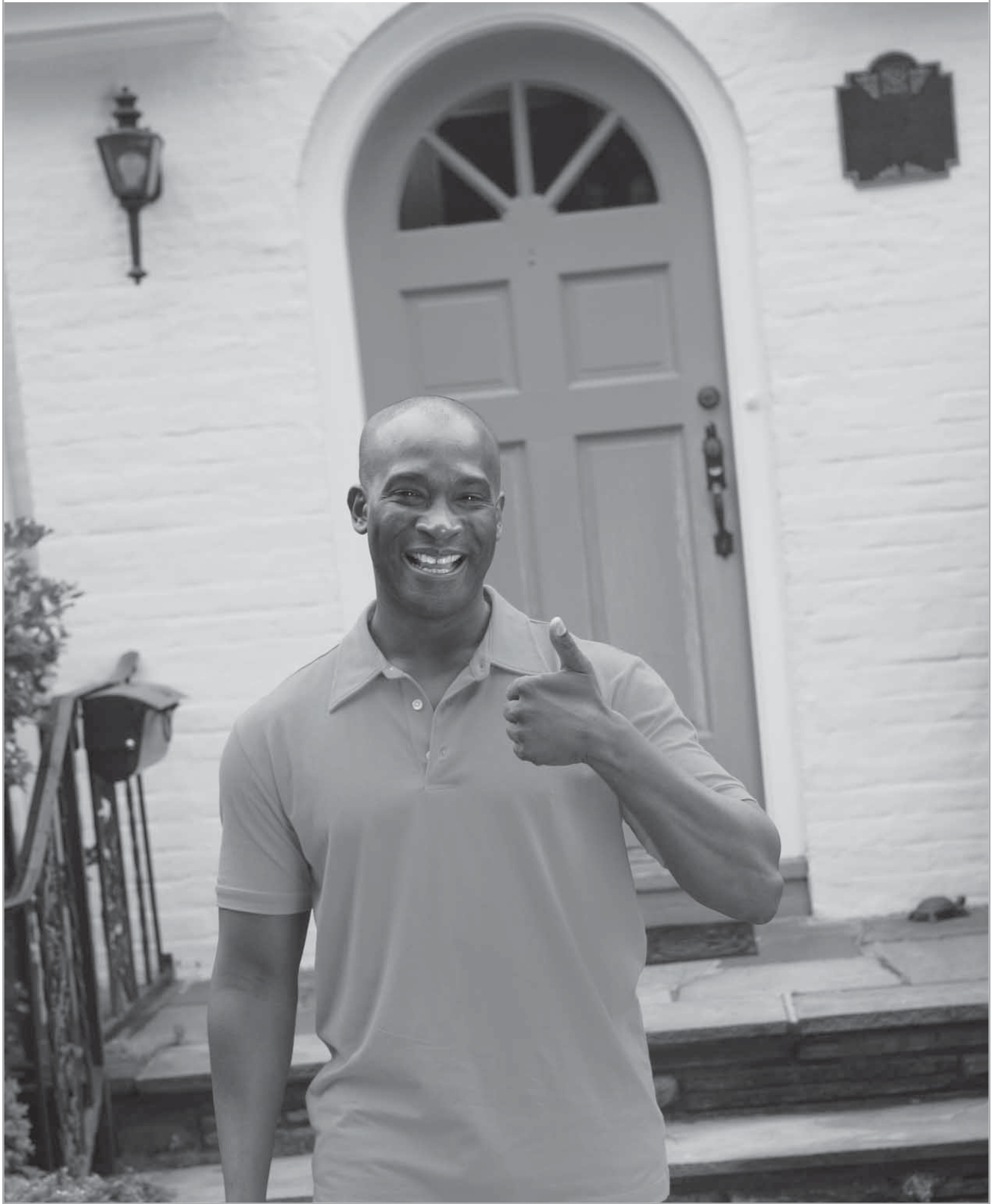


Unit Volunteer Recruiting



Adults can be identified and recruited in many ways; no single solution will do. As you work with chartered organizations, be prepared to try many approaches. The traditional BSA approach to recruiting unit adults is described in detail in *Selecting Cub Scout Leadership*, No. 510-500; and *Selecting Quality Leaders*, No. 522-981. Each folder outlines the following six steps for success. (1) A district Scouter meets with the head of the chartered organization to discuss how leaders will be selected. The head of the organization appoints a task force to select a new leader. (2) The task force develops a prospect list, rates each prospect, and rank orders the list. (3) An appointment is made with the top name on the list. (4) A team of people calls on the prospect to convince him/her to accept this opportunity for service to youth. (5) The new leader is welcomed at a special get-acquainted meeting. The application is approved by the head of the chartered organization or chartered organization representatives and the new leader is formally recognized. (6) The district Scouter sees that the new leader completes Fast Start training.

This plan works in some situations. However, in many rural areas, you may need other methods. The more sparsely populated or low-income an area is, the more you may need to try other methods. One option is for the district Scouter and the head of the organization to be the “task force” mentioned in the above six steps. If that is the case, take time to know the people in the community and gain their confidence. In everything you do, have a “recruiting attitude,” and develop this attitude among your volunteers. Get them to size up everyone they know and meet as to how they might help Scouting. Be “recruiter ready.”

You will need to be spontaneous; when only one person shows up for a recruiting meeting—you expected at least six!—silently set your agenda aside. Make that one person feel that he or she is the most important reason you came out tonight. Brainstorm names of people he knows who might help out. Mention various categories of adults in their lives (neighbors, co-workers, relatives, shopkeepers, church members, etc.). Be prepared to go, at a moment’s notice, to call on a prospect if suggested by others in the community. Check out the name with the head of the chartered organization. Take them with you. (Let them take you.)

For recruiting people new to Scouting, show them what other new people have done for kids. Send in someone who has just had a first success, not the “super Scouting expert.” Instill self-confidence; don’t take it away. And if people have had problems with Scouting before, or felt exploited, deal with their feelings in an open and honest manner.

The phone is a useful tool, but not for recruiting; you should recruit in person so that you can communicate your own commitment to Scouting and to the local community. Before you start, learn as much about your prospects as possible—how they think and live, what they like and dislike. Link Scouting to the needs and interests of the prospect. People’s survival needs often come first. Stress the benefits of Scouting to the prospect. People are far more likely to participate in programs that they see having an impact on their community.

You may find it is more effective if you first ask a person to help out with one task rather than asking for a commitment to be a leader. Many people who don’t initially feel comfortable with formal leadership structures are willing to help kids but need to gain confidence in their ability to lead and become comfortable with the program.

Beware of recruiter stereotypes about who is qualified to be a leader. People with little education; people from the most disadvantaged community; people who have never lead before can be effective leaders of youth. Don’t forget retired people; they have leisure time and valuable talents. Many senior citizens want to feel needed and Scouting can give them a worthwhile activity, help overcome their feelings of loneliness, and offer them an opportunity to work with young people or with other adults.

Practice patience, persistence, and flexibility. Be willing to meet and accept failure—but don’t give up! When you’ve made the “sale,” give the new recruit a specific task immediately, and offer training as soon as possible. Be prepared with step-by-step instructions about the job or tasks they are being asked to do.

If there is no unit committee, or if this is too structured an approach, try some of the alternative approaches below. But always check out the prospect with knowledgeable people, including the head of

the chartered organization or chartered organization representative. No matter what recruiting methods you use, the head of the chartered organization or chartered organization representative and the local council must approve the registration of the leader on the Adult Leader Application, No. 524-501.

Target Prospects

Learn about prospects from local opinion leaders.

Talk with people you know in the community about people who work well with youth. Work with local opinion leaders and influence groups to find people to help. Develop a trust level with the right people in the town or rural area; then get them to help you recruit. Spend time with an opinion leader in the area, just meeting and talking with people about Scouting. Brainstorm with key people in the chartered organization to develop a list of prospects. Never underestimate the importance of local opinion leaders.

With local helpers, go door-to-door to talk with local residents about helping kids, about the unit, and about the need for people to help. Get residents committed to attend a get-acquainted meeting a couple of days later to learn how Scouting can help local kids. Don't overlook mobile home parks, company housing, and remote villages.

Help a group of young people select and recruit a leader for their troop or crew. Hold a session with the kids, and ask them, "Who do you know whom you would like to have work with you?" Or—"If you had a question you had to ask somebody, what adult would you ask?" Kids are quick to identify adults they will trust and feel good about. The group probably will agree on a name or two. Check out the name with knowledgeable local persons, including the head of the chartered organization. Go with a group of the young people to ask the adult to be their leader. If they have selected the right kind of person, the answer won't be "No."

Arrange to visit school classrooms to interest children in Scouting, followed the same night, or the next night, with a get-acquainted-with-Scouting meeting. In each classroom, give children a colorful flyer promoting the meeting and indicating that their "ticket of admission" is an adult. Tell each class that no child will be admitted without at least one adult (parent, neighbor, older brother or sister,

godparent, foster parent, other relative, or adult friend). Children can influence adults to attend. You will have a group of people to work with at the get-acquainted meeting.

Give old unit field sheets to a knowledgeable person in the organization or neighborhood to identify former Scouts or committee members who might be good prospects.

Hold Meetings

Before a recruiting meeting, type several clusters of specific unit committee tasks on no more than two sheets of paper. Keep them simple and avoid a lot of Scouting jargon. Beside each cluster of tasks, put a place to write a name and phone number. At the get-acquainted-with-Scouting meeting, parents' meeting, or other meeting, give each person this worksheet. Have each person put their name next to the task they would most like to do. Have everybody put everybody else's name and phone by the tasks they have selected. Then get the group to suggest who should be the unit leader. Have a person who is truly "pre-recruited" agree during the meeting to help out or be on the committee. That will encourage others to agree to help.

These are some of the meetings you might want to hold:

A corporate rural emphasis luncheon. Work with your district chairman or other key county Scouter to host a "rural emphasis luncheon" of top corporate leaders of the county. Include an inspiring challenge of the opportunities to bring Scouting to rural kids. Corporate leaders are then asked to recruit, through their own personal invitation, or by invitation of their department heads, people to help serve these areas. They select people who they know are competent and have some reason to be interested in the local area. You follow up with each company and each volunteer, placing them in the most appropriate unit or unit service position. Some employers may even give the person released time to carry out Scouter responsibilities.

A get-acquainted-with-Scouting night. Use any of the methods outlined above, or others that fit the local area, to encourage people to attend a get-acquainted-with-Scouting night to discuss local youth needs and

Scouting opportunities. At the meeting, people can be recruited to help out in various ways. At the get-acquainted meeting, help the group feel good about Scouting. Be inspirational. Answer all questions. With the help of other Scouters, local religious leaders, and other local leaders, inform the group about Scouting. Then, recruit people to support the unit and get commitments that very night.

A local coffee, lunch, barbecue, or dessert meeting.

Work with a key grassroots Scouter or local opinion leader to host this meeting of local prospects. The location could be a home, business, restaurant, club, or farm co-op in the area to be served.

A parents' meeting. Ask them to recruit the best person in the community to lead their sons.

The two ideas below are less conventional, but they might work for you:

Ask a few chartered organizations (business, church, or social agency) to provide leaders from among their employees, giving them released time from their job.

Bring in a neighboring troop to put on a town fair or mini Scouting-in-action show in the town square, shopping center, or churchyard. Let everybody in the community participate—hands on. Recruit new leaders on the spot.

An ideal resource is *Best Methods for District Volunteers Serving Rural Communities*, No. 7-504. Each kit contains eight easy-to-use folders on unit service, recruiting adults, training adults, unit funding, organizing units, unit programs, special activities, and boy and leader success stories. Like this guidebook, each folder contains ideas that supplement the information in conventional BSA literature. Photocopy individual folders as needed to use in training, coaching, and self-study for district volunteers.

Are Local Leaders the Best?

Sometimes councils get into a debate over the relative merits of recruiting local, inexperienced unit leaders or more experienced unit leaders from “outside” to work with kids. Some will say that “imported” leaders are better because they:

- Are more confident
- Have more Scouting experience
- Can give Scouting a higher priority
- Have more time
- Reflect traditional Scouting

Others will point out that insiders are best because they

- Feel more comfortable in the area
- Better understand the boys and families served
- Are more personally motivated
- Can more easily get additional help
- Know the real opinion leaders and influence groups

Try to avoid the debate. Recognize that you need *both*: you need all the help you can get. Learn to use both—building on the strengths and compensating for the weaknesses of each. And, deal with individuals, not labels.

Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award

This national award is used by local councils to recognize an adult or an organization that has made an outstanding contribution in providing Scouting for low-income rural or urban youth. The award nominee must have demonstrated significant accomplishments in some combination of the specific criteria listed on the award application, No. 523-427. The contribution may have been at any level of Scouting, but must involve Scouting advocacy for low-income rural or urban people.

Nominees are to be screened carefully by a committee appointed by the council president. Nominations are then submitted to the national Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award committee for review and approval before the award is announced. An appropriate award ceremony is conducted at an auspicious council or district event. The application contains details.

Also see *Best Methods for Multicultural Markets Growth*, No. 523-035, for a detailed outline of how one council organized a successful Whitney M. Young Jr. Service Award banquet.