

Selecting Quality Leaders

Your organization has joined with the Boy Scouts of America to deliver a program of citizenship training, character development, and personal fitness to the young men of your community. Critical to the success of your Scouting program is the selection of quality leaders who represent the values of the Boy Scouts of America and your organization. The chartered organization has the responsibility for the selection of these individuals.

You will find the following information contained in this brochure:

- A selection and recruiting process that has proven successful for many years
- A sample presentation for the recruitment of new leaders
- The traits of a successful Scout leader
- Position descriptions for a new Scoutmaster and Varsity Scout Coach

The Process

Scoutmasters, assistant Scoutmasters, Varsity Scout Coaches, and assistant Varsity Scout Coaches must be identified and recruited by the chartered organization when a new troop/team is organized or when there is a leadership change in an existing Boy Scout troop or Varsity Scout team. The chartered organization may seek advice from the BSA local council about the process.

1. Chartered Organization Briefing

The head of the chartered organization or the chartered organization representative meets with the representative of the local council to discuss the process of selecting and recruiting quality leaders. This Scouting professional can provide recruiting techniques, videos, and other support materials. It is important at this time for the chartered organization to understand its responsibility for operating a troop or team, and particularly its responsibility for selecting and recruiting new leaders.

Action. In forming a new troop or team, the organization head appoints a steering committee of knowledgeable and influential people to select the very best individual to serve as Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach. Existing troops or teams should already have a troop or team committee in place to assist with this process.

2. Steering Committee Meeting

The head of the steering committee selects a date and time for the meeting and notifies the steering committee members. For existing troops or teams, the committee chair should set the meeting date and time, and notify the troop/team committee members.

Action. At the meeting, the following tasks should be accomplished.

- A. Review part one of the videotape Selecting Quality Leaders.
- B. Develop a list of prospects who closely fit the descriptions you heard in the videotape. Be prepared with lists of chartered organization members and parent rosters. Choose prospects who live up to the values of the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives. Do not make assumptions about whether prospects will accept or have time to do the job. Give them the opportunity to make their own decision.
- C. Rank the prospects. The committee should agree on and rank the top three prospects, in preferential order.
- D. Clear the list of prospects with the head of the chartered organization before making any contact.
- E. Preview part two of the videotape Selecting Quality Leaders. It explains the vision of Scouting to the prospective Scoutmaster. Become familiar with the points made in the video.
- F. Select at least three people from the committee to call on the number one prospect. These persons should know the prospect quite well and have influence in the prospect's decision.

3. Make an Appointment with the Prospect

The committee member who knows and has the respect of the number one prospect should make the appointment with the prospect.

Action. The appointment usually can be made on the phone. Do not try to recruit the prospect over the phone. Your objective at this point is to set a time and date to meet, preferably at the prospect's home. You will want to involve this person's spouse since it will affect the prospect's time at home. If the prospect questions the purpose of the meeting, frankly state that it is to discuss a matter important to the youth of the community. Confirm the date and time with the other members who will be making the visit.

4. Call On the Prospect

The committee members making the call should gather at a convenient place and arrive at the prospect's home as a group.

Action. Ask the prospect to serve in the desired position, subject to approval of the membership application. If for some reason the prospect is unable to accept the position, you should repeat the process with the number two prospect (who now becomes number one).

5. Have the Prospect Complete a Membership Application

Have the prospect complete a BSA adult volunteer leader application.

Action. It is the responsibility of the committee to review and screen the application. Individuals who have lived in the community for three or more years and are known to members of the committee well enough for them to serve as a reference should require little additional screening. Conduct a reference check on those who are new to the community as well as those who may be new to volunteer Scouting. References should be checked in a discrete, nonthreatening manner, and previous Scouting experience should be confirmed.

Upon approval, the application is signed by the chartered organization head or chartered organization representative, and is submitted to the local council. All leaders registered with the Boy Scouts of America must meet its standards for leadership.

6. Welcome the New Leader

Every step should be taken to ensure that the new leader is recognized for accepting this important position.

Action. Once the prospect has accepted the position and has been approved as a leader, the head of the chartered organization should personally welcome the new leader. An announcement should be placed in the local newspaper and the chartered organization's publication, if applicable. A formal induction ceremony should take place as soon as possible at a meeting of the chartered organization.

7. Fast Start Training

A representative from the BSA local council will contact the new leader and schedule Fast Start training.

Action. The Fast Start counselor conducts Fast Start training using the video and accompanying booklet. Attendance at the next roundtable is encouraged as well as participation in New Leader Essentials, Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster or Varsity Coach Leader Specific Training, and BSA Youth Protection training.

Sample Presentation

Opening Comments

(After introductions) (Name), you must be wondering why all of us are here. (Response) It's as I told you over the phone. We are here to talk to you about something very important to the youth of our community. As you may know, our (type of organization) (has been/is in the process of organizing) a (Boy Scout troop/Varsity Scout team).

Short History (Knowledgeable Person)

(This is a good time to describe what has happened with the troop/team organization up to this point or with a short history of the current troop/team. If this is a replacement for a Scoutmaster/Varsity Scout Coach, then comments related to that person's departure would be appropriate.)

Why We Are Here (Key Person)

Now, (name), that brings us to why we are here. A group of knowledgeable people met recently to determine who would be the best person to lead our young men. We went through a very detailed process that involved making a list of everyone we thought qualified based on some very strict BSA standards. We then rated them as to who we thought would be the best for our young men. Your name rose to the top of the list. (Pause for acceptance of that fact.)

Describe the Role of the Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach (BSA Representative)

(Show part two of the video Selecting Quality Leaders. It was designed to give the prospective Scoutmaster or Varsity Scout Coach the vision of what we are trying to accomplish in our program. Be prepared to answer questions at the end of the video. The position descriptions found in this brochure might be helpful if the prospect has questions about duties.)

Note: You might encounter objections at this point, so be prepared with the answers.

Well, (prospect's name), you have heard our story, and we hope we have answered your questions. You are our number one prospect. This group, the members of the troop committee, and the membership of the chartered organization promise you our support if you will assume this important position.

(Wait for answer. This is very important. The prospect will accept the position or present objections to accepting. If this person accepts, move on to the next step in the process, which is the completion of an adult volunteer leader application. If this person objects, then we must answer the objections and close the presentation again. This might occur several times before you receive a final response.)

Types of Objections Likely to Be Encountered and Responses

Why me? I am sure there are many more qualified people!

That's not true. We looked at a lot of people, but your name came up at the top of our list.

I don't have enough time.

We've found that our most successful (Scoutmasters/Varsity Scout Coaches) are very busy people, but they have made time for Scouting.

I don't have the knowledge or experience to be a Scoutmaster/Varsity Scout Coach).

The Boy Scouts of America has been in existence for more than 90 years. We have excellent training programs that will give you all the knowledge you need to be successful.

On a regular basis, we will also check on your progress and offer a helping hand as needed.

That's an awful lot of work for one person.

That's correct. The (troop/team) committee is responsible for the administrative functions of the (troop/team)--such things as equipment, finances, and transportation. Assistant (Scoutmasters/Varsity Scout Coaches) can help when you might be away, but more importantly, they manage key parts of the (troop's/team's) program. It has to be a real group effort.

Varsity Scout Coach

The Varsity Scout Coach is responsible for training and guiding youth leaders in the operation of the team, and works with the team committee to support the functions of the team.

Varsity Scout Coach Duties

- Conduct the Varsity Scout program according to the policies of the Boy Scouts of America.
- Conduct, through the team youth leaders, all Varsity Scout team meetings and activities.
- Work with the team committee chair in developing a monthly committee meeting agenda that will address the needs of the team.
- Participate in Varsity Scout Leader Fast Start Training, New Leader Essentials, and Varsity Coach Leader Specific Training.
- Conduct a monthly team leadership meeting to plan the team business meeting and team activities.
- Conduct Varsity Scout Coach conferences for all ranks.
- Conduct an annual team program planning conference to assist youth leaders in planning a well-rounded team program utilizing all five program fields of emphasis.
- Conduct a special high-adventure activity annually.
- Provide the necessary framework (using the BSA's Youth Protection program) for protecting the young people in your team from abuse.
- See that activities are conducted within BSA safety guidelines and requirements.

Scoutmaster

The Scoutmaster is responsible for training and guiding youth leaders in the operation of the troop, and for managing, training, and supporting his or her assistant Scoutmasters in their role.

Scoutmaster Duties

- Conduct the Boy Scout program according to the policies of the Boy Scouts of America.
- Train youth leaders by conducting, at least yearly, an introduction to leadership and a team-building workshop.
- Conduct an annual troop program planning conference to assist youth leaders in planning the troop program.
- Conduct a monthly patrol leaders' council meeting to plan weekly troop meetings and conduct troop business.
- Conduct, through the patrol leaders' council, weekly troop meetings.
- Provide a minimum of 10 days and nights of camping yearly, including participation in a local council resident camp.
- Assist in selecting and recruiting assistant Scoutmasters to work with the new-Scout patrol and the Venture patrol for older Scouts.
- Work with the troop committee chair in developing a monthly meeting agenda that will address the needs of the troop.
- Conduct Scoutmaster conferences for all ranks.
- Participate in Boy Scout Leader Fast Start Training, New Leader Essentials, and Scoutmaster and Assistant Scoutmaster Leader Specific Training.
- Provide the necessary framework (using the BSA's Youth Protection program) for protecting the young people in your troop from abuse.
- See that activities are conducted within BSA safety guidelines and requirements.

Characteristics of Successful Scoutmasters and Coaches

The following ten characteristics are important to the success of a Scout leader.

- Commitment to the ideals of Scouting
- High moral standards
- Ability to relate to boys
- Ability to keep a cool head under pressure
- Good organizational skills
- Ability to relate to and interact with adults
- Flexibility and the ability to compromise
- Good planning ability
- High energy level
- Good attention to detail

Reference Check Guidelines for the Chartered Organization

Here are some tips to use when checking personal references for Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmaster, Varsity Scout Coach, and assistant Varsity Scout Coach:

- Introduce yourself and explain the purpose of the contact.
- Ask how long the reference has known the applicant and what is the nature of their relationship.
- Ask about the applicant's positive attributes—why would the individual make a good Scout leader?
- Ask the reference to describe personal observations of the applicant interacting with children.
- Ask if the applicant has any qualities relating to the welfare of children about which the committee should be concerned. Are there any reasons the reference could explain that the applicant should be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America?
- Ask if the reference would feel comfortable having his or her own child supervised by the applicant.

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