Dear Scout Leaders,

Thank you for providing a fun program for youth that builds character, improves physical fitness, teaches practical skills, and develops a spirit of community service.

This guide provides the tools needed to develop and implement a successful plan to invite all kids in your area to join your pack or troop.

This year may look a bit different with school policy changes and public health mandates, but the steps in this guide are suggestions. Please be flexible and creative in your recruitment this year.

If you need assistance or have other questions about recruitment, please contact your district executive. Additional tools and resources to help you with recruitment can be found at www.ErieShoresCouncil.org/recruitment.

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Timeline for Success
Begin planning early with input and help from all leaders to ensure a successful recruitment.

**July**
- Hold a unit/parent committee meeting to discuss all aspects of a successful recruitment and assign responsibilities to parents and leaders.
- Contact the school(s) your unit serves to touch base on current plans for COVID-19 adaptations, and how they are handling outside groups this year.
- Determine what creative ideas you will implement this year to reach new families.
- Coordinate additional promotion efforts to ensure every youth receives at least seven invitations to join Scouting. See list of methods on page 5.

**August**
- Request promotional materials from Council as needed (print materials, etc).
- Follow your unit’s promotion plan to ensure youth receive at least seven invitations to join.

**September**
- Confirm the location and/or format for this year’s recruitment. Be prepared!
- Conduct the Join Scouting Night! See instructions on pages 8-10.
- Submit join night report envelope (including rosters, applications, and fees) to your district professional.
- Within 24-48 hours of join night email or call each new family to thank them for joining your unit and answer any questions they may have.
- Hold an orientation for new families within one week of join night. This may be done virtually. A sample agenda can be found on page 11.
- Be sure each new adult leader completes youth protection training and basic training for their position (available online at my.scouting.org).
- Submit new leader applications. See page 14 for adult registration process.

**October**
- Ensure all dens are meeting regularly, if you are a Cub Scout pack. Virtually or in person, depending.
- Distribute flyers at school to reach any youth who may have missed your Join Scouting Night. Flyers should read “It’s not too late to join Scouting!” and invite them to your October pack/troop meeting or other activity. Be sure flyers are distributed one week before the meeting.
- Be prepared at the October meeting to enroll new youth into your unit, and assign to the appropriate dens if applicable.
Promoting Your Unit: The Rule of Seven

Research has shown that people need to be invited to do something an average of seven times before they are likely to take action. How does that apply to Scout recruitment? It’s important that families are invited to your Join Scouting Night **at least seven times**. The Council offers a variety of prepared materials to assist in this effort, and the methods below have a proven record of yielding great results.

Best Methods (At A Minimum, Your Unit Should Do These)

1. **Open House Display**
   Set up a booth at your school’s open house, supply drop off, or other parent informational meeting to promote your unit. See page 6 for examples of eye-catching displays. Be sure to have an interest form to collect parent contact information. *Do your best this year, in getting information out early.*

2. **Posters**
   One way of reaching parents is to hang posters up in places they visit often. Customize posters by filling in the date, time, and location of your Join Scouting Night, as well as the name and phone number of a leader that parents can call if they have questions.

3. **Yard Signs**
   Get the word out in the community by placing yard signs in high-traffic areas in your community. In large block letters, clearly write the date, time, and location of your JSN on the yard sign. Tip: place yard signs at busy traffic intersections so each car that stops will be able to see it.

4. **Flyers**
   Send an invitation home with every youth at school to be sure parents are aware of your JSN (*digital if possible this year*). Have your unit’s annual calendar on the back of these flyers to show all the fun activities planned for the upcoming year! If your schools do not allow flyers, perhaps there is another creative paper alternative. Contact your district executive to coordinate this.

5. **School Talk with Flyers/Wristbands**
   A great way to ask students to join Scouting is by visiting their school and generating excitement about all the fun activities and events your unit participates in. Contact your district executive to coordinate flyers and school talks. *We understand that this year there may not be in person school talks for many of our packs. Let’s work together to be creative for alternatives!*

6. **Facebook Events and Geofencing**
   Geofencing is a method of geographically targeting a specific audience using Facebook. This year we will set up an event in Facebook to feature a “Join Scouting” night for **each unit**. We will put a “geofence” around the neighborhood area to reach prospective families, serving as a social media ad. Talk to your District Executive for more details.

7. **Press Release/Church Bulletins**
   If you have a small-town newspaper or local church bulletin accessible to your unit, write a small article to be published in advance of your JSN. Your District Executive can help if needed.
Unit Promotion Effort

Ensure that every child is invited to join Scouting at least seven times by selecting at least two methods from the list below to accompany the five best methods listed on page 5. *We understand that some of these may not be possible this year, due to school policies related to COVID-19.*

**Great Promotion Ideas**

- Telephone calls to perspective families; especially Lions and Tigers, and new Scouts BSA youth
- Social media blitz, and Facebook Geofencing
- Article in local newspaper or church bulletin
- Announcement on local radio station
- Current Scouts wear their uniform on the day of the School Talk and/or Join Night
- Bookmarks delivered to local libraries
- Display cases and bulletin boards at schools, libraries, etc.
- Community newsletters, community bulletin board posts, and website posts
- Classroom, lunchroom, and Sunday school visits
- Displays at local supportive businesses; Text on business marquees advertising the information to join
- Pack special events in the community (fishing derby, picnic, parade, fair, etc.)
- Flyers in grocery store bags
- Hold a pinewood derby at a visible location in your area
- Parent-to-parent recruiting; parents tell the good Scouts has done for their families and encourage to join
- Peer-to-peer recruiting: Current Scouts give personal invitation to friends
School Talks

A school talk is a three-to-five-minute presentation to kids during the school day to generate excitement about Scouting and tell them how they can join. A school talk can be conducted by any enthusiastic pack leader or volunteer. Contact your district executive to coordinate printing of flyers and scheduling the school talk. *Be creative if necessary this year. Some schools may not allow traditional school talks as they have before.*

School Talks: Step By Step

*Ideally, flyers will have been sent home with kids already and your visit will serve as a reminder of join night. You can also bring a second batch of flyers to be sent out on the day of the School Talk/JSN.*

**Supplies:** Customized flyers with details about joining Scouts, Pinewood Derby car or other cool prop, Scout uniform (full of badges), etc.

1. Call the principal at least two weeks prior to the day you want to conduct the school talk. Determine the preferred method of talking to the students this year, as outside guests may not be physically allowed inside the school. See if they would be willing to perform the school talk instead.

2. Stop at the school office to introduce yourself to the secretary and principal about 10 minutes prior to the time you have scheduled. *This is if an in-person method is possible.*

3. The actual presentation to the students should include:
   - A brief description of the fun activities the youth can do in Scouts.
   - Repeat the date, time, and location of Join Scouting Night multiple times, and remind them that a parent needs to attend as well.
   - Each child receives a flyer Ask them to show the flyers to a parent as soon as they get home.

**Other creative methods this year could include (but not limited to):**

- Zoom Talks – coordinate with the teachers to see if you could land a timeslot for these.
- Recess Games/Talks – this may or may not be possible, depending on if recess is allowed.
- Pre-recorded Announcements – some school districts have in-classroom TVs that broadcast news to their students. See if you could have a short (3-5 minute) Scouting video shown as an announcement.

School Talk Sample Script

*Hi, I’m (name), and I’m here to invite you to join Scouting! Scouts is a fun club for kids like you, and now is the perfect time to join!*

I want to play a quick game with you to tell you about all the fun things you can do if you join Scouts. I am going to list an activity, and if you think it is fun, or think it would be cool to try, I want you to raise your hand as fast as you can. I want to see who the fastest hand raiser is in the whole class! Who thinks it would be fun to go hiking? Camping? (List activities that are special to your unit).

Our unit does all these things and if you join you can too! You can join by bringing your parents to our join night on (date, at time, at location). I am going to give you a wristband/flyer to remind you to tell your parents you want to join Scouts! Okay, just a reminder: what day is the sign-up night? What time? Where? Thank you for being good listeners! I hope to see you at our join night!
Join Night Checklist

Below are key items to plan for to ensure a successful Join Scouting Night. *Be flexible in this year’s climate.*

**Before Join Night**

- **Choose A Location**
  Your unit’s join night should be held at a public location central to your community. People want to feel comfortable and new families are usually unfamiliar with Scouting. They are more apt to know where the library at school is than the Scout House or VFW Hall. If public is not possible, consider a virtual format.

- **Select A Format**
  Decide how your join night will be structured. If able to host in person, it is recommended that units utilize the five-station format (see page 9 for more details). Regardless of your structure, the evening needs to be organized and flow nicely for families, without too much information to overwhelm them.

- **Coordinate Uniforms**
  To make parents feel more comfortable, it is recommended that leaders wear a unit t-shirt with a name tag that identifies you as a “parent volunteer.” The BSA field uniform is always appropriate, but it can sometimes be intimidating to a new parent.

**During Join Night**

- **Take Attendance**
  Make sure every family signs in on the attendance sheet when they arrive. At the end of the night, mark the appropriate columns to indicate paperwork and fees submitted. Return the top copy in your join night report envelope, and the other copies are for the pack and den to keep.

- **Share Information**
  Every family should receive a pack calendar that includes leader contact information. Your recruitment kit also contains helpful handouts and materials that should be distributed to each new family.

- **Help With Paperwork**
  Help families complete and submit their application to join that night. Most applications that go home with parents usually end up getting lost.

- **Collect Fees**
  Checks should be made out to your pack. At the end of the night your pack treasurer will write one check to the “ESC BSA” to cover fees.

**After Join Night**

- **Submit Paperwork** Place all paperwork and a check made out to “ESC BSA” in your join night report envelope and submit at your district turn-in location.

- **Conduct a New Family Orientation Meeting**
  See page 11 for a sample agenda.
Join Night Format

It is recommended that units structure their join night as an open registration meeting. This type of sign-up night allows parents to arrive throughout a scheduled block of time (6:00 to 8:00 PM, for example) and flow through stations to get important information, register their child, and leave.

Five Station Format

An open registration meeting that utilizes stations is designed to be:

- Faster for parents. Families should complete the process in 15-20 minutes
- Less stressful for pack leaders (no group presentation!)
- Informative and organized: important information is given in an efficient manner

An important aspect of this format is follow-up with new families. Contact new families within 24 hours of the sign-up night by phone and/or email to remind them about the upcoming new family orientation meeting, as well as den and pack meetings. Each station has a dedicated function, and depending upon anticipated turnout and available volunteers, packs may combine stations as needed. Make an effort to have as many den leaders and assistant den leaders on hand to give families a chance to get to know them.

Join Night Stations

☑️ = Item is included in your recruitment kit
☐ = Item supplied by pack

Station 1: Welcome!

Leaders at this station will:

☐ Greet every family and ask them to sign in.
☐ Tell parents they will visit five stations to learn about the pack and complete the sign-up process, and it will take about 15-20 minutes.
☐ Provide every family with the orientation guide for new Cub Scout families.

Materials:

☐ Station 1 sign
☑️ New Cub Scout family orientation guides
☑️ Join night attendance roster

*Again, we understand that this “normal” format may not be possible this year. If you can hold a JSN in person, it is the recommended best practice. However, please work with your district professional to plan accordingly as health guidelines and school policies change.
Station 2: What We Do

Leaders at this station will:

- Talk about what makes your pack special. Consider speaking to several families at once.
- Give every family your pack calendar and let them know that you would like them to attend as many functions as possible, but they are not required to make every event and meeting.
- Explain which uniform parts are required, provided, and optional. Help families fill out the Cub Scout uniform essentials flyer (or have completed forms ready).

Materials:

- Station 2 sign
- Popcorn sale flyers
- Uniform essentials flyers
- Fall cub camp flyers
- Pack displays, pictures, etc.
- Pack calendar
- Leader information sheet
- Cub Scout uniform example

Station 3: Paperwork

Leaders at this station will:

- Explain the youth registration form and be prepared to answer any questions.
- Help parents complete the form. See page 11 for more information.
- Tell families about Boys’ Life magazine (only $1 per month).

Materials:

- Station 3 sign
- BSA youth applications
- Parent information sheets
- Boys’ Life mini magazines

Station 4: Check Out

Leaders at this station will:

- Collect completed youth applications, parent information sheets, and fees.
- Be prepared to answer questions about fees, payment plans, and financial assistance options. In addition to any assistance your pack may provide, the ESC BSA Council offers need-based assistance to cover registration, uniforms, or other expenses. Your District Executive can help you with this form if needed.

Materials:

- Station 4 sign
- Join night report envelope
- Registration & Boys’ Life fee sign
- Calculator
- Money to make change

Station 5: Q&A

Leaders at this station will:

- Make sure parents know when and where the first meeting is and answer any other questions parents may have.
- Explain that the first award any Cub Scout earns is the Bobcat, and hand out the Bobcat trail flyer to help get them started.

Materials:

- Station 5 sign
- Bobcat trail flyers
Orientation for New Families

An orientation meeting for new families should be held no more than one week after the Join Scouting Night. All parents and leaders should attend. *Explore the idea of making this meeting virtual, if possible.*

Suggested Meeting Agenda

1. Welcome & Introductions
2. Unit Program
   - Explain the difference between: unit meetings, den meetings (if applicable), and parent committee meetings
   - Review unit calendar and highlight upcoming activities
   - Handout & review requirements for Bobcat. Set a goal as a pack to present each new youth their Bobcat badge no later than the October pack meeting.

3. The Pack Committee
   - Explain that the Scouting program is an all-volunteer organization. Your unit is successful because each parent volunteers in some way during the year to help out. Some people run the meetings. Some people take a “behind the scenes” role on the committee and help with planning, paperwork or other administrative type duties. Some parents are not available to help every month, so they volunteer for short term projects such as the pinewood derby, court of honors, etc.
   - Talk about key unit leadership needs. It may be helpful to have a large poster showing the organization and current positions that are needed.
   - Ask parents to complete the parent information sheet if they have not already done so.

4. Leader Training
   - Explain that youth protection training is required for all registered leaders and is strongly recommended for all parents. Direct all leaders to the council website for youth protection training or plan to conduct youth protection training together as leaders using the presentation format.
   - Direct new leaders to the appropriate basic leader training courses offered online.

5. Den Program *(Separate into Dens if you are a Cub Scout Pack)*
   - Dens that already have a den leader:
     - Den leader discusses den-meeting dates, times and locations and recruits parents to assist with den meetings or serve on the pack committee.
   - Newly formed dens without a den leader:
     - Another pack leader will need to guide the discussion with parents. Explain that it may take a few meetings to identify a parent to lead the den and ask for their cooperation and patience.
     - Discuss possible meeting dates, times and locations.

6. Closing
   - This meeting should not be conducted at the join night or a regular unit meeting.
   - This is a chance for your unit to establish expectations, communicate the program plan, and answer any questions before the first official meeting.
   - Arrange to have a few experienced parents run an activity for any youth and siblings who attend so you will have the full attention of the parents without distractions.
   - This meeting should last no more than one hour, but plan to stay late to answer additional questions.
     - Think back to your first Cub Scout meeting - what do you wish you had been told?
October Recruitment Plan

The early Fall join night is no doubt the single most productive recruiting event of the year for units. However, even when the promotion plan is executed perfectly some families miss the opportunity to join Scouting.

October unit meetings are the perfect opportunity to invite youth and their families to join your pack or troop that may have missed, or been unaware of, the JSN night. With very little additional effort, units across the council will bring hundreds of youth into Scouting this October that otherwise missed the opportunity to join in August and September.

There are only a few additional steps each unit needs to take in October to maximize the success of their fall recruitment.

October Recruitment Checklist

- Contact the school principal immediately after the Join Scouting Night to thank them for their support of your unit’s successful recruitment event.

- Ask the principal to again allow you to distribute flyers to students at school. Emphasize the importance of reaching out to families that may have missed the join night. Note: The first meeting you have with the principal in August is the best time to ask about distributing flyers in September and October. Explain that you would like to distribute flyers before the JSN and also before your October pack or troop meeting to catch those you missed in September.

- Deliver flyers to the school for distribution at least one week prior to your October meeting. The flyers can be ordered by contacting your District Executive. Distribute digitally if possible, as well.

- Be ready at your October meeting to welcome new families. Give new parents the information packet you used at your Join Scouting Night. Ask them to stay after the meeting for about 20 minutes so they can complete the paperwork and meet their den leaders (if applicable).

- Follow-up with all new families. Be sure they are aware of the meeting dates, unit activities, the popcorn sale, etc.

- Turn in paperwork and fees collected to register the new youth with your unit within 24-48 hours.
Youth Application Requirements

Ensure that youth applications are completed fully by parents before they leave the Join Scouting Night. If possible, have families register completely online.

YELLOW highlighted fields need to be completed by a parent/guardian.
GREEN highlighted fields need to be completed by a unit leader.

Fees for 2020

For registering youth in January units:
If recruiting in August 2020: Registration Fee $33.00; Boys’ Life fee $6.00.
September recruitment: Registration $27.50; Boys’ Life $5.00.
October recruitment is: Registration $22.00; Boys’ Life $4.00.
November recruitment is: Registration $16.50; Boys’ Life $3.00
December recruitment is: Registration $11.00; Boys’ Life is $2.00

For registering adults in January units:
If recruiting in August 2020: Registration Fee $21.00; Boys’ Life fee $6.00.
September: Registration $17.50; Boys’ Life $5.00.
October: Registration $14.00; Boys’ Life $4.00.
November: Registration $10.50; Boys’ Life $3.00
December: Registration $7.00; Boys’ Life $2.00

*Do not forget about this year’s New Member Fee of $25 for any youth who has not previously been a registered member of our programs. This is a one-time fee, on top of the prorated fees listed here.
Adult Leader Registration

There are two pages of the adult application that need to be completed and turned in to the Council, along with verification of youth training, in order for an adult registration to be processed.

1. **Applicant must fill out the adult application entirely:**
   - **YELLOW** highlighted fields are required.
   - The authorization form must be signed.
   - The **GREEN** highlighted portions require the signature of the unit Committee Chair and Chartered Organization Representative.

2. **Applicant must take BSA youth protection training and submit a certificate of completion.**
   - To take training online:
     b. Click on “Create an Account” and follow the instructions to register as a new member.
     c. After registering and logging in, click on “BSA Learn Center” located along the right margin.
     d. Take Youth Protection training. After training is completed a certificate will be issued, which will need to be printed and included with the adult application.

3. **Submit the three pages (pictured here) to the Council office for processing.**