

#ADVENTURE ON!

2024 W.D. Boyce Council Spring Scouts BSA Recruiting Guide

Scouts can join any time of the year!

No matter the time of year, we must ensure we:

1. Make every youth feel welcome.
2. Make joining online easy.
3. Make joining accessible to all eligible youth.

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. Troops have been there, waiting with open arms, as Webelos/AOL scouts "crossed over" from Cub Scouts to Scouts BSA. That's what many 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 hasn't come back to pre-pandemic levels. Membership is slowing rebuilding, but continuing to rely 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.

But We Can 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!

Quick! Turn the page and read on...



Those Lost Scouts Can be Found!

Your District Executive can provide you with lists of youth in your communities who were registered with Scouting a few years ago 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 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 for a Kid 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 16th birthday. And it doesn’t take making Eagle to have a meaningful, memorable and positively life-changing experience as a Scout.

Additional Points to Consider:

- 1) Scouts BSA works best when it’s youth-led and adult-guided.** Engage your troop’s older Scouts. To help envision, plan and execute recruiting activities. Embrace their great ideas and simply use this guide as a jumping off point!
- 2) Spring Recruiting is Good for Scouts Crossing Over, Too!**
Spring recruiting activities can be just as valuable for Scouts who are already crossing over. Ideally, the activities you plan can serve to welcome and integrate already-incoming Scouts (and parents) as the youth who haven’t yet decided to join. In fact, seeing peers who have already decided to join may help them make the decision, too!
- 3) Scouting Hasn’t Changed!**
Scouting STILL provides life changing opportunities for youth, families, and communities at large. Welcoming new families is vital to ensure these traits continue on in our neighborhoods. We recruit so that more youth can grow from Scouting and so more adults have an opportunity to volunteer.
- 4) 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!)

5) Ready, Set Launch! Scouts BSA Summer Camp is a ready-made “launch” activity that’s ideally timed for spring recruiting. And adding more kids to your troop’s summer camp plans requires little to no extra planning – maybe just some additional orientation to the patrol method and camping like a Scout.

6) Reach Beyond School!

Spring is a great time to reach kids and families in 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, especially as families start thinking about summer activities. 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 coops 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 a youth who joins in the spring. 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 Scouts crossing over from a nearby pack. But don’t worry. Spring recruiting may be just the ticket for easing into the idea, because spring is a great time to bring families out, get them involved in Scouting, get outdoors and have some fun.

Normal Friend Activities are low-pressure troop events where units invite non-Scouting families to join them for an afternoon or evening of fun. Think about things friends and families like to do with each other, like swimming, cookouts, short hikes ... basically, anything fun and safe that kids can do (outside, if the weather allows it) with their families.

An NFA might be a hike, a picnic, an ice cream party, 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.*

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 springtime, relaxed outdoor activity gives prospective Scouts BSA families the opportunity to interact with families who are already part of the troop in a relaxed environment.

Much more online...

We could kill a tree by printing all the recruiting information and resources we have to share – but let's NOT!

Instead, head to <https://wdboyce.org/recruiting-resources/>, where you can find the following information AND MORE!

- Scouts BSA Recruiting Readiness Checklist
- Normal Friend Activities (NFAs) for Scouts BSA
- Working with Packs
- Preparing New Scouts for Summer Camp
- Social Media Resources
- Videos

Questions? Ideas?

We want to hear from you! Contact any of the following:

- Your District Executive (Contact info here: <https://wdboyce.org/staff/>)
- Dan Martin, VP of Membership & Relationships (eagle_scout98@hotmail.com)
- Charlie Zimmerman, Field Director (charlie.zimmerman@scouting.org)