



## SCOUTS BSA & VENTURING RECRUITMENT OVERVIEW:



Inviting older youth to join Scouting can prove difficult as traditional recruitment methods or those methods used to recruit Cub Scout aged youth generally produce poor results. A steady flow of youth into your Troop or Crew is essential to maintaining the unit's health. New Scouts bring energy and enthusiasm to the program. To avoid the pitfall of shrinking membership, the unit should add at least 10 new Scouts every year. Having a year-round growth plan in place will help attract new Scouts.

The first step for any recruitment effort is to appoint a New Member Coordinator. This person oversees, develops and implements a year-round growth plan that incorporates all methods of recruitment. They work closely with Cub Scout packs in the community, the district membership committee, and the unit commissioner.

There are three actions to follow to guarantee recruiting success:

1. Graduate Webelos into the troop.
2. Host Recruitment Event(s)
3. Encourage continual peer-to-peer recruiting.

### ACTION 1: GRADUATE ARROW OF LIGHT SCOUTS INTO TROOP

For Scouts BSA Troops, ensuring that Cub Scouts cross over into your troop is key to your success. Here are some important guidelines:

1. Work closely with a nearby Cub Scout pack.
2. Prepare an effective Webelos/Arrow of Light-to-Scout plan.
3. Have a strong annual program plan with associated funding plan that can easily be shared.
4. Make new Scouts and their parents feel welcome.

Your the troop should align with a Cub Scout pack in the community. If more than one troop draws its new Scouts from this pack, contact the leadership of the other troops and design a plan to work together. Offer the use of your troop's equipment and expertise to the Cubmaster and the Webelos den leaders, and work with them to develop an effective Webelos/Arrow of Light-to-Scout plan, following the year-round calendar provided below.

Lastly, ensure that the Scouts and their parents have a smooth transition from the Webelos den to the troop. Make the Scouts and their parents feel welcome and at ease in the new troop environment, and recruit parents of the new Scouts to become assistant Scoutmasters and troop committee members.

The activities recommended in this plan will help stimulate youth interest in the Scouts BSA program. Implementing the plan involves the active involvement of adult and youth leaders of the troop as well as the leadership of the Cub Scout pack.

## WEBELOS/ARROW OF LIGHT TO SCOUT TRANSITION TIMETABLE

### August

- Get names, addresses, and telephone numbers of second-year Webelos.
- Plan a joint Scout troop/Webelos den camping trip for October.
- Plan a program of upcoming events to present at a Webelos den meeting visit in November.
- Select a den chief for each Webelos den.

### September

- Mail a letter of introduction from the Scout troop to second-year Webelos Scouts to introduce them to the troop.
- Put second-year Webelos Scouts on the mailing list to receive the troop newsletter.
- Continue planning the joint camping trip for October.

### October

- Conduct the camping trip with the Webelos den.

### November

- Attend a Webelos den meeting to teach the Webelos Scouts how the Scout troop works.
- Have den chiefs attend a local council or district training course.

### December

- Set a date for Webelos Scouts and parents to visit a Scout troop meeting in January. Discuss Summer Camp Dates & Costs.
- Send a form of information or greeting, letting Webelos you look forward to them joining the troop.

### January

- Host Webelos Scouts and their parents at a Scout troop meeting.
- Letter to all 5<sup>th</sup> grade Webelos steering them toward [BeaScout.org](http://BeaScout.org).

- Plan a bridging ceremony for the blue and gold banquets in February to welcome graduating Webelos Scouts to their new troop.
- Attend a meeting for first-year Webelos Scouts to introduce them to Scouting.

### February

- Hold the bridging ceremony at the blue and gold banquet.
- Get new Scouts actively involved with the troop through troop activities.
- Recruit parents of new Scouts to become assistant Scoutmasters or troop committee members.

### March

- Plan a troop activity for new Scouts to get them involved with their new troop.

### April

- Conduct summer camp orientation to encourage troop involvement.
- Attend a meeting of Bear Cub Scouts to introduce them to Scouting.
- Sponsor a troop activity for new Scouts.
- Call the 5<sup>th</sup> graders who have not yet joined a Troop.

### May

- Work closely with new Scouts and parents during their transition to the Scout troop, ensuring their needs are met and that their move has been natural and fun.
- Work on rank advancement with new Scouts.

### June

- Ensure all new Scouts attend summer camp.

### July

- Work closely with new Scouts and parents during their transition to the Scout troop, ensuring their needs are met and that their move has been natural and fun.
- Work on rank advancement with new Scouts.

## ACTION 2: HOST A RECRUITMENT EVENT

The best form of recruitment for youth ages 11+ is **EVENT RECRUITMENT**. The Troop or Crew holds a fun event and invites others to attend the event. This type of recruitment yields the greatest return, is easy for the unit to implement and generally unit leaders are excited to do it.

All Troops and Crews should hold a recruitment event annually in the fall to invite and recruit youth to join their program. If executed correctly, this event will help ensure the longevity of the unit and will ensure the youth receive a Mountain-Top Scouting Experience.

There are 5 Steps to follow to guarantee a successful recruitment event:

1. Annual Program Plan & Funding Plan
2. Unit Plans an Event
3. Promote the Event
4. Hold the Event
5. Paperwork and Follow-up

### Step 1: Annual Program Plan & Funding Plan

- The 1<sup>st</sup> step to a successful Recruitment plan is to have a strong annual program planned a year in advance that is shared with prospective youth and families in the form of a calendar. Accompanied with this plan should be a funding plan that outlines how all the activities listed in the calendar are paid for.
- This will answer the 2 BIG questions that parents have: What are we going to do? & how much is it going to cost?
- Any youth or adult should be able to quickly share this information with anyone who asks.
- Unit Leaders receive training on how to develop this plan ever spring at the May Program Planning Roundtable. For more info please see the Council Program Planning Page on the Council website.

### Step 2: Unit plans an Event

- This event can be anything but should be something fun and exciting! The event can be on a weeknight or held over the weekend. *(Remember that all prospective youth who attend an event with your unit, who are considering joining Scouting are covered by our Council's liability and health insurance, there is no additional risk in inviting youth to your event.)*
  - Examples include high adventure activities such as: Indoor or Outdoor Rock Climbing, Mountain Biking, Camping Trip, Caving, Downhill Skiing, Whitewater Rafting, Shotgun Shooting, Pistol Shooting (Ventures), Black Powder Shooting, Archery, Hiking, cross country skiing, sail boats, kayaks, etc.
  - Examples can also include fun activities such as: Slack Lining in the Park, Frisbee Golf, Swimming, Fishing, Theme parks, exciting community service events, etc.
  - A regular unit meeting is **NOT** a good event to use, unless you are doing something exciting such as Dutch oven cooking or fire building. The bigger the event, the higher the success rate. Most units can simply coordinate their recruitment efforts with an event they are already doing such as attending a District Camporee.

### Step 3: Promote the Event

- Peer to Peer recruitment is the most successful form of promotion for Troop & Crew recruitment events. The BSA Provides Peer to Peer recruitment cards which can be found online. These business card sized promotional items allow each youth to pass them out to their friends at school, inviting them to attend the fun event.
- Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat & Social Media. Youth over the age of 14 are heavily involved in social media and units should encourage their youth to utilize their social networks to invite others to join.
- Let the youth come up with how they think it can be promoted and let them impress you with their ingenuity!
- Traditional Promotion: Flyers, Posters, Stickers, Yard Signs Etc. These traditional forms of promotion are available to Units via the District Membership Committee and District Executive. Pre-printed flyers are available at no cost to the unit.

### Step 4: Hold the Event

- Hold the planned event and have fun!
- Invite all the youth who attended to sign up that same day. If possible, encourage them to sign up before the event.
- Share with the youth the annual program plan and funding plan. Tell them about all of the fun things you will be doing over the next few months/year.
- Make sure you do **after-event promotion**. Let the older youth share pictures and videos of the fun things they did during your event. By allowing the youth to share this on their social media you will dramatically increase awareness and interest in your unit.

### Step 5: Paperwork and Follow-up

- Follow-up with all new Scouts and parents to make them feel welcome and part of the unit
- Follow-up with any youth who attended the event but did not join. Invite them to participate in an upcoming event
- Promptly get all new youth paperwork turned into the office
- Report you're the results of your recruitment event to your District Membership Committee

## ACTION 3: ENCOURAGE CONTINUAL PEER-TO-PEER RECRUITING

The most effective recruiter in Scouting is a Scout who is enthusiastic about his Troop or Crew. Troops that have a strong annual plan that can easily be shared with prospective youth and parents find that youth will continually join their unit. Having a system in place that allows your Scouts to invite their friends to participate in activities is essential to sustainable growth. In general, if the troop is active with trained leaders, it becomes very easy for each Scout to sell his friends on coming, participating and eventually joining.

As the Troop or Crew prepares for activities and events be sure to include incentives that encourage each Scout to invite friends from school, church or their neighborhood to tag along. Remember that a candidate for First Class Scout must invite someone to attend a troop meeting or activity. Recruiter patches are available to Scouts who recruit a friend to join the troop.