ROUNDTABLE

THE ROLE OF ROUNDTABLE

The roundtable program is a key component of unit service.

Roundtable exists to:

- Provide information
- Capture information
- Offer additional program training
- Provide networking opportunities

Additionally, there are two fundamental purposes for roundtable in unit service:

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

The result is that unit leaders are better able to prepare their youth to live the values of the Scout Oath and Law; receive helpful program ideas, relationship development, and timely communication; and experience the fun and fellowship with others that is a hallmark of Scouting.

Simply put, when skillfully executed, the roundtable experience will inspire, motivate, and enable unit leaders to provide a stronger program for their youth.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND ROUNDTABLE?

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

It is almost ALWAYS possible, however, that at least one leader from each unit is available to attend. In fact, some units schedule rotations for their leaders to attend roundtable to ensure there is someone there each month.





ROUNDTABLE LEADERSHIP

National Roundtable Support:

The National Commissioner Service Team Roundtable Chair provides Nationallevel support to the BSA roundtable program, a key component of unit service. This includes program level-specific materials and resources to support everyone involved in providing a roundtable program.

The roundtable chair is supported by various subject-matter-expert volunteers who are recruited from the various national program committees and by council- and district-level volunteers familiar with providing effective roundtables.

The subject matter experts on the national program committees develop the material used at roundtable, and the local roundtable teams execute these established materials into the local district roundtable programs.

The National BSA roundtable materials are outstanding resources for all levels of commissioners and Scouters, but they are specifically intended as resources for roundtable commissioners and facilitators to use at roundtable.

Council Roundtable Support:

ACC for

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 each district with council-level support.

The ACC for roundtable reports directly to the council commissioner. They are responsible for conducting an annual council-wide roundtable planning meeting with all districts, followed by a mid-year review. This helps to standardize district roundtables.

Council Commissioner ACC for Other Roundtables Training ACCs... districts.

The ACC for roundtable is authorized by the council commissioner to work directly with the district commissioner, ADC for roundtable, or the programspecific roundtable commissioners, as appropriate, to meet the varying needs of the council and individual



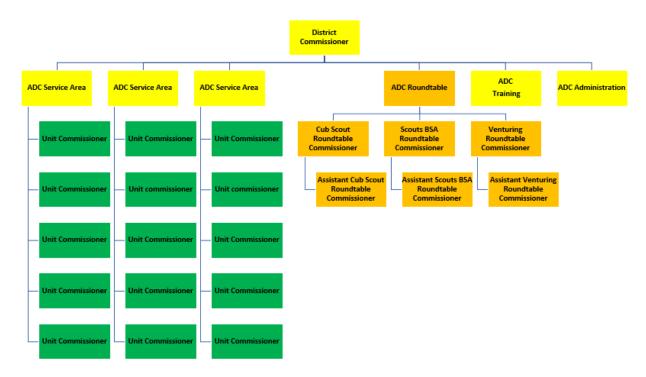


District Roundtable Support:

The assistant district commissioner (ADC) for roundtable reports directly to the district commissioner. Their role is to oversee their district's Cub Scout roundtable commissioner, Scouts BSA roundtable commissioner, and Venturing roundtable commissioner.



Under certain circumstances, some districts may not have enough staff for a separate ADC for roundtable, so they may choose to have the program-specific roundtable commissioners share ADC responsibilities and have them all report directly to the district commissioner.



ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONERS



Roundtable commissioners' responsibilities are similar for each program (Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, and Venturing).

The main responsibility is to conduct a monthly roundtable to help units address

their needs by providing **the skill to do** and **the will to do**. This is accomplished through discussing unit issues and linking unit needs to district resources. It's the nature of the various differences in each program that creates the need in each district to have separate program-specific roundtable commissioners.

Roundtable commissioners are normally responsible for their entire roundtable program. This includes planning and execution, effectively evaluating the delivery, and implementing positive changes. This is a cycle that repeats over and over again.

In order to be successful, it is highly recommended that roundtable commissioners should have a planning session to plan three to six months of program and then monthly team meetings to ensure program is meeting the needs of the units, districts, and council.

All roundtable commissioners and their respective assistant roundtable commissioners should attend the monthly district commissioner's staff meeting, and they should provide the district commissioner with appropriate updates related to roundtable and local unit needs, as appropriate, 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 handle; this is why recruiting a great team of assistant roundtable commissioners is essential. For additional insights, take a look at these three resources on the <u>Roundtable Support</u> website:

- Delivering Roundtable reference booklet
- <u>Roundtable Job Descriptions and Organization Chart</u>
- <u>Roundtable Tasks</u>

ROUNDTABLE FUN

In addition to providing great ideas and information, every roundtable commissioner is responsible for ensuring a fun roundtable! A portion of the time each month should be dedicated to having fun!

The reason for this is that roundtable should emulate a well-run, interesting unit meeting for leaders to bring home and implement in their units. Youth at all levels of the Scouting program should have fun, or they will leave and find other fun activities in which to participate, instead.

The acronym KISMIF, often used in Scouting, applies to roundtable, too: Keep It Simple, Make It Fun.





"The real way to gain happiness is to give it to others."

-Lord Baden-Powell

ASSISTANT ROUNDTABLE COMMISSIONERS AND THE ROUNDTABLE TEAM

Every roundtable commissioner should have a support team to help them provide the best roundtable possible. Assistant roundtable commissioners (ARTCs) are that support team! The roundtable commissioner is responsible for recruiting enough individuals to meet the specific needs for the size and program type for their roundtable.



There are no limits to the number of assistant roundtable commissioners that can be on the roundtable team; however, there should always be at least one assistant roundtable commissioner per program to serve as a backup for each of the program-specific roundtable commissioners. Unit leaders always expect roundtables to happen as scheduled. The show must go on every month, even

if the roundtable commissioner has a conflict and cannot attend. Having an ARTC already in place helps ensure roundtable's delivery when that occurs.

Several specific areas of duty 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).
- New Member Coordinator ARTCs model the use of a New Member Coordinator (NMC) for unit leaders and fulfill similar responsibilities for the roundtable team. These ARTCs welcome new leaders to roundtable, track attendance, and become friendly faces 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.
- **Specific Assignment ARTCs** can be used to fill any specific position that would help the roundtable commissioner. These include ARTCs responsible for any program-specific elements.

ROUNDTABLE IS UNIT SERVICE

Roundtable has sometimes been called "Group Unit Service," or a time when roundtable commissioners learn of unit needs in the group setting. In addition, roundtable commissioners consult individually with unit leaders before and after the formal meetings. As such, roundtable commissioners should be familiar with who attends and who does not. Additionally, it is vital to determine why those who did attend in the past no longer participate in the monthly roundtable. In essence, roundtable is the front line and is a critical piece of successful unit service in our districts.

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

It is recommended that district commissioners fully utilize Commissioner Tools and document all unit service opportunities provided by the roundtable team.

Roundtable encompasses and fulfills all five commissioner objectives:

COMMISSIONER OBJECTIVES

- Supporting unit growth and retention through the journey to excellence.
- Contacting units and capturing in commissioner tools their strengths, needs, and a unit service plan that enables continuing improvement.
- Linking unit needs to district operating committee and other resources.
- Supporting timely unit, district, and council charter renewals.
- Supporting unit leaders by collecting and distributing information, enabling program training, and providing networking opportunities.

How does roundtable support these commissioner objectives?

- 1. **Supporting unit growth and retention**: Roundtable provides an opportunity to educate units to grow their membership and provide an effective program.
- 2. **Contacting units**: Roundtable provides an opportunity 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: Roundtable provides a place to meet and network with all district leaders and subject matter experts to discuss unit needs and expectations.
- 4. **Supporting timely charter renewals**: Unit leaders who are active at roundtable are normally 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 presentations can be offered to manage the recharter process effectively.
- 5. **Supporting unit leaders**: 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, take advantage of networking opportunities, and learn how to make Scouting fun for the youth we serve.

TRAINING FOR THE ROUNDTABLE TEAM

Every Scout deserves a trained leader, and roundtable is one of the most important events held in a district each month to provide training and updates on policies for unit leaders (including



unit committee members).

The roundtable commissioner and other roundtable team members should also be properly trained so they will be able to present material and teach skills in an interesting way.

Some examples of available training for roundtable commissioners and roundtable teams include the following:

- Previous attendance at leader-specific training courses and council-offered Train the Trainer and/or Trainer's EDGE conferences
- Personal coaching by the district commissioner or the roundtable commissioner
- E-Learning modules on <u>my.Scouting</u> and <u>ScoutingU</u>
- Wood Badge
- Roundtable commissioner and roundtable team training conferences
- Council roundtable team workshops and commissioner conferences
- College of Commissioner Science or Universities of Scouting
- <u>National-level training events</u> at various locations, including Philmont Training Center (PTC), Summit Bechtel Reserve (SBR), and 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 of Scouting spirit that motivates people to do their best. When this is a built-in part of roundtable, it will rub off on the leaders who attend. The district commissioner coaches the ADC of roundtables and district roundtable commissioners to ensure the following list is understood and used by everyone conducting or supporting roundtables.

- Provide information. Open communication is important. Keep the team updated on the material necessary for the roundtable. This update may occur at your roundtable team meetings or in the monthly district commissioner staff meeting.
- Make assignments to fit the talents and abilities of the team members. Once 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.
- Recruit team members to back up one or two basic parts of the roundtable.
- Use team meetings to good advantage. Do not hold pointless meetings or let 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 they are supported in their position.
 Roundtable teams should lead by example!
- Roundtable team members are all commissioners, and the district commissioner should properly track and award their commissioner recognition.

RECOGNITION FOR THE ROUNDTABLE TEAM

Provide frequent recognition for the roundtable team. 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. An important one is always remembering 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). More details on how to earn and provide these commissioner service awards can be found at the National <u>Commissioner Awards and Recognition</u> webpage.

RECOGNITION FOR ROUNDTABLE PARTICIPANTS

Make sure the participants attending your roundtables are recognized with attendance awards, and make sure to thank them often for attending roundtable and for the unit service they provide. Make participant recognition fun.







- First roundtable attendance recognition
- Thank-you notes and awards sent to their units
- Attendance awards
- Guest speaker letter of appreciation
- Random "fun" awards

PLANNING ROUNDTABLES

To be successful, quality roundtables require significant planning. Roundtables should be planned on both a long-range and a short-range basis. Long-range planning includes a three-tosix-month schedule of programing and short-range includes monthly team 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. The monthly meeting also provides roundtables flexibility to allow the team to address any new or needed topics that might arise.

Effective Roundtables:

To deliver effective roundtables, it's crucial to understand why roundtable exists as well as commissioners' two main goals in delivering the roundtable program.

As stated in the introduction, roundtable exists to:

- Provide information
- Capture information
- Offer additional program training
- Provide networking opportunities

Roundtable is a collaborative effort coordinated by unit service volunteers (commissioners) and supported by commissioned professionals and district operations (district commissioner, district chair, program, membership, and finance).

The roundtable program is the vehicle through which commissioners meet of one of their five objectives: supporting unit leaders by collecting and distributing information, enabling program training, and providing networking opportunities.

Ultimately, effective roundtables are the result of keeping in mind the two main commissioner goals in delivering them:

 Building relationships with unit and district leaders: 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.

2. **Providing unit service**: Provide unit service that is appropriate to the needs of your local district. 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.

Planning Effective Roundtables:

To plan effective roundtables, consider the following basic steps:

- 1. Determine the needs of the units in your district. Talk to your district commissioner and district chair to assist in identifying areas they feel should be improved.
- Review the calendars that affect units in your district. Look at the district and council calendars for activities and training events, and try to highlight these events to increase unit participation. Also review the public calendars in your area from the city, county, schools, and other church and civic organizations.



- There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Utilize
 all available resources for your roundtables starting with the BSA's <u>Roundtable Support</u>
 webpage. There are numerous BSA publications, videos, and other resources to also
 choose from when preparing for your roundtable.
- 4. Survey your participants to see what topics they need. Remember, though, that roundtable is intended for supplemental program training. It is not for basic leader-specific training topics.
- 5. Work with the district committee members, the district commissioner's staff, and other subject matter experts to provide presentations and support to your unit leaders.

6. Make 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, they will stop attending.



USING THE ROUNDTABLE SUPPORT WEBPAGE

The BSA's <u>Roundtable Support</u> webpage contains roundtable planning resources, formats, and additional materials for you and your roundtable team to plan and host effective roundtables.

By utilizing the virtual meeting formats and the resources and tools provided on the BSA Roundtable Support page, local roundtables can meet the objectives with maximum efficiency by eliminating travel and other barriers to in-person attendance.

The resources provided are all current, valuable, and helpful options for you to use, but you should always use what is most appropriate for the needs of your district or council while still following the current BSA guidelines.



ROUNDTABLE LENGTH AND FORMATS

Recommended meeting formats enable local councils and districts to benefit from the efficiency of virtual meetings while also meeting local needs resulting from limited internet access or the occasional need for face-to-face gatherings.

The length and format of each roundtable should be based on the needs of each council or district and may be adjusted as necessary. There are two standard formats: a 50-minute



(below) and a 75-minute. Both may be used for in-person roundtables as well as virtual meetings. Templates for both formats are available on the Roundtable Support webpage under <u>Roundtable Formats</u>.

VIRTUAL ROUNDTABLE



50-MINUTE FORMAT

-15:00 - 00:00	NETWORKING TIME (Optio	nal)
00:00 - 08:00	OPENING 1. Welcome 2. Pledge of Allegiance 3. Scout Oath & Law	(Supported by National Service Center video or other National Service Center resource)
08:00 - 13:00	HOT TOPICS	(Supported by National Service Center video or other National Service Center resource)
	 National or council information that significantly impa or requires immediate volunteer action (such as progr membership recruitment tools, fee changes, new opport 2. Announcements via handouts, website postings, email 	
13:00 - 18:00	SAFETY MOMENT	(Supported by National Service Center video or other National Service Center resource)
18:00 - 45:00	BREAKOUTS (TRAINING & DISCUSSION)	(Supported by National Service Center video or other National Service Center resource)
	 Cub Scouts Scouts BSA 	
45:00 - 50:00	CLOSING	(Supported by National Service Center video or other National Service Center resource)
50:00 – 65:00 NETWORKING TIME (Optional)		
NOTES:		
The virtue internet a	access isn't available. Nationa	ecessary. o be used for in-person roundtables when I Service Center videos can be downloaded age and shown to on-site participants.

Boy Scouts of America, September 2020

ROUNDTABLE PLANNING RESOURCES

To support the virtual roundtable formats, the National Service Center provides fresh, timely content located on the <u>Roundtable Planning Resources</u> webpage. Check the page frequently for new videos and materials to use with the following sections of roundtable:

- Opening
- Hot Topics
- Safety Moment
- Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA Breakouts
- Closing

These digital meeting resources may also be used for in-person roundtables. When internet access isn't available or reliable, National Service Center videos can be downloaded ahead of time and shown to on-site participants.

OTHER COMMISSIONER RESOURCES

The <u>Roundtable Support</u> website contains many additional resources commissioners will find helpful in fulfilling their role. In addition to topics already covered in this manual, find materials on matters such as:

- Delivering Roundtable reference booklet
- Roundtable job descriptions and organization chart
- Roundtable tasks
- Virtual meeting guidance
- Virtual roundtable resources
- Archived roundtable planning resources

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 program resources like program specific video content, new video content specific to Venturing is not available currently. The program resources are updated monthly and can be accessed at the <u>Commissioner Roundtable Support webpage</u>.

Each district should determine how to implement the most effective roundtable program that best meets their local needs. Since the programs are so distinctly different, however, there should, at a minimum, be a separate roundtable breakout 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, as well as a minimum of one assistant roundtable commissioner per program area. The ARTCs

provide support to each roundtable commissioner and serve as backup resources for the program-specific roundtable commissioners.

Roundtable is a year-long program and should meet monthly. The ARTC 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 technology improves, the more opportunities there are to harness it 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 commissioners 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 volunteers.

Audio/video conferencing tools and webinars are being used effectively in many areas, as are shared file sites and web pages to post electronic information about roundtable. More information is available on how to successfully utilize today's technology for your local roundtables via the BSA Roundtable Support webpage for <u>Virtual</u> Roundtable Resources.



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.

 TABLE
 Some suggestions include:

- 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 awards and recognitions—national and local
- "Unit spotlight"—feature a different unit 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 unit leaders' valuable and limited time. 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 tracking participant attendance and then contacting those leaders that miss roundtable to invite them to attend the next one.

The more leaders that attend, the greater the benefit will be for the youth programs. Active participation by all roundtable participants increases the value of attendance for everyone.

The best measurement of how well you are promoting roundtable is your attendance. A wellplanned 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

Commissioner

Tools

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 with one metric to measure the benefits of roundtable.



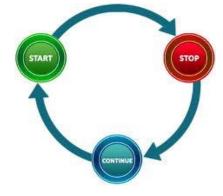
AFTER ROUNDTABLE: TIME FOR EVALUATION—START, STOP, AND CONTINUE

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, plan to implement your improvements for future roundtables.



SUMMARY

Roundtable is one of the most important events held in every district. It provides unit service that will assist unit leaders in preparing their youth to live the values of the Scout Oath and Law.

Roundtable supports unit leaders through delivering effective program ideas, relationship development, and timely communication, making them essential to unit service.



Roundtable also provides an opportunity for sharing experiences and enjoying fun and fellowship with other leaders. It should be "the place to be" in every district to obtain updates, take advantage of networking opportunities, and learn how to make Scouting fun for our youth.

Active participation by all roundtable participants increases the value of attendance for everyone.

To host effective and successful events, roundtable requires proper staffing, proper planning, proper promotion, and proper implementation.

Ultimately, an effective roundtable program is the result of keeping in mind the two main commissioner goals in delivering roundtable: building relationships with unit and district leaders and providing unit service.

RESOURCES

- The best location for roundtable resources is the BSA National Commissioner website's Roundtable Support page: https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable-support/
- The best location for general and program-specific training resources is the BSA National-Level Training Events webpage: https://www.scouting.org/training/adult/
- There are also several Facebook groups dedicated to BSA Commissioner Service, including BSA Roundtable Commissioners and Roundtable News and Discussion. https://www.facebook.com/groups/ScoutRTCommish/?ref=linked_groups_hscroll https://www.facebook.com/groups/998658400617717

