



**2023 Fall  
Recruiting**  
W. D. Boyce Council

# #ADVENTUREON!

This guide and more available at  
<https://bit.ly/wdb-recruit23>



# #ADVENTUREON!

**Dear Scouts BSA & Senior Patrol Leaders,**

Thank you for volunteering as a Scouts BSA leader and providing activities where Scouts build character, improve physical fitness, learn skills, develop a spirit of community service, and have a ton of FUN!

It is of great importance that Scouts BSA troops throughout our council build a year-round recruitment plan. The Scouts in your troop - with your guidance - can create a recruitment plan that will positively impact the size of the troop and the quality of program.

We need the help of every Scouting leader this year, as our best success will be ensured by working as a team. Together we can grow your unit and recruit new parents who will help fill your unit's leadership roles.

To assure an effective Join Scouting event, we have compiled the information within this guide to help everyone achieve success. Your District Executives and volunteers will be with you every step of the way.

Thank you for all you do to support Scouting in our communities!

**Dan Martin**  
**VP of Membership**  
**W. D. Boyce Council, BSA**

**Charlie Zimmerman**  
**Field Director**



## **Don't Just "Cross Over" Recruiting**

For years, many Scouts BSA troops have been able to rely on the annual influx of new Scouts arriving from a neighboring pack or packs, often sharing the same chartering organization. That's what many current adult leaders experienced when they were Scouts as well. It's what we know. It's how "the system" works. Right?

*Not anymore.*

Cub Scout packs lost large numbers of families during the pandemic, and membership isn't back to pre-pandemic levels. Numbers are slowly increasing, but know this:

Relying on Cub Scouts "crossing over" guarantees that your troop will shrink, no matter how strong the program is.

***And a shrinking troop hurts the Scouts that are in it.***

It's not just about having fewer friends to hang out with. It means having fewer leadership opportunities, loss of the patrol method, more work spread around fewer Scouts on campouts and at summer camp, and always worrying about whether there will be enough Scouts for the troop to continue another year.

The loss of every Scout who drops out is felt more. It reduces the pool of adult volunteer leadership. And the overall camaraderie of the troop declines.

***Scouting becomes less fun.***

## Shake It Off and DO Something About It!

The picture we just painted may be scary, but YOU have the opportunity to ensure that YOUR troop avoids the post-pandemic pitfalls and actually FLOURISHES in 2023 and beyond!

## Lost Scouts Can be Found!

Along with the release of this guide, your District Executive is providing you with lists of youth in your communities who were registered with Scouting in 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022 who are NOT registered today but are still between the ages of 11 and 17.

This includes a list of former Cub Scouts as well as former Scouts BSA troop members – all of whom at one time said “Yes!” to Scouting, and may be eager to do so again – *if only someone will take the time to invite them and make them feel welcome!*

**Key point: There's No Joining Fee for Returning Youth or Adults!**

Even if a youth dropped out as a Cub Scout

during the pandemic, there is no joining fee when they return. Registering online, the system will NOT charge a new member joining fee to returning youth or adults.

## It's Never Too Late to Be a Scout

Just as the values and experiences of Scouting remain valuable and relevant, the trail to Eagle can begin as late as a Scout's 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

If youth or their parents are hesitant because they feel it's “too late” to being working towards Eagle, emphasize that it doesn't take making Eagle to have a meaningful, memorable and positively life-changing experience as a Scout.

## Additional Points to Consider

**Scouts BSA works best when it's youth-led and adult-guided.**

Scoutmasters, engage your troop's older Scouts! To help envision, plan and execute recruiting activities. To embrace their great ideas and simply use this guide as a jumping off point!

## You're Still Integrating New Scouts Who Crossed Over in the Spring

Fall activities can be just as effective for recruiting Scouts as they are for retaining Scouts who just crossed over.

The activities you plan to welcome and integrate still-new Scouts (and their parents) can also serve as recruiting events. In fact, seeing peers who have already made the decision to join may help them make the decision, too!

## Scouting Hasn't Changed!

Scouting STILL provides life changing opportunities for youth, families, and our



communities at large. Welcoming new families into Scouting is vital to ensure these opportunities continue to be available in our neighborhoods.

We recruit so that more youth can grow from Scouting, so more adults have an opportunity to volunteer, and so we can maintain a local community legacy.

### **Scouting HAS Changed!**

Scouting grows and changes with the times. Consider what your troop does now compared to even 5-10 years ago. There's more travel, more adventure, more relevant growth and leadership opportunities. There's more FUN!

*And if not, we will help you make it so! Send up a signal and we'll work with you to ensure your unit has an awesome program!*

### **Reach Beyond School!**

You can always reach kids and families through other means. In particular, you may find churches to be very receptive to flyers and messages that they can pass along to their congregations. You can also take the opportunity to tailor your message to emphasize Scouting's attention to reverence and duty to God.

Another group that may be missed in the fall is the homeschool crowd. One way to find this audience is to search for homeschool co-ops in your area. Just Google "homeschool co-ops near me" for more information at your fingertips!

## **How Does this Work with Advancement?**

Scouts BSA advancement isn't tied to grade levels, a Scout's age (except when they

reach 18) or the time of year when they join. So there's no negative impact on when a youth joins. The trail to Eagle begins when they do!

## **What to DO (And what's an NFA?)**

Having a recruiting event may feel like a foreign concept if your troop has been fortunate enough to just rely on Cub Scouts crossing over from a nearby pack. But don't worry. Fall is a great time to get kids involved in Scouting, get outdoors before winter sets in and have some fun.

The emphasis here is on the word **fun**. Think about things friends (and families) like to do with each other, like cookouts, short hikes... basically, anything fun and safe that kids can do (outside, while the weather allows it) with their families.

While memories of typical Cub Scout recruiting in the fall conjures up visions of families listening to (and quickly forgetting) a presentation from a Cubmaster they don't really know yet, a casual outdoor activity gives prospective Scouts BSA families the opportunity to interact with families who are already part of the troop in a relaxed environment.

*Don't feel the need to overtly "sell" the program. Instead, just let the new families hang out in a stress-free environment and enjoy this time with their kids.*

### **Normal Friend Activities (aka "NFAs")**

Imagine you're a parent in a family with no Scouting experience.

Your son or daughter sees a flier for the local troop, inviting anyone who's



interested to visit their next meeting on Monday night. Fun — and snacks! — are on the agenda.

When you show up, everyone is in uniform. You see lots of adults in tan shirts, assuming most are paid professionals. You think, “wow, there’s a lot of staff here tonight.”

Everyone knows exactly what to say and the right way to raise three fingers aloft in what you later learn is called “the Scout sign.”

The meeting looks fun, but you can’t help but feel a little mystified by it all. That’s when someone hands you a registration form. Overwhelmed yet?

***This is why Normal Friend Activities (NFAs) might just be the ticket!***

[Normal Friend Activities](#) are low-pressure troop events where units invite non-Scouting families to join them for an afternoon or evening of fun.

An NFA might be a hike, a cookout, a service project, a trip to a local sporting event or anything else you can dream up. Most importantly, your Scouts themselves can help plan the event, because they’re probably the best judges of what will appeal to their peers – and what will just seem lame.

*Nobody wants to be lame.*

At NFAs, most Scouts and adult volunteers should dress in normal “street” clothes instead of uniforms — a tactic that will help visitors feel more included. (That doesn’t mean some Scout t-shirts wouldn’t be appropriate.)

Speaking of feeling included, the focus of an NFA should be on Scouts (and their families) getting to know one another — not on high-pressure recruiting pitches. And be patient. It might take some families a few NFAs before they feel comfortable and ready to join.

Also, while there are plenty of merit badge activities that can work for an event like this, advancement should not be the main goal. The average family doesn’t know that ranks exist, or what a merit badge is - and they’re just looking for fun activities to do with their kids!

## **PREPARATION**

- 1) Sure, you know what Scouts are all about. But find out what the BSA is telling people so you’ll be on the same page when you meet them!
- 2) Time and place are important for setting the tone. It’s probably not ideal to pick your usual meeting time and location. Be at an easy to access location and consider when families will be available. Meeting for 45 minutes to an hour should be long enough!
- 3) Offer a fun, hands-on experience. Again, think “NFA” a little bit more than “BSA” – keep the activity relevant and representative of what your troop does, but not so in-depth that it confuses potential new members with jargon and methods that could serve as barriers.
- 4) Let’s all be there! The point of an NFA is to show that this is the kind of things that Scouts and their families do, so the troop really needs to show up. And it shouldn’t be hard, because it’s going to be FUN!

Current parents and their Scouts need to be there so they can talk to prospective parents and Scouts. And current Scouts who recruit a friend who joins can be awarded the Recruiter Strip, available from the Council Service Center.

- 5) Your troop's youth leadership should make a checklist of who is responsible for various components of the NFA. Just because it's casual, it shouldn't be disorganized!
- 6) Do NOT plan on talking about minutia - the difference between the troop and patrols, the intricacies of advancement, horror stories from campouts gone awry, the cost, youth protection and two-deep leadership, girls and boys, and anything else parents might think of – unless they ask.

If they ask, fine – but there's no need to bombard them.

- 7) Prepare some flyers or cards with the QR code and instructions for online registration on-hand.
- 8) Include key info about when and where the troop normally meets, dates of campouts and other fall activities so that kids and parents can start to visualize being a part of the fun!
- 9) If you're asked about being an adult leader, emphasize the enjoyment you get, the value of time spent supporting kids' programs, availability of fun adult training, etc.

It's also a good opportunity to talk

about why we think youth protection and two-deep leadership are so important.

- 10) Jaws probably WON'T drop when you mention the cost, especially when you focus on the value and benefits of Scouting upfront. Everything costs more these days!

Scouting costs more than what many people remember or may have in their minds, and we recognize that people have to make choices. But when you consider that Scouting is a year-round program with benefits that extend well beyond a Scout's active years, it's an investment as smart as any youth sports league or other activity.

How does Scouting compare to other activities, such as youth athletic programs? Here's a July 2022 article from the Mass Mutual personal finance blog, taking a look at the costs of popular youth sports:

<https://blog.massmutual.com/post/cost-of-youth-sports-dollars-and-sense>

And it's not just sports. Even high school marching bands may have fees of several hundred dollars!

That said, no potential Scout should miss out on the experience due to financial hardship. If the troop can help financially, that's great – and the council can help as well. Contact your District Executive for more information.

- 11) Get familiar with the online registration process at BeAScout.org and determine who will be responsible for accepting

online applications - usually the Scoutmaster or Committee Chair.

This is the fastest and best way to register new Scouts. No cash to handle, no forms to send to the council office!

## PROMOTION

The council can provide flyers if schools or churches are willing to distribute them.

- 1) For promotion at schools, find out about:
  - a) Procedures for submitting announcement and flyers to be sent home. How many copies of flyers are needed in each grade level? Can they be sent home in backpacks? Your District Executive can provide flyers with information about your troop's joining event and Scouts BSA in general - at no cost - if schools are willing to distribute them. Talk to your DE about getting them printed!
  - b) Providing information electronically for school emails or newsletters. Putting a few posters by drinking fountains and a yard sign by the school pick-up/drop-off location. Your DE can provide yard signs and posters, too!
  - c) How about providing a video to be shown during lunch or other times, or a message for the school marquee?
    - Out Here It's Just Us  
<https://youtu.be/P6E91qYXRxU>
    - Join Scouts BSA  
<https://youtu.be/yiEBq3b9MDE>

- 2) Ask each of your troop families to invite three other families to your NFA.
- 3) Don't forget to use a multichannel approach to promoting your NFA!

Consider:

- How youth want to be communicated with
- How families want to be communicated with

So go beyond flyers and include such things as email, Facebook, Snapchat, TikTok, Instagram, text messages and word of mouth. (Hint: You won't find the kids on Facebook!)

***See Appendix A for more great recruitment readiness ideas developed by the Grand Canyon Council!***

## EXECUTION

Remember, this is supposed to be FUN! So keep the following in mind:

- 1) Scouts and adult volunteers should dress in normal "street" clothes instead of uniforms — a tactic that can help visitors feel more included. At an NFA, where uniforms aren't worn, that non-Scouting parent will see themselves as equal to everyone else.
- 2) Refreshments? You bet!
- 3) Make sure everyone gets the flyers or cards with the QR code and instructions for online registration. But keep in mind that the focus of an NFA should be on potential Scouts (and their families) getting to know the troop — not on high-pressure recruiting pitches.



- 4) Be patient. It might take some families a few NFAs (yes, you might want to do a few of these!) before they feel comfortable and ready to join.
- 5) Be happy to see people you don't even know! Encourage the Scouts (and their parents, too) to welcome people as they arrive.
- 6) If there are two program elements you should promote, it's Scouts BSA Summer Camp and... Scouts BSA Summer Camp!

*Remember: No need to recite too much history or details that everyone will forget on the way home anyway!*

## **AFTER THE EVENT**

Say thank you to everyone in the troop who helped make it a great night, especially the Scouts!

Follow up with every family who came, mainly to thank them for coming, but also ask if they have any other questions.

If they registered, let them know what's next – first troop meeting, fall campout plans, etc. If they didn't register, that's fine. Encourage them to come back again - and if you have another event scheduled, let them know.

## **Hey – That was FUN!**

Sure was! Consider holding at least one NFA a month.

Families who miss one event can come to another, and your entire troop will enjoy the chance to get together and have fun in a casual manner. At this point, recruiting

and troop program planning can begin to merge – and almost every troop activity can become a potential entry point for new Scout and their families.

## **Laying Groundwork for Years to Come**

Recruiting can become a year-round thing if you make a conscious effort to welcome prospective new Scouts and families to events on a regular basis. And there are things you can do to help improve the chances for success in coming years. Here are a few ideas:

### **Establish - or strengthen - an ongoing relationship with packs in your community**

Maybe you have a relationship with a pack that is chartered by the same organization as your troop – or not. Whether that relationship is thriving or simply cordial, explore how you can strengthen that partnership moving forward. Also, consider reaching out to packs without an associated Scouts BSA troop.

- **Implementing a [Den Chief program](#) where a Scout from the troop works with a den for a defined period of time.** This gives Cub Scouts a trained Scout BSA role model to look forward to emulating, provides a service to Den Leaders and offers another means of fulfilling the leadership requirement for Scouts seeking to earn Star, Life or Eagle.
- **Inviting Webelos/Arrow of Light scouts to participate and camp at a Scouts BSA troop unit campout.** All Cub Scout camping requirements still apply, including all Youth Protection policies and the den having a BALOO-trained adult leader in attendance. See the

Guide to Safe Scouting and Scouting's Barriers to Abuse for more information.

- **Providing Scout and adult assistance to the pack.** This might include helping with a pack Pinewood Derby, Blue and Gold Banquet, or other pack program.

## BEFORE THE FIRST CAMPOUT

First campouts are often the stuff of LEGEND! They *could* be great – but they could also be a disaster!

And camping is synonymous with Scouting. So, the best way to “set the hook” is to have a series of awesome outdoor experiences that include camping.

Here are two ideas that can help make those first campouts AWECOME – the planning for which should at least involve your current Scouts:

### Outdoors Skills Day

Find a nearby park where new Scouts can be introduced to the troop's outdoor gear, the gear they need (or may already have) and how to use it. This can include setting up taking down tents and dining flies, cooking gear, patrol boxes, etc.

It's also a chance to go over proper sleeping bags and duffle bags, rain gear, footwear, and what else to bring (and not) on a campout. Cook an easy meal (maybe foil dinners) and have some fun along the way, including some games. Other skills can include some basic first aid, campout hygiene and knot tying.

Talk about the planning that goes into a campout – menus, gear, watching the weather, being well-rested and eating properly before you go, etc. Talk about the

buddy system, safe camping practices and telling a leader if you don't feel good.

Allow for Q&A and anticipate some questions that might not get asked. (For instance, Scouts might wonder about bathrooms – but not want to raise the issue.)

### 1<sup>st</sup> Campout – One night

Putting the Outdoor Skills Day into action! Camp at a nearby favorite park (maybe the same location), with continued introduction to what your troop likes to do on a campout. Maybe it includes orienteering, pioneering, hiking, or fishing. This is also a good time to introduce Scouts to the Outdoor Code.

Again, make the meals easy to prepare, but emphasize teamwork and shared responsibilities. Have a campfire with smores! Have a good breakfast in the morning, a short nondenominational service, make sure everyone participates in cleaning up the campsite and packing up troop gear, then packs up to go home.

Finally, talk about what to do when they get home: Unpack *everything* and help with laundry - or do it themselves – and dry out things like sleeping bags, tents, foot gear and rain gear. **Then put it all away.**

***Remember MMH: Make Mom Happy!***

## RESOURCES: Sample Photos, Templates, Text and MORE!

**BSA Brand Center:** One of the best resources that many Scouters don't even know about is the BSA Brand Center... it's full of photos, video clips, sample media and more that can help you promote your troop like a pro!

<https://scouting.webdamdb.com/>

**Business Cards for Scouting:** Flyers are great, but not always convenient to carry with you. Consider stopping by Office Max, PIP, or FedEx Office to print up some easy-to-carry cards with the key information a family needs to find and join your troop! Your Scouts may even want to help design cards for them to give to their friends.

*TIP: Don't include dates, times or locations for one-time events... make the card "evergreen" so that you can use it throughout the year!*

### Sample Parent to Parent Email:

*Hi – As one Mill Valley Middle School parent to another, I want to tell you a little bit about Scouts BSA and invite your family to join us at our Spring Into Scouting cookout, 6 pm on May 11<sup>th</sup> at Lincoln Park. There's a troop for girls (Troop 87) and a troop for boys (Troop 63) both having the event at the same time and place, so it should be a great time!*

*Scouts BSA is a fun program for boys AND girls, ages 11-17. It's the traditional Scouting experience (formerly just called "Boy Scouts")*

*where kids can have their share of adventure in the great outdoors. Develop a love of service by volunteering in your community, boost your leadership skills through fun and exciting challenges, and create memories of a lifetime with no prior Scouting experience required!*

*Scouts have been a part of our community for decades, and now it's your family's chance to be a part of the Scouting story if they haven't been already. Or maybe you tried Cub Scouts and got derailed by the pandemic – if so, now's a great time to come back and discover "the next level" of Scouting!*

*Are you busy? So are we! Fortunately, Scouting is a year-round program which allows for youth to participate in multiple youth programs, and come and go as their schedules allow. Scouts can be just as involved in sports, church, school, the arts as the next kid – not to mention any other activity that helps young people develop character and life skills. And Scouting will always be here if they have to leave for a time and come back later.*

*I hope you can join us at 6 on the 11<sup>th</sup> at Lincoln Park. In the meantime, you can find more information at <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/>*

*Yours in Scouting,*

*Gina Weaver*

*Mom of Josie (Tenderfoot) and Roberto (Star Scout)*



## Appendix A - Recruitment Readiness Checklist

(Source: Grand Canyon Council, BSA – most links lead to good content on their website)

### ***#1: Commit to welcoming more families into Scouting!!***

#### **Identify the Fall Recruitment Lead**

Which Scout family can help arrange and lead this one-time event that community members feel genuinely invited to?

#### **Set a Troop Recruitment Goal**

Think about how many 5th and 6th graders are at your neighborhood Elementary Schools, how many of them will you in share Scouting with this year?

#### **Update Your Digital Footprint**

Is the Troop website and/or public Facebook page up-to-date? Share your story – The Troop website and Facebook page should show action, fun, highlight events and activities, and engaged parents.

#### **Is the Troop BeAScout Pin accurate?**

[How To Update Your BeAScout.Org Unit Information](#) Ease of Access – Be Sure BeAScout Pins are up to date. Families that are researching online want to be able to apply online.

#### **Event Location**

Set your location, date and time. Events at schools are most successful. Parks and public places are second. Facebook promoted recruitment events held at churches perform worst. [Using Social Media To Welcome New Families](#) (Be sure to use geofencing!)

#### **Plan a Hands-On 30-Minute Activity:**

It's great when youth and adults work together. Scouting's fun and the recruiting process you host should reflect that.

#### **Prepare Recruitment Event Agenda**

Be prepared. Utilize the example-agenda for recruitment night.

#### **Invite Potential New Scouts**

Request Facebook targeted (Geofencing) ads and flyer's from your [District Executive](#) at least 3-weeks in advance. [What is Geofencing?](#)

#### **Prepare New Family Welcome Packet**

Clear Information – Families that see expectations of families, meeting times and locations, Troop calendar, and contact information know what to expect and see that it is an organized functional Scout unit they are looking at.

**Include: Troop calendar, contact list, Troop expenses and fundraising opportunities, and plan how new families can join summer camp this year!**

## **Appendix B - More Questions to Help Plan for Recruitment**

**What is our recruiting goal? How many new members do we need?**

**Do we foresee needing to fill a leadership role for someone in the next year or two?**

**Do we have a Troop Membership Chair or New Member Coordinator?**

**Where do our members come from—which schools or organizations can we connect with? Where will we hold our Join Scouting event(s)?**

**What information should we have available for attendees at our recruiting event? Does our troop have an information or fact sheet?**

**Does our troop have a program and calendar of events planned for the next 6-12 months?**

**What do kids like about what Scouts do?**

**Think about your friends – who do you think would enjoy Scouts if they only gave it a chance?**

**Why do you think some of your peers aren't Scouts?**

## Appendix C - How will we promote our troop's recruitment efforts?

Here are some ideas:

### ***Social Media Campaign:***

*SPL's this may be your place to shine! Here are some thoughts....*

In today's society digital media is one of the best ways to reach out to families to share the exciting world of Scouting. The goal is for every unit to create a dynamic digital presence.

Navigating the world of social media can seem overwhelming at first. However, the Bay Lakes Council's membership committee has drafted a step-by-step guide to help your unit create an amazing Facebook page or begin your unit Twitter and Instagram accounts: [bit.ly/43SI6nj](https://bit.ly/43SI6nj)

Promote the good work your troop members do throughout the school year. Creating program recognition will lead to great community support for your troop's recruitment activities next year.

Utilize other social media platforms like Tik Tok, Snapchat or Instagram.

Be safe *and* smart: Keep the BSA Social Media Guidelines in mind! <https://bit.ly/3NiLm5T>

### ***The Community Partner Event***

These events can be a great way to reach your local community. It could be hosting simple but fun kick ball game, volunteering to work a community picnic, hosting a simple activity for kids at a school or community carnival or participating in local markets, expos, or festivals. The size of the event is up to your unit. This type of recruiting can be a long game approach; however, it can net amazing results. Always have some kind of take away with you, like Troop contact cards, so prospective families have a way to contact your unit.

### **Troop Open House**

These events are when a troop plans a drop in style event where the troop shows off and demonstrates what they do & how they bring the Scouting mission to life. These events have best results with people familiar with the program: Webelos, former Cub Scouts looking to return to the program, and alumni families.