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2025 Troop Recruitment Guidebook

I present this information to you as Scoutmaster for Troop 67 who has faced their own recruiting challenges. I am passionate about ensuring this program has the youth to continue, but recognize that the recruiting landscape has changed since I first got involved. The landscape has changed significantly. There are different family dynamics and a number of different communication tools that shape how communities involve with local programs. With that in mind, I've done my best to compile this guide using insights and materials from councils across the country that have demonstrated a strong track record of recruitment success.

That said, I fully recognize that a one-size-fits-all approach doesn't work across our entire Council. Each district, community, and unit faces its own unique set of circumstances. What works in one area may not be effective in another.

If you find that parts of this plan don't align with your local needs or aren't yielding the results you're hoping for, I strongly encourage you to reach out to your District Membership Chair and District Executive. They're here to support you and help tailor an approach that works for your specific situation.

- Blue Hen – Jason Neff Membership Chair, neffjasonm@gmail.com
- Blue Crab – Cory Polidore, District Chair, Pack185cubmaster@gmail.com
- Chesapeake – Christina Pouliot, District Chair, christina.pouliot@gmail.com
- Coastal – Mike Pearson, Membership Chair, mdpearson217@gmail.com
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Thank you for all you do to grow Scouting in your community. Your efforts make a difference.

Yours in Scouting,
John Walker
Council Membership Chair
Del-Mar-Va Council

NEW MEMBER COORDINATOR

Having a dedicated volunteer that can provide leadership to recruiting and onboarding new families is vital. This volunteer position is called a New Member Coordinator.

Position Concept:

A registered member of the Troop committee that leads and promotes recruitment programs and onboards new families so the pack can achieve its membership goals.

Responsibilities:

- Attend the annual recruitment training to get resources and updates on recruiting.
- Set a new scout membership goal and work with your district's membership team on plans to achieve it by November 30. A good goal to consider is 10-15% growth per year.
- Support the growth of the local Pack. We know that the easiest kids to recruit into a Troop are kids that are already in a Pack.
- Build relationships with local middle schools, high schools, and Charter Organizations.
- Provide the leadership in planning, organizing, marketing and the execution of your Troop Join Scouts events, targeting each school your Troop draws from.
- Coordinate opportunities for your Troop to be at community and school events to promote Scouting and generate new leads of prospective families.
- Build a culture in your Troop that is welcoming to all families and where all members are promoters and recruiters. Advocate for a 'Scout led' culture.
- Keep your Troop's BeAScout.org pin up-to-date. [Click Here](#) to view an instructional video.
- Timely follow up with BeAScout.org leads and applications.
- Collaborate with the Troop Committee to allocate a recruitment budget.

Time Considerations:

Attend regular unit committee meetings.

Attend the Annual Recruitment training in your area.

Planning and attending your units recruitment events.

Calling and visiting local institutions to promote Scouting.

THE PLAN

Sustainable Troop growth ensures a vibrant and active program. New Scouts also bring in potential new leaders, energizing the Troop and ensuring continuity of leadership. This guide outlines a practical, adaptable strategy for successful recruitment. This guidebook will walk you through how to make any recruitment you hold a success.

This guidebook is designed to be interactive with our website <https://www.delmarvacouncil.org/recruitment-scoutsbsa/>. You will find many great resources that will help you with recruiting new families.

This Troop Recruitment Plan has three key elements:

- 1) Every unit should plan to hold at least 2 Join Scout Events in the Fall and 1 in the Spring. *Make sure you report these dates back to your Membership Chair.*
- 2) This plan is flexible and allows units to select recruitments and dates that work best for the schools and communities that we hope to recruit families from. *Every community is different!*
- 3) There must be direct and consistent communication with prospective families so they stay engaged year-round so they know they can join at any time. *Ideally, there should be one point of contact per school. Be sure to coordinate with neighbors.*

STEP ONE: PREPARE

Start by ensuring your Troop has a solid, exciting annual program that showcases the adventures Scouts will experience such as campouts, merit badges, leadership development, and service projects. A well-organized Troop calendar is a powerful recruitment tool.

Once the Troop program is planned, a complement recruitment plan can be developed. Use the [Troop Recruitment Plan](#) to help you and to communicate recruitment dates with the volunteer membership team and professional staff.

Part of your preparation should be reaching out to teachers, administrators and the parent-teacher groups at the schools your Troop draws from. Maintaining positive relationships with these people and groups will help your Troop have access to promote Scouting and your recruitment events.

Keep your Troop's BeAScout.org pin up-to-date. The [BeAScout.org](https://www.beascout.org) website is on all recruitment materials and will be the first thing families see if they are searching Scouting online. Prospective parents can reach out with questions and families that have visited your Troop can join and pay electronically. However, it only works if your pin is up-to-date. [Click Here](#) for more information on how to manage your Troop's BeAScout.org pin.

STEP TWO: IDENTIFY

Successful recruitments happen when families have been personally invited to attend. There are many ways to get the word out about your recruitments. [Click Here](#) to view and order all the recruiting resources Del-Mar-Va Council has, to help promote your recruitment event. You can complete this order form as many times as you like to order enough materials for events year round.

National Scouting America also has plenty of resources available. [Click here](#) to view those.

It is important to also build an invite list of families that may want to join Scouting. Being at community events allows you to engage with families and collect their contact information. All contacts made should be put into a simple invite list. Direct communication and invitations to this list is the best way to ensure that families will show up and join at your recruitment events. Here are some ways to build an invite list:

- Participate in school events like a Meet the Teacher or STEAM Night and have a fun activity kids can do. Collect contact information from parents and add them to your invite list.
- Host 'Scout Skills' or 'Troop Sampler' activities at schools or community groups.
- Ask current families in your Troop to provide names of other families that might want to join Scouting.
- Work with your Charter Organization to secure a list of families.
- Add leads you have from BeAScout.org.
- Work with your district membership team to get a list of youth who have dropped out of Scouting. **We have lists of youth who are in 5th grade who didn't cross over into Troops.**
- Review your pack's social media accounts for families that have liked or shared things off your pages but are not members.

However you create a list, it is important that you maintain consistent communication. Your invite list should always be growing. You should always be adding new prospects to the list. *Families should only come off the list if they join or say they're not interested.*

There are different ways to keep and manage an invite list. It can be through an excel spread sheet or with a free account through an email communication site like MailChimp.

STEP THREE: PROMOTE

Promoting your recruitment events early and often is key to getting new families to join. In the previous step you should have familiarized yourself with the many promotional materials available to your pack. Use the [Promotional Back Dater](#) to help you plan out the promotion of your recruitment events.

New Scout Sign-Up Events are themed so they can be easily promoted to the community and your local school. You can view them all on the delmarvacouncil.org/recruitment-scoutsbsa/ website. Make sure that all print and digital promotional communication has the **Date, Time and location**.

Here are some key steps to make sure your recruitment gets properly promoted.

Enlist the help of every family currently in your Troop to:

- Put up yard signs, posters and fliers around the community.
- Use peer-to-peer cards to invite friends to recruitments.
- Liking and sharing your Troop's social media posts and recruitment events.

Use all methods of communication in your school and Charter Organization to promote your recruitment. This includes:

- Print fliers sent home and digital fliers in parents' emails
- Messaging in emails from the principal and parent/teacher groups.
- Announcements made over the school PA system and on the school marquee.

Since each district has different accesses, we encourage you to quickly chat with your District Membership Chair.

STEP FOUR: SIGN THEM UP

Everything that you have done up to this point has been so that new families are aware of how, when and where to join Scouting. Make sure your recruitment is easy to find with enough signage. Everything about a recruitment should make it so that families can and want to sign up. This can not be overstated. Here are some easy ways to ensure this happens:

- **Make a good first impression.** Make sure new families can find your meeting easily. Ensure families are welcomed when they arrive, and they are given a [Joining](#) and [youth application](#) packet. Have all families sign in and provide their contact information.
- **Immediately involve the kids in the activity that the Troop is doing.** Parents can be whisked to the side in casual conversation with leaders. This is the beginning of the new Scout forming relationships with their peers. Wherever possible, give them the space to do that.
- Make sure new families are introduced to Troop leaders and other new families. Show them that there are families already volunteers and that there are other new families just like them.

Here are some things to consider and remember for your New Scout Sign-up Night.

- **Keep it casual.** Cub Scout Join Nights are typically a presentation. For Troop Join Nights, we recommend a more casual approach where the kids participate in the scheduled activity while the parents talk one on one on the side with existing volunteers.
- **Don't recruit leaders.** Remember you are trying to sign up Scouts. Leaders should be recruited before the sign-up event or at the parent orientation. Many families will not sign up on the spot because of the pressure of being asked to be a leader.
- Share details on the next meeting with new families. They need and want to know when they can start their adventure.

Make sure to review all applications when families turn them in. If there is any incomplete information, have the families fill it in. Doing this will save time and ensure families are registered quickly. **Or better yet have them complete online applications.**

Regardless of how you run your recruitment, remember this: Most families will come ready to join your Troop. They simply need to be asked. Don't let families walk away without asking them to complete the application for their child. For the few families that want to think about it. Encourage them to complete the application anyways. This way they don't lose it or forget about it. Having the completed application will give you all the information you need to stay in contact with the family.

SUBMIT AND APPROVE APPLICATIONS

After families have left your recruitment event review and organize the applications and payments. Applications collected without payment should be kept in a separate pile. Ensure all applications are signed by the Scoutmaster or Committee Chair and are filled out completely. Match payments with applications. If payments are made out to your Troop please be ready to write a check to Del-Mar-Va Council or that appropriate funds are in your Troop account at the Scout Store to pay for those applications. [Click here](#) to see the National Registration and Del-Mar-Va Council Fee structure, [click here](#) to see the membership assistance application.

If families are submitting online applications, have a way for unit leadership to accept them during the sign-up night. This can be as simple as a phone or iPad.

If not given to a District Executive or membership team member on the night of your recruitment, the following items should be turned in within 72 hours of your recruitment event:

- All completed youth applications
- All completed adult applications
- Matching payments for all applications being turned in
- A copy of the sign in sheet – be sure to keep one for yourself!
- Any recruitment materials that the Troop does not need

STEP FIVE: ENGAGE

Send an email or text to all families that attended your recruitment within 24 hours and call every family within three days. Families will want to hear from you and are excited to start their adventure. Don't wait to welcome them. Ensure they get a personal invite to your next meeting or activity. ASMs or Committee Members should make welcome phone calls to their new families. You cannot over communicate between a family joining and them attending their first Troop event. Consider sending new families the following as you communicate with them:

- Access to or copy of the Troop calendar
- Contacts for key leaders
- Invites to join the Troop's social media pages
- Invite and instructions to Scoutbook PDF guide [here](#)

Don't wait for a new family that has already signed up to show up again. If they do not feel welcomed or invited, they may decide to not come back.

The same time and effort should be made to follow-up with the families that did not sign up at your recruitment event. You should know which families these are based on the sign up sheet from the recruitment event. Follow up with each family with a phone call. Address any concerns they may have and offer to meet up with them so they can get signed up. Invite them to your next meeting or activity explaining they can come check out the program in action and then sign up.

Your invite list should also be followed up with after your recruitment event. Invite them to your next pack meeting or activity. Any families that showed up to your recruitment but who do not join should be kept on or added to your invite list.

Hold a Parent Orientation Night within two weeks of your recruitment. This can and should be for all parents of the Troop, not just new ones. A parent orientation should go into the business and operational details of the pack. These are things that did not need to be covered in detail during the sign up event. Things that should be covered include:

- Troop budget and fundraisers along with fundraising expectations for families. This should include a breakdown in the registration fee so families can see what the money is spent on.
- Troop leadership and structure. Families should know who does what and how that is important to the Troop program. Be sure this includes contact information.
- District and Council structure including District events, Summer Camp and the Scout Store.
- Leader training and [Safeguarding Youth Guidelines](#).

- A good amount of time should be spent on parent involvement and expectations. This is your chance to build a culture where every parent is helping.
- [Click here](#) for the Parent Orientation agenda.

STEP SIX: Deliver

The final step is **Deliver the Promise**. It is important that all the fun and adventure that was talked about at the recruitment events is delivered through the Troop program. If your program plan is followed and executed families will re-register and your Troop's retention rate will soar. Here are some things you can do to deliver the promise to your new families that have joined:

1. New Scouts should join a patrol and meet their assigned ASM within 30 days.
2. There is a fun outdoor activity families can participate in within their first 30 days. This can be as simple as the regularly scheduled Troop campout, but it's important to spend extra attention welcoming them specifically.

Membership recruitment is not an extra thing that needs to happen to get more Scouts to join your Troop. It is an essential operation that touches every part of the Troop. More youth equals:

- ✓ More parents to take on leadership roles
- ✓ More Scouts to provide service hours to the community
- ✓ More families to sell popcorn and raise funds for the pack
- ✓ MORE FUN because everyone is working together to support that Troop and ensure our Scouts have life-changing experiences

Annual Recruitment Timeline

JUNE/JULY

Set a date for your fall recruitment and start planning
Contact schools about your Troop fall recruitment events.
Attend community events to identify new families. And add them to your invite list.

AUGUST

Begin promoting your fall recruitment events.
Attend back to school open house and “Meet the Teacher” events at your local schools.
Attend Pack Join Scouting Nights to support them and potential Troop age recruits.
Communicate with your invite list and invite them to your Fall Recruitment Events.

SEPTEMBER

Hold New Scout Sign-Up Events.
Attend Pack Join Scouting Nights to support them and potential Troop age recruits.

OCTOBER

Hold a Parent Orientation within two weeks of your fall recruitment events.
Follow up with any families that have not signed up.

FEBRUARY

Set a date for your spring recruitment and start planning.
Attend Pack Blue and Golds to show support. Depending on Pack timeline, crossover
Send an email to your invite list inviting them to your 1st Troop meeting after crossover

MARCH

Identify new families to add to your invite list.
Conduct a peer-to-peer recruitment campaign.
Begin promoting your Spring Recruitment Event. Market directly to 5th graders

APRIL/MAY

Communicate with your invite list and invite them to your Spring Recruitment Event.
Hold a Spring Recruitment Event.
Attend Annual Membership Roundtable to get recruitment materials.