
ROUNDTABLES

THE ROLE OF ROUNDTABLES



Roundtables provide unit service that will assist unit leaders in preparing their youth to live the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Roundtables support unit leaders through delivering effective program ideas, relationship development, and timely communication.

Roundtables also provide an opportunity for sharing experiences and enjoying fun and fellowship with other leaders.

There are two main purposes of Roundtable:

- First. To provide **the skill to do**—skills, techniques, information, program ideas—the know-how that makes for successful unit operation.
- Second. To provide unit leadership with **the will to do**—the morale, enthusiasm, inspiration, and vision that periodically renew the desire to serve youth.

When skillfully executed, the Roundtable experience will inspire, motivate, and enable unit leaders to provide a stronger program for their youth.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND ROUNDTABLES?

All unit leaders, unit committee members, chartered organization representatives (CORs) and commissioners should attend Roundtable, but in the busy world today, it is understood that with everyone's full schedules that all leaders might not be able to attend EVERY monthly Roundtable.

But it is almost ALWAYS possible that at least one leader from each unit is available to attend the monthly Roundtable.

Some units schedule rotations for their leaders to attend Roundtable to make sure there is always someone there each month.

SUPPORT OTHER SCOUTERS



LET OTHER SCOUTERS
SUPPORT YOU

ROUNDTABLE LEADERSHIP

National Roundtable Support:

The National Commissioner Service Staff Roundtable Chair provides National-level support to the BSA Roundtable program. This support includes program-specific materials and Roundtable resources to support everyone involved with providing a Roundtable program.



The Roundtable Chair is supported by various subject matter expert volunteers. These volunteers are recruited from the various National Program Committees and council and district-level volunteers familiar with providing Effective Roundtables.

The subject matter experts on the national program committees develop the program material used at Roundtable and the Roundtable Team executes the established program materials into the local district Roundtable programs.

The National BSA Roundtable materials are outstanding resources for all levels of commissioners and Scout leaders but they are specifically intended as resources for Roundtable Commissioners and their Assistants to use at Roundtables.

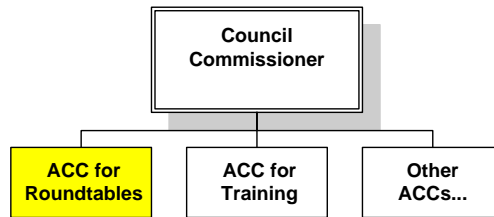
Council Roundtable Support:

Every local council provides additional Roundtable resources for their districts. These resources are intended to support the districts within the council, based on their current commissioner structure. It is recommended that each council have at least one Assistant Council Commissioner (ACC) for Roundtable to provide Council Roundtable support to each district.



The ACC for Roundtable reports directly to the Council Commissioner. They are responsible to conduct an annual council-wide roundtable planning meeting with all districts followed up by a mid-year review. This helps to standardize District Roundtables.

The ACC for Roundtables is authorized by the Council Commissioner to work directly with the District Commissioner, ADC for Roundtables or the program specific Roundtable Commissioners as appropriate, to meet the varying needs of the council and individual districts.

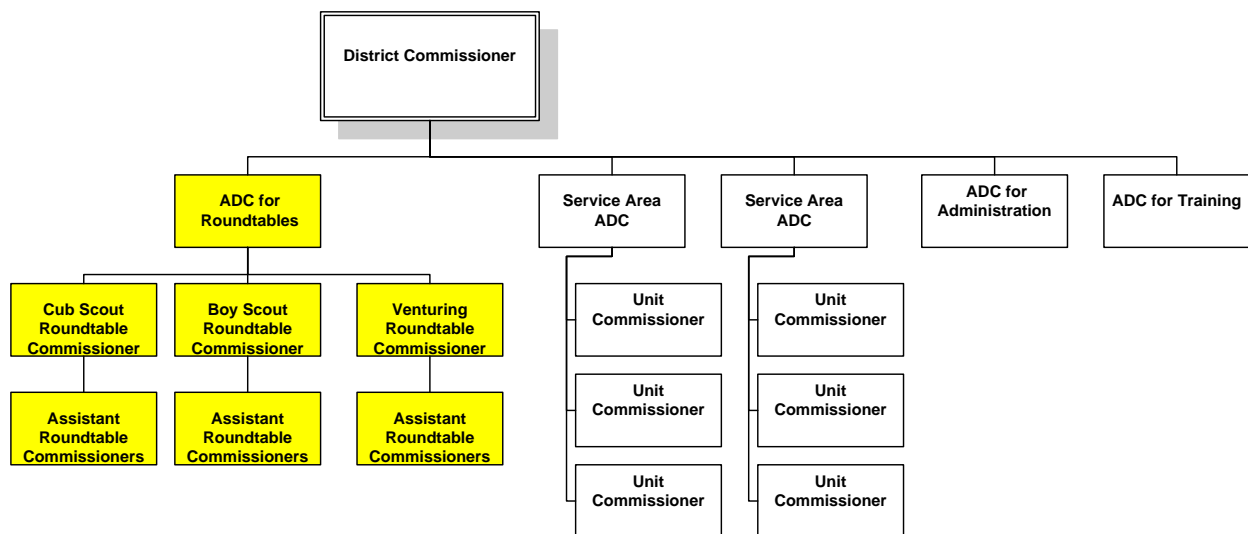


District Roundtable Support:

The Assistant District Commissioner (ADC) for Roundtable reports directly to the District Commissioner. Their role is to oversee the Cub Scout Roundtable Commissioner, the Scouts BSA Roundtable Commissioner, and the Venturing Roundtable Commissioner within their respective district.



Under certain circumstances, some districts may not have enough staff for a separate ADC for Roundtable, so they may choose to have the specific program Roundtable Commissioners share the responsibilities of the ADC and have them all report directly to the District Commissioner for their program.



ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONERS



The responsibilities of a Roundtable Commissioner are similar for each program (Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturing).

The responsibility of a Roundtable Commissioner is to conduct a Roundtable to help units address their needs by providing **the skill to do** and **the will to do** and through discussing unit issues and linking units to district resources. It is the differences in each of the programs that create the need in each district to have separate program Roundtable Commissioners.

Roundtable Commissioners are normally responsible for their entire Roundtable program: from planning to executing, to evaluating the effectiveness, to implementing positive changes and then starting the process all over all again.

In order to be successful, it is highly recommended that Roundtable Commissioners should have an Annual Planning Session, quarterly or semi-annual update meetings and monthly team meetings.

All Roundtable Commissioners and their respective Assistant Roundtable Commissioners should attend the monthly District Commissioner's Staff Meeting and they should provide appropriate updates related to District Roundtables and local unit needs, as appropriate, to the District Commissioner either directly or through the Assistant District Commissioner for Roundtable.

There are usually too many moving parts in a well-run Roundtable for one person to reasonably handle, so that is why recruiting a great team of Assistant Roundtable Commissioners is essential.

ROUNDTABLE FUN

In addition to providing great ideas and information, every Roundtable Commissioner is responsible to make Roundtable Fun! Roundtable should have a portion of the time dedicated to having fun! How to have fun with each program will differ based on the capacity and the maturity of the youth.



HAVE FUN!

"The spirit is in there in every boy;

it has to be discovered and brought to light.”

--- Sir Baden-Powell

Roundtables should emulate a well-run, interesting unit meeting for leaders to bring back and implement back in their home units. Youth at all levels of the Scouting program should be having fun, or they will leave and find other fun activities to participate in instead.

The acronym KISMIF is often used in Scouting and applies to Roundtable too (Keep It Simple, Make It Fun).

ASSISTANT ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONERS AND THE ROUNDTABLE TEAM

Every Roundtable Commissioner should have a team of support staff to help them provide the best Roundtable possible. Assistant Roundtable Commissioners are that Support Team!



It is the responsibility of the Roundtable Commissioner to recruit enough individuals to meet the specific needs for the size and program type of their Roundtable. There are no limits to the number of Assistant Roundtable Commissioners that can be on the Roundtable Team.



However, there should also never be less than one Assistant Roundtable Commissioner for each program to serve as a back-up for each of the program specific Roundtable Commissioners.

The unit leaders expect Roundtable to always happen as scheduled. The show must go on every month, even if the Roundtable Commissioner has a conflict and cannot attend. This is why you should always have at least one Assistant Roundtable Commissioner.

There are no limits to the number of Assistant Roundtable Commissioners (ARTCs) you may have in a district. There are several specific areas of duties that may be assigned to an Assistant Roundtable Commissioner.

Program-Specific ARTCs should be assigned to work with a particular Scouting program (Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA or Venturing Roundtables).

New Member Coordinator ARTCs are a new position that both models the use of a New Member Coordinator (NMC) for unit leaders and fulfills similar responsibilities for the Roundtable Team. These ARTCs welcome new leaders to Roundtable, track attendance, and becomes a friendly face at Roundtable to help build those first relationships with new leaders. This individual should collect contact information for participants and follow up

with them to make sure Roundtable is meeting their needs. This ARTC may wear a Commissioner polo shirt or a NMC shirt, along with a NMC Vest to readily identify them to new participants. NMC's help build relationships with new leaders.

Specific Assignment ARTCs can be used to fill any specific position that would help the Roundtable Commissioner. These include ARTCs responsible for any specific program elements.

USING ROUNDTABLE IN UNIT SERVICE

Roundtable has sometimes been called "Group Unit Service." But Roundtable Commissioners also consult individually with unit leaders before and after the formal meetings. All of these are ways Roundtable provides Unit Service.

Roundtable is a critical piece of successful unit service in our districts. Roundtable is also the front line of unit service. Roundtable Commissioners often learn about unit needs in the group and individual discussions that occur at Roundtable. Roundtable Commissioners should also be familiar with who is attending and who isn't.... or who isn't anymore.

Units, especially newer units and newer leaders, emulate what they learn from being at Roundtable. Roundtables are full of energy and information that will help units put on a successful program back at home. Roundtable is also an excellent source for networking with other Scouters.

It is recommended that District Commissioners fully utilize and document all of the Unit Service opportunities provided by the Roundtable Team in Commissioner Tools.

Roundtables transcend all of the Five Focus Areas for Commissioners:

The FIVE Focus Areas for Commissioners

- 1. Supporting unit growth and retention through the journey to excellence.**
- 2. Making meaningful unit contacts that capture in commissioner tools their strengths, needs, and a unit service plan that enables continuing improvement.**
- 3. Linking unit needs to district operating committee and other resources.**
- 4. Supporting timely unit, district, and council charter renewals.**
- 5. Supporting unit leaders by delivering effective roundtables that provide program ideas, relationship development, and timely communication.**

How do Roundtables support the FIVE Focus Areas for Commissioners?

- 1. Supporting unit growth and retention.** Roundtable provides a great opportunity to educate units how to grow their units and providing an effective program is the best thing a unit can do to retain their youth and their unit leaders.
- 2. Contacting units.** Roundtable is the perfect place for Unit Commissioners and the Roundtable Team to meet new unit leaders and augment other types of unit contacts. Roundtable should also be part of every unit service plan for continuous improvement.
- 3. Linking unit needs to resources.** There is no better place to link units with district and other resources than a district Roundtable. Roundtable is a great place to meet and network with all district leaders and to discuss unit needs and expectations.
- 4. Supporting timely charter renewals.** Unit leaders that are active in Roundtable are normally much more proactive in completing their charter renewals. Roundtable provides instructions and reminders on how to routinely maintain the units' youth and leader registrations throughout the year and special classes can be provided on how to effectively manage the recharter process.

5. Delivering effective roundtables. Effective Roundtables are essential to unit service by ensuring program ideas, relationship development and timely communication is provided to support all unit leaders. Roundtable should be the place to be in every district to obtain updates, networking opportunities and to learn how to make Scouting fun for our youth.

TRAINING FOR THE ROUNDTABLE TEAM

You have certainly heard the term “Every Scout Deserves a Trained Leader.” Well, Roundtable is one of the most important events held in a district to provide training and updated policies for unit leaders (including unit committee members).

The Roundtable Commissioner and other Roundtable team members should also be properly trained so that they will be able to present material and teach skills at the Roundtables in an interesting way.

Roundtables are too important to leave the training of the Roundtable Team personnel to chance. There are unlimited opportunities for staff training.



Some examples of available training for the Roundtable Commissioner and Roundtable team:

- Roundtable team members should have previously attended the leader specific training courses and the council’s Train the Trainer and/or Trainer’s EDGE Conferences.
- Personal coaching by the District Commissioner or the Roundtable Commissioner from Commissioner guides and current Roundtable Planning Guides.
- E-Learning modules on My.Scouting and Scouting U.
- Wood Badge
- Roundtable Commissioner and Roundtable team training conferences.
- Council roundtable team workshops and commissioner’s conferences
- College of Commissioner Science or universities of Scouting
- National training conferences at various locations, including the Philmont Training Center (PTC), the Summit (SBR) and the Florida Sea Base (FSB).



DISTRICT COMMISSIONER SUPPORT FOR THE ROUNDTABLE TEAM

The tone of the Roundtable Team’s routine interactions is normally set by the Roundtable Commissioner, but it is essential that the Roundtable Team feels supported by the District Commissioner. Roundtable support is one of the primary responsibilities of all District Commissioners.



It is important to create a supportive climate which motivates people to do their best. Create a climate of “good old Scouting spirit.” When this is a built-in part of the Roundtable, it will rub off on the leaders who attend.

- Provide information. Open communications are important. Keep the team updated on material necessary to Roundtable. This update may occur at your roundtable team meetings.
- Make assignments to fit the talents and abilities of the team members. Once the assignments are made, check with team members to see how you can help.
- Make sure everyone has a meaningful responsibility. This is a very important part of a successful roundtable. Sharing responsibilities makes everyone’s job easier.
- Be sure the team knows what is expected. Give each team member a copy of the monthly agenda and assignments.
- It is helpful if the team member is recruited to back up one or two basic parts of the roundtable.
- Use team meetings to good advantage. Don’t hold pointless meetings or let the meetings stray too far off the track. Time is valuable to everyone.
- Show confidence in individual team members and the team as a whole. Let them know you expect and count on them to do their best.
- Every Scout volunteer wants to be successful in their service and everyone needs to feel that they are supported in their position. Roundtable Teams should lead by example!
- The Roundtable Team are all commissioners and should have commissioner recognition properly tracked by the District Commissioner.



RECOGNITION FOR THE ROUNDTABLE TEAM

Provide frequent recognition for both the Roundtable Team and Roundtable participants.

Give credit openly for good results. Remember to say a simple “thank you” for a job well done.

There are multiple ways to creatively recognize the Roundtable Team on an informal basis and always remember to thank them for the time they spend, that alone goes a long way.

The District Commissioner should also make sure the team is recognized with the appropriate Scouting training and service awards (e.g. Arrowhead Honor, Commissioner Key, Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service and the Distinguished Commissioner Service Award).



RECOGNITION FOR ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

Make sure the participants are recognized with attendance awards and make sure you thank them often for attending Roundtable and for the unit service that they provide. Make participant recognition fun.



- Thank You Awards Sent to their Units
- Attendance Awards
- Guest Speaker Letter of Appreciation
- Random “Fun” Awards
 - Most Distance Travelled
 - Unit with the Most Participants, etc

PLANNING ROUNDTABLES

If you want to be successful, quality Roundtables require significant Planning. Roundtables should be planned on both a long-range and a short-range basis.

Planning for the next year starts at the end of the Scouting year. This is called the Annual Planning Conference.

Regular Planning updates on a semi-annual or quarterly basis are also recommended to discuss any major program updates to the Roundtable plan; such as discussing a new advancement policy that has been recently released.

Short-term planning is essential to make sure all Roundtable assignments and logistic issues are confirmed.

The monthly planning meeting is extremely important for roundtables to be effective. This meeting is held during the month before the Roundtable presentation to verify everything is ready to go.

Effective Roundtables:

How do we deliver Effective Roundtables? First, we must define what a successful Roundtable should look like. Roundtable really consists of two parts: (1) Building Relationships with unit and district leaders and (2) providing Unit Service.

Relationships: If you do not develop a relationship with those you serve, then the service you provide will be limited to the presentations given at your Roundtable. If you seek first to develop relationships at Roundtable, then you will create an environment of learning where everyone feels comfortable discussing their unit needs with the Roundtable Team either during the Roundtable sessions or after the formal meetings. This is why developing relationships is one of the key purposes listed in the Five Focus Areas for Commissioners.

Unit Service: Provide Unit Service that is appropriate to the needs of your local district. We should always support unit leaders by delivering effective roundtables that provide program ideas, networking, and timely communication that is tailored to the uniqueness of your district.



Now that we all know something about what a Roundtable should look like we need to discuss the basics of Planning Roundtables.

Some Basic Steps to Consider in Roundtable Planning.

- 1) Determine the needs of the units in your district. Talk to your District Commissioner and your District Chair to assist in identifying areas that they feel should be improved.
- 2) Review the calendars that affect units in your district. Look at the district and council calendars for activities and training events. Try to highlight these events to increase participation of the units. Also, review the public calendars in your area from the city, county, schools and other church and civic organizations.
- 3) There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Utilize all available resources for your Roundtables. There are numerous BSA publications and other resources to choose from when preparing for your Roundtable.
- 4) Survey your participants to see what topics they need. But remember, Roundtable is intended for supplemental program training. Roundtable is not for basic leader specific training topics.
- 5) Work with the district committee members and the district commissioner's staff and other subject matter experts to provide presentations and support to your unit leaders.
- 6) The final step, we will discuss is making your Roundtable worth the effort to attend. If you are providing the resources and relationships needed for Unit Service in your district, your Roundtables will be a success! If participants feel the information is of little or no value, then the unit leaders will stop coming.

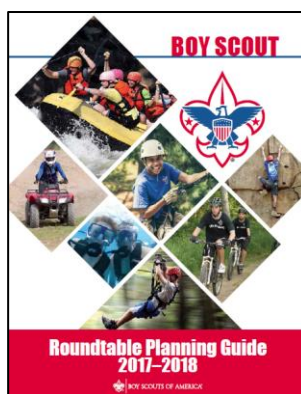
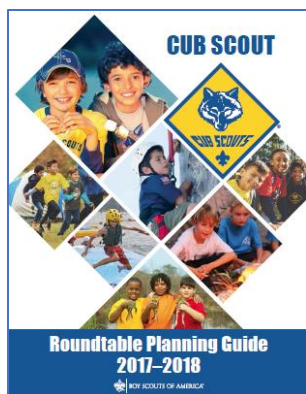


*** Successful Roundtables are all about building Relationships and providing Unit Service. ***



USING THE ROUNDTABLE PLANNING GUIDES

Roundtable Planning Guides and other resources provided by the National BSA are all wonderful options for you to use, but you should always use what is most appropriate for the needs of your district while still following the current BSA guidelines.



The current Roundtable Planning Guides are always available on the BSA Commissioner Website on the BSA Roundtable Support Page.

<https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable-support/>

ROUNDTABLE LENGTH AND FORMAT

The length and format of each Roundtable should be based on the needs of each district.

If your district covers a large geographical area then the Roundtable should be worth the time it takes to travel to and from the event.

The most common two roundtable program plans include options with combined group formats and leader break-out formats.

Roundtables lengths also depend on the needs of each district and templates are available in 60-90-120 & 180-minute formats. These templates are available in the Roundtable Planning Guides and on the BSA National Commissioner Roundtable Support webpage.

The normal length of most Roundtables is 60 minutes without leader breakouts and 90 minutes with leader breakouts. Longer Roundtables may be needed for districts with long-distance travel or for other local reasons.



PROGRAM SPECIFIC ROUNDTABLES

There are separate program specific roundtables for each of the three major programs we support (Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, and Venturing). Each program has its own specific Roundtable Planning Guide and numerous supporting publications.

Each district should determine how to implement the most effective Roundtable program in their district that best meets their local needs. However, since the programs are so distinctly different there should at a minimum be a separate Roundtable program provided in each district for each of the three program areas (Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, and Venturing).



Each of these program areas (Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, and Venturing) should have their own Roundtable Commissioner. A minimum of one Assistant Roundtable Commissioner for each program area should also be the

minimum. This provides support to each Roundtable Commissioner and they serve as a back-up resource for the program-specific Roundtable Commissioners.

Roundtable is a year-long program and should meet monthly. The Assistant Roundtable Commissioner should be available to fill in anytime the Roundtable Commissioner is unavailable.



Your unit leaders are depending on you, the Roundtable Program must go on!

TECHNOLOGY AND ROUNDTABLE DELIVERY

The more that technology improves, the more opportunities there are to harness technology to support the Roundtable program.

Technology supported Roundtable information is especially important for use in remote districts and for Scout Leaders that need to access Roundtable information when they cannot participate in a traditional Roundtable event.

Roundtable should encourage the use of technology to ensure that Roundtable meetings are adequately promoted and that the meetings engage and empower the volunteers.



It is also possible to explore the use of technology to support those who are not able to attend the meetings in person or to otherwise distribute materials and resources to assist the volunteers.

Audio/Video Conference calls and webinars have been effectively used in many areas and shared file sites and web page locations have also been successfully used to post electronic information about Roundtables.



One of the most important parts of Roundtable is the opportunity to interact with other Scouters.

ROUNDTABLE PROMOTION AND ATTENDANCE



Promotion is a key ingredient to increasing your roundtable attendance. You can and should promote your roundtable in multiple ways to reach multiple audiences.

Some suggestions are:

- Council and district newsletter or website
- Social media
- News releases and local media
- Monthly fliers
- Telephone or personal contact plan
- Inventive, simple gimmicks, etc.
- Trading post or service center posters
- Presentation of recognitions—national and local
- “Unit spotlight”—a different unit is featured each month
- Phone chains
- Agendas—the best way to get them back
- Mail announcements
- Email messages and Personal invitations!

Roundtable Attendance:

An important thing to remember about Roundtable Promotion is that you are competing for the valuable and limited time of the leaders. The more ways you promote Roundtable, the greater your success. The better your program is, the more likely they will tell someone else!

One of the greatest attendance and retention tools available to the Roundtable Team is the proper use of the New Member Coordinator (NMC) position. As previously discussed the NMC can assist in the tracking of participant attendance and contact those leaders that miss Roundtable and invite them to come to the next Roundtable.

The more leaders that attend, the greater the benefit will be for the youth programs.

The best measurement of how well you are promoting Roundtable is your attendance. A well-planned roundtable program will inspire leaders to try the program ideas they see, and they will want to come back for more ideas, fun, and fellowship.

The secret to better attendance is not in making people come to your roundtable meetings but in making them WANT to come!

...the place to be

Consider the following points regarding attendance:

- What is your current attendance—units and leaders?
- What is the potential for your district—units and leaders?
- What percentage of units and leaders are attending?
- What is your goal as roundtable commissioner?



Try the following ideas to help retain attendance:

- Attendance awards
- Traveling attendance trophy
- Door prizes or special drawings
- Refreshments

Tracking Roundtable Attendance in Commissioner Tools:



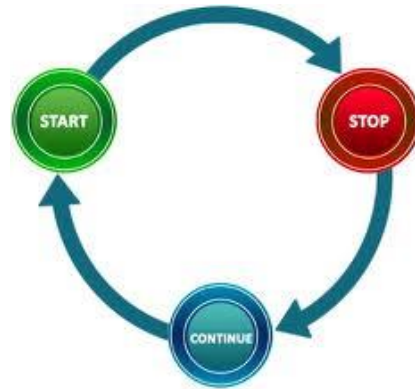
Roundtables are such a key part of Scouting's on-going training opportunities that we've long seen the need to track what is offered and what units attend Roundtable.

The Commissioner Task Force has updated the Roundtable program and brought focus upon the Roundtable Commissioner positions. Tracking attendance in Commissioner Tools provides you one of the metrics to measure the benefits of Roundtable.

AFTER ROUNDTABLE: TIME FOR EVALUATION: START, STOP, & CONTINUE

Take time for a Reflection Period after each monthly Roundtable.

It is the responsibility of the Roundtable Commissioner to reflect on the success of each Roundtable and continuously make improvements to their program.



An effective tool to use is the **Start, Stop, and Continue Method**.

- **Start** (What should we start doing that will make things better?)
- **Stop** (What should we stop doing because it is not helping?)
- **Continue** (What is our strength, and what is working well that we want to continue doing?)

After using the Start, Stop, and Continue Method, try to implement your improvements for future Roundtables.

ROUNDTABLE
FOR FUN AND
KNOW-HOW

SUMMARY

Roundtables are one of the most important events held in every district. They provide unit service that will assist unit leaders in preparing their youth to live the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Roundtables support unit leaders through delivering effective program ideas, relationship development, and timely communication.

Roundtables also provide an opportunity for sharing experiences and enjoying fun and fellowship with other leaders. Roundtables require proper staffing, proper planning, proper promotion and proper implementation.

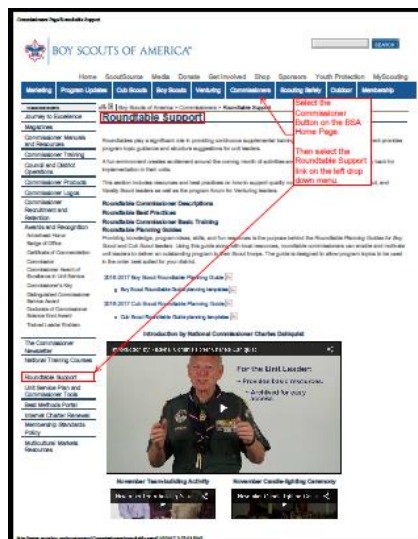
Effective Roundtables are essential to unit service by ensuring program ideas, relationship development, and timely communication are provided to support all unit leaders. Roundtable should be “the place to be,” in every district to obtain: updates, networking opportunities and to learn how to make Scouting fun for our youth.



RESOURCES

- The best location for Roundtable Resources is the BSA National Commissioner Website, Roundtable Support Page:

<https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable-support/>



- The best location for General and Program-Specific Training Resources is the BSA National Training Website:

<https://www.scouting.org/training/adult/>

- There are also several Facebook Pages dedicated to BSA Commissioner Service, including the BSA Roundtable Commissioners Page.

https://www.facebook.com/groups/ScoutRTCommish/?ref=linked_groups_hscroll

