

A Guide to Selecting and Recruiting Unit Volunteers

Recruiting volunteers is one of the most important responsibilities in your unit. The goal is not just to fill positions—it is to place the right people in the right roles and set them up for success.

Successful units take a thoughtful, personal approach to recruiting volunteers and focus on building a team, not just filling gaps.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY YOUR NEEDS

Start by clearly identifying what roles need to be filled.

- What positions are currently open?
- What roles will you need in the future?
- What support roles could reduce workload for current leaders?

Break roles into:

- **Key leadership roles** (Den Leaders, Cubmaster, Committee Chair)
- **Support roles** (event coordinators, advancement help, communications)
- **Short-term tasks** (Pinewood Derby, Blue & Gold, outings)

Not every volunteer needs to take on a major role—start by identifying where help is needed.

STEP 2: DEFINE THE ROLE

Before asking anyone, be clear about what the role involves.

- Responsibilities (simple and concrete)
- Estimated time commitment
- When and where support is needed
- Training and support available

Avoid:

- Vague asks like “we need help”
- Overloading the role with unnecessary responsibilities

People say yes when they understand what they are saying yes to.

STEP 3: IDENTIFY THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Think intentionally about who would be a good fit.

- What skills or interests does this role require?
- Which parents have shown interest or engagement?
- Who has already helped in small ways?

Look for:

- Parents who connect well with youth
- Organized, detail-oriented individuals
- Parents already showing up consistently

Match the person to the role—not the role to whoever volunteers.

STEP 4: MAKE A PERSONAL ASK

The most effective recruiting happens **one person at a time**.

- Meet in person whenever possible
- Clearly explain the role and why you are asking them
- Share how their contribution will make a difference
- Provide a clear next step

Example approach:

“We’ve noticed how great you are with the Scouts, and we think you’d be a strong fit as a Den Leader. Would you be willing to step into that role? We’ll support you every step of the way.”

People are more likely to say yes when they are personally invited and feel valued.

STEP 5: PROVIDE IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS

Once someone agrees, act quickly.

- Help them complete registration
- Direct them to Safeguarding Youth Training
- Share position-specific training resources
- Connect them with another leader

Avoid:

- Waiting weeks to follow up
- Expecting them to figure things out on their own

Momentum matters—support them while their motivation is high.

BEST PRACTICES

- Recruit continuously, not just when you have a vacancy
- Start with small tasks to build engagement
- Make targeted, personal asks—not group announcements
- Be honest about expectations and time commitments
- Always explain the **impact on Scouts**

STEP 6: SUPPORT AND FOLLOW THROUGH

Recruitment doesn't end when someone says yes.

- Check in regularly
- Answer questions early
- Provide resources and examples
- Encourage training and participation in Roundtable

Volunteers stay engaged when they feel supported and successful.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Asking a large group for volunteers
- Posting general requests in emails or social media
- Waiting until a position is critical to recruit
- Assuming people will volunteer without being asked
- Filling roles with whoever is available instead of the best fit

Building and Supporting Your Volunteer Team

Recruiting a parent is only the first step—how you support them afterward determines whether they stay engaged and succeed. The most effective units are intentional about setting clear expectations, providing training, and supporting volunteers throughout their Scouting experience.

This framework outlines six key actions that help turn new volunteers into confident, successful leaders.

THE SIX KEYS TO VOLUNTEER SUCCESS

1. Define the Role Clearly

People are more likely to say yes—and succeed—when they understand what is expected.

- Provide a simple description of the role
- Share time commitment and key responsibilities
- Explain how the role supports Scouts

Clarity builds confidence. Unclear expectations create hesitation.

2. Make a Thoughtful, Personal Ask

Recruitment should be intentional and personal—not broad or passive.

- Match people to roles based on their interests and skills
- Ask individuals directly and explain why they are a good fit
- Show how their involvement will make a difference

The right person is more important than just filling a position.

3. Orient and Train Immediately

New volunteers need support right away to stay engaged.

- Connect with them shortly after they say yes
- Walk through their role and next steps
- Help them complete required training

Early onboarding and training set volunteers up for success.

4. Provide Ongoing Coaching and Support

No one should feel like they are doing this alone.

- Pair new leaders with experienced leaders
- Check in regularly and offer guidance
- Share resources and best practices

Support builds confidence and keeps volunteers engaged.

5. Recognize and Appreciate Contributions

Volunteers stay involved when they feel valued.

- Thank people personally and often
- Recognize contributions publicly when appropriate
- Celebrate both large and small efforts

Recognition strengthens commitment and builds culture.

6. Check In and Adjust as Needed

Strong units regularly evaluate how things are going.

- Ask volunteers how they're doing
- Adjust roles or expectations if needed
- Provide feedback and encouragement

Ongoing communication helps volunteers grow and succeed. Strong programs don't happen by accident—they are built by supported, confident volunteers. When you intentionally recruit, train, and support your leaders, you create a team that delivers a great experience for every Scout.

