might also consider adding a QR code to the sign to allow people to use their phones camera app to go to a website for more information, just make sure you tape over the code to keep it waterproof. QR codes can be made free of charge at sites such as <https://www.qr-code-generator.com>







## *Peer to Peer*

Having your Scouts invite their friends to an event is a great way since the new recruits will already have heard how great Scouts BSA is from their friends. Encourage your scouts to all invite at least one friend to the recruitment events. As an incentive scout's who recruit new scouts will earn a recruiter patch and become eligible to attend the council's Extreme Scouting event in June. This event will give them the opportunity to take part in a lot of fun activities such as archery, shooting sports, climbing, geocaching, and disc golf.

## *Parent to Parent*

You also have a built-in recruitment network in the parents of your scouts. If your parents are bought into your program, they can be cheerleaders to other families. Encourage your parents to talk about the benefits of the scouting program to their friends.

## *Community Visibility*

Make your unit visible in your community. This could be helping at a community event, service projects, parades or even fundraising. When you are out in your community make sure that the scouts and leaders are in their uniforms and should have an information card about your unit that you can hand out to the public.

# Troop Introduction Packet

You should also consider putting together a Troop Introduction packet to hand out to families at recruitment events. This packet would be full of all the information they would need to know about. Some of the things that you might want to include are Troop structure (Troop, Patrols, Committee), meeting times and locations, Dues, Adult leaders (emphasis how all leaders are trained), Rank progression, Uniform Requirements, Adult Participation, Troop Activities, Fundraisers, Troop Calendar.

# Structure of an Open House

Your open house should be structured like a troop meeting. The key is to keep the kids engaged the entire time. This will keep their excitement level high and give you a higher chance of signing them up for your troop. Below are the different stages of the meeting that you should consider for your open house.

## *Sign In*

When new families enter your event, they should be greeted by your scouts and volunteers. A warm welcome will go a long way to build a great first impression on a family. They should be directed to the table where they should sign in. It is recommended that you do a digital sign in sheet, a handwritten one can be hard to read making it hard to reach out to families. This can easily be done for free. Just setup a google form with all the fields you need. Turn the link into a QR Code and have families use their phones to fill out the sign-up sheet.

Once they finish signing in give the families an information packet. This should include your troop introduction packet, an application, and flyers for upcoming troop events. We suggest putting this all together on a clipboard with a pen. This both makes it easier to hand out and allows families to fill out applications throughout the event so they can be turned in at the end of the night. You might also consider a handout to the new youth to pique their interest, old event patches are great for this.

## *Gathering Activity*

While the parents are getting signed in, have an activity available for the youth to do before the event gets kicked off. This activity does not have to be elaborate, just something to keep the youth engaged. Some ideas include a team building game, puzzles, or scout skills. The sky is really the limit, you can find a lot of great gathering activities by searching online.

## *Youth Talk*

At the formal start of your event hold a short talk with the youth, no more than about 5 minutes, the kids will want to get to the activity as soon as possible. Quickly go over all the fun activities your troop does and the troop meeting structure.



## Main Activity

Spend the majority of your time during the meeting doing the activity. This activity should be run entirely by the scouts. This will give both the parents confidence that their children will learn leadership skills and the youth will be more at ease working with scouts similar in age. This should last 30-45 minutes.

## Parent Talk

While the youth are busy doing the activity, it is the perfect time to pull the parents of potential new scouts aside for a parents meeting. It is best to do this in a separate room away from the main activity so the parents will be able to hear. It is best for this meeting to be led by the Scoutmaster, but another adult would work. Make sure that you introduce all your adult leaders. At this meeting go over troop structure, events, fundraising, summer camp, volunteers' leaders and training, costs, and uniform. Field any questions that the parents may have. Be sure to let the parents know the value the program has, not only will it provide great year-round activities and provide life skills, but it also cost much less than about any other activity their kids can get involved with.

At this meeting you may also choose to make an ask for volunteers, but you will need to determine if this is the right time to do this, or if it would be best to do this at a later date.

Be sure not to have this meeting take up the entire activity time, you want the parents to see how much fun their kids are having at your activity.

## Closing

When the activity and parent meetings are complete hold a short closing. Ask the kids if they had a lot of fun. Let them know that if they had fun at this event that you have lots of other fun activities throughout the year for them to take part in. Keep this part of the meeting short as well as it will be hard to keep the youth's attention at this point.

## Follow Up

A few days after the event send an email to all new families that attended your event thanking them for coming. You will also want to ask them if they have any follow up questions as well as invite them to any upcoming troop events.



# Recruiting Adults

Just as important as recruiting youth for your program is the recruitment of adult leaders. This can be done at the same time as you are recruiting youth, or you can choose to do this after your youth recruitment, this is up to you and what you feel works best for your unit. We again asked our top adult recruiting units for their feedback and their input has been included in this section.

## *Troop Resource Survey*

As part of the recruitment night paperwork you might want to consider handing out a Troop Resource survey found here [https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-116\\_wb.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/512-116_wb.pdf) This can help you identify critical skills from your families and could make a directed ask for a role much easier as you will know where a person's strengths lie.

## *Lasting Impact*

For this presentation the moderator asks the crowd to think back to their childhood and to think about the adults that had a lasting impact upon them. The moderator then polls the audience for the people they thought of. The responses will tend to be fairly narrow: family members, teachers, coaches and scout leaders. After the polling is over the moderator then asks the audience if they would like the opportunity to leave a lifelong impact on the next generation.

## *The Slow Play*

In this scenario you make a series of asks of an adult. Starting off with small tasks like helping to set up for an event, or picking up some supplies for a meeting. The next ask would be for something a bit larger like leading an activity for the scouts. Once they see that a volunteer position is not as hard as they originally had thought, you then make the ask for them to take on a full leadership position within your unit.





## *The Hard Sell*

This presentation should be used by those units who have had trouble getting volunteers using the other methods. This method can be done one of two ways, but the structure of each is similar. A board will need to be created that lists all the volunteer positions within your unit. Circle those positions that are filled. This will likely only be a small portion of the roles within your unit. Follow up by putting a rectangle around those positions that are needed for your unit to function. Tell the audience that if these roles are not filled then the pack will no longer be allowed to meet. This will generally grab the adult's attention and quickly get people to volunteer.

An alternative method is to have a list of all activities that your troop does. Circle those activities for which you have enough volunteers. One by one ask for volunteers for the remaining activities. If you no one volunteers to help with the activities tell them that we will just have to stop doing this activity and put an X through it. This will also get their attention and will usually result in someone volunteering.

# Recruitment Principles

**Principle 1:** PEOPLE WANT TO BE ASKED. It makes them feel special, seen, wanted, and included to get an invitation to join a committee or take on a position. If you tell a scout parent you need their help, they will at least have the conversation with you. Remember, these are scout families with scout values. It's in their DNA.

**Principle 2:** Ask everyone. This is another HUGE point. We should ASK EVERYONE TO JOIN THE COMMITTEE. If we restrict our pool of candidates to only those that show up or step up, we are severely limiting ourselves. Having a scout in BSA should come with the implicit agreement that parents will volunteer time to support the program.

**Principle 3:** Pre-screen your candidates. When I have a position to fill, I consider the occupation, scouting experience, availability of each candidate and ASK AROUND TO GET AN IDEA OF THEIR SUITABILITY FOR THE POSITION. If you are asking everyone to help, having knowledge about candidates will help you to suggest positions that align to their skills and interests and, therefore, increase your probability of successfully recruiting them.

**Principle 4:** Start small. If the first request is imminently achievable and simple, you are more likely to get an affirmative response. From there, it is possible to build and request more complicated and more involved responsibilities. Plus, this will give you a chance to learn your new recruits strengths and challenges.

**Principle 5:** Be clear on mission and expectations. A recruitment pitch is actually not that hard if you can clearly explain: 1) what the role means to the mission of scouting; 2) what the time commitment is; 3) what the responsibilities are; 4) what the resources / processes are; and, 5) how the training / ongoing support will work. It is critical to BE HONEST ABOUT HOW MUCH WORK IT REALLY IS. Also, I have found that it is much less intimidating to join a team than to be the lone person or the person in charge. Splitting some jobs up into a committee may be a way to get more volunteers. Not only will this increase our success rate, but it will help us to build a pipeline to train and develop committee chairs.

**Principle 6:** Ask individually. Blast emails and putting a request out to a large group almost never works. People are busy, distracted, and get hundreds of messages every day. But do you know what's unique and special? ASK FOR A VOICE, VIDEO, OR IN-PERSON CONVERSATION. Plus, it is a lot harder to say 'no' when someone is being asked directly.

**Principle 7:** Be excited. We all do this because we love it. It is important to successful recruiting that our enthusiasm and love for the work come across. ENERGY AND CHARISMA ARE MAGNETIC and make people want to be a part of it.

**Principle 8:** Let them know you are with them for the long haul. The biggest reasons people say no are: 1) not enough time; and, 2) not knowing how to do the job. If you can CLEARLY ARTICULATE HOW YOU WILL TEACH THEM to do the job and how you will BE AVAILABLE TO HELP THEM, it goes a long way to assuaging #2. We have all been there before, so conveying your own story of how we learned to do the job will help. And don't forget to plug Wood Badge and other training opportunities!

# Recruitment Calendar

Month	Activity
January	Plan Spring Recruitment Events Set annual membership goal
February	Webelos Families visit with Troop Promote eXtreme Scouting to Families
March	Youth identify friends to invite to join events Spring recruitment begins
April	Conduct 5 <sup>th</sup> and 6 <sup>th</sup> grade recruitment event Record webelos transition plans with packs
May	Conduct bring a buddy event Submit all Webelo transfer applications Attend Membership Kickoff
June	Planning for Fall Recruitment Attend eXtreme Scouting
July	Annual Planning Conference
August	Invite Webelos to attend Troop Activity Start marketing recruitment events
September	Hold recruitment Events
October	Leaders Complete Training Prepare membership inventory for charter renewal
November	Complete Recharter Paperwork
December	Review membership plan and develop updated plan for upcoming year

# Council Resources

To ensure a robust recruitment program the council has several resources available for units, all free of charge.

## *Marketing Materials*

The council offers units many resources to help your unit market your recruitment event.

- Event flyers (both paper and digital)
- Facebook event boosting

Both can be requested via the online form at

[https://scouting.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_aXLqvQKfZVaNSPI](https://scouting.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_aXLqvQKfZVaNSPI)

Additionally, yard signs are available for pickup at the council office or drop off can be arranged with your district Professional.

## *Program Materials*

The council also has many program materials for you to help put on a great recruiting event these include.

- Basecamps – BSA branded popup tent with or without walls
- Inflatable Archery – Includes an inflatable target, bow, foam tip arrow and ball targets. In order to run this event a trained council volunteer or professional must oversee this event. This setup requires access to electricity in order to function
- Inflatable GaGa Pit – Includes inflatable Gaga wall and ball. Access to electricity is required for this to function

To reserve any of these program materials

<https://www.ctyankee.org/membership-basecamp>.



# Recruitment Incentives

## *Individual Incentives*

Individual scouts who recruit a new scouts will be eligible to receive the recruiter award. This is a patch that can be worn below the right uniform pocket. A scout will also be eligible to attend the eXtreme Scouting event, along with the new scout they recruited. This event is a fun event where scouts will get to take part in many fun outdoor activities such as rifle shooting, Archery, disc golf, BMX biking and much more. This event will be held on June 24<sup>th</sup> at Camp Sequassen. To claim your spot at this event register at the eXtreme Scouting website

<https://www.ctyankee.org/events/extreme-scouting-23/>

## *Unit Incentives*

Any unit who recruits at least 10% of its 2022 year-end membership in the calendar year of 2023 will receive a free weekend tent site at one of the council camps. These recruits must be new scouts, scouts transitioning from a Cub Scout Pack do not count towards this incentive. This is designed to add focus for troops on recruiting outside of the Cub Scout Program. You may claim your tent site at any point once your goal is reached. If your unit does not reach its goal until the end of the year, you will still be able claim your tent site in 2024. To claim your tent site talk with you District Executive or Director, contact information in the next section.

# Membership Contacts

## Council Membership Contacts

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