

# Recruiting Scouts BSA 101

Patriots' Path Council Membership Committee

*Last updated: February 2024*



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# Agenda

- Does your unit have a New Member Coordinator?
- Objective & Strategy
- Task 1: Recruit All Arrow of Light Candidates
  - Den Chiefs — Your Youth Recruiters
  - Key Actions by Month
  - Introduce the Troop to the AOLs and Their Parents
  - Make the AOL Visitation to Your Troop Meeting Awesome!
  - Give the AOLs an Incredible Webelos Woods Experience
  - Don't Forget About the Parents!
  - Get the AOLs to Commit early
  - Kick-Start Their Scouts BSA Experience
- Task 2: Recruiting Middle School Youth
  - Determine Your Buzz-worthy Event
  - Create Awareness
  - Put Your Best Foot Forward
  - Follow-up! Follow-up! Follow-up!
  - Do it Again!
- Tips and Advice
- One Last Task...
- Appendix



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# Does your unit have a New Member Coordinator?

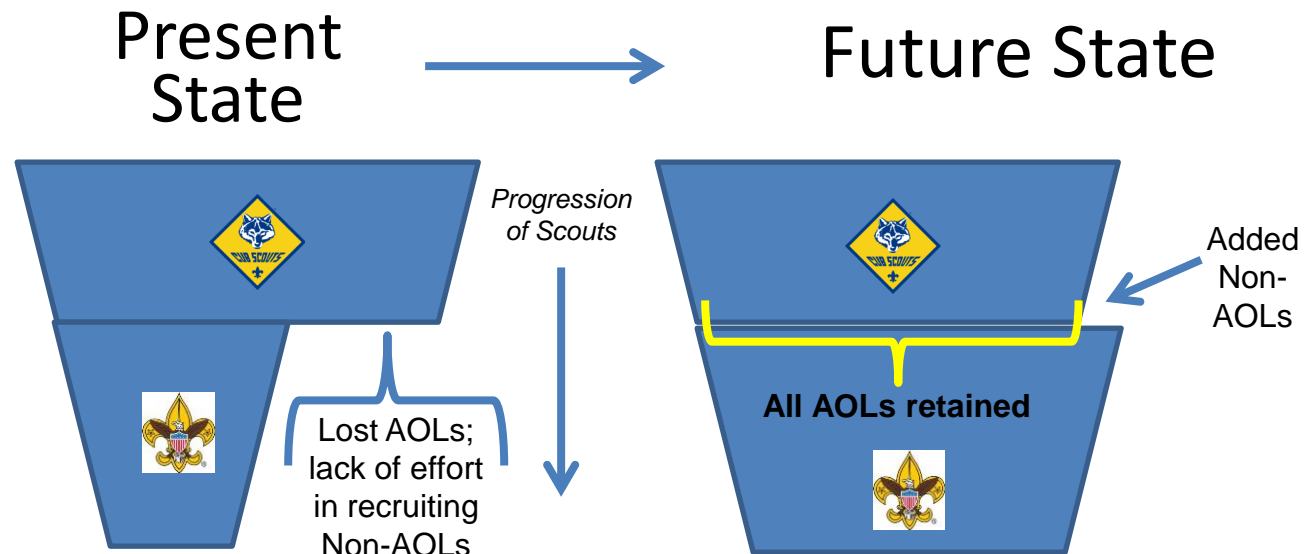
- If yes, great! You are 1 step ahead in the game! Please make sure that person is attending PPC & District Recruiting trainings
- If not, you really need to find a person to take point on recruiting. You would like to find a strong recruiter(s) before the recruiting season starts. This person(s) should be personable, a good listener and driven to make the 'sale'



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# Objective & Strategy

- **Situation:** Too many Cub Scouts are lost during the AOL Crossover process; Troops reliant on Cub Scouts for new members
- **Objective:** Increase the size of Patriots' Path Council Scouts BSA Units by
- **Strategy:** Focus on Recruiting 1) all AOL Candidates from the local Pack(s) and 2) middle-school youth not in Cub Scouts (Non-AOLs)
- **Rationale:** In order to increase the size of Scouts BSA Troops, we cannot afford to lose one AOL candidate in the Crossover process. Troops also need to actively recruit middle school youth so that they are not reliant on the Pack for new members



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# Task 1: Recruit All Arrow Of Light Candidates



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# Den Chiefs — Your Youth Recruiters!

- Yes, Den Chiefs serve a practical purpose in terms of both helping a den leader as well as demonstrating leadership skills.
- But Den Chiefs need to be aware that they play an important role in helping recruit AOLs to the Troop.
- Scoutmasters and Recruiting Chairs should check-in with Den Chiefs periodically to see how the 'recruiting' aspect is going



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# Key Actions by Month

Month	Actions	Person(s) Responsible
June - July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact Pack to obtain Crossover Date</li> <li>Invite Webelos and AOLs to Troop Meetings and Webelos Woods</li> <li>Assign Den Chiefs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pack Liaison &amp; Membership Coordinator</li> <li>Scoutmaster</li> </ul>
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact AOL Den Leaders and get the names &amp; contact info of AOL candidates; offer Troop help with 'Scouting Adventure'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership Coordinator</li> </ul>
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Welcome letter sent to AOL candidates and parents</li> <li>AOLs added to Troop communication</li> <li>AOLs attend Troop meeting; parents are given an overview of how Scouts BSA is different than Cub Scouts as well as an overview of the Troop</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership Coordinator &amp; New Parent Coordinator</li> <li>Scribe / ASM</li> <li>Scoutmaster</li> </ul>
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Webelos and AOLs attend Webelos Woods; invite them to attend a Spring camp-out</li> <li>New Scout Patrol should attend a Pack camp-out (if planned) to show the AOLs how Scout BSAs operate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership Coordinator, Scoutmaster &amp; ASM for New Scout Patrol</li> </ul>
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend the AOL patrol meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership Coordinator, SM / ASM</li> </ul>
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend the AOL patrol meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Membership Coordinator, SM / ASM</li> </ul>
January – February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment letter sent to AOL candidates</li> <li>New Parent Orientation Process begins; info about Spring trips and summer camp(s)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Parent Coordinator &amp; ASM for New-Scout Patrol</li> </ul>
February - April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in the AOL Crossover</li> <li>Applications processed, set-up in Scoutbook</li> <li>Ensure AOLs earn Scout Badge ASAP</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scoutmaster, SPL and Troop Guide(s)</li> <li>Membership Coordinator</li> <li>SPL, Troop Guide &amp; ASM for New Scout Patrol</li> </ul>



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# Introduce the Troop to the AOLs and Their Parents

- Send a letter (yes, its old fashioned, but it will let the AOL Scout know that this is an important matter) and introduce the Scoutmaster to the AOL Scouts and his/her parents
- Provide a brief overview of the Troop
- Invite the AOL Scout to attend the pre-determined AOL Visitation Meeting and the Webelos Woods event
- Ask the AOLs now to consider joining your Troop



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# Make the AOL Visitation to Your Troop Meeting Awesome!

- Make sure the PLC knows the importance of this visitation so that they plan out an action-packed Troop meeting – this is their chance to show the AOLs what Scouts BSA is all about
- Have designated greeters (SPL, Troop Guides, Den Chiefs) for AOLs, and a check-in station manned by the Recruiting chair and ASMs to greet parents — make everyone feel welcomed and wanted!
- Integrate AOLs into the Troop meeting – make sure all Scouts go out of their way to be friendly and welcoming
- **START AND END THE MEETING ON TIME!**
- Provide parents with an orientation on how Scouts BSA is different than Cub Scouts as well as provide key info about your Troop, its activity calendar, fees, etc. Have the SPL introduce himself/herself to the parents.
- Have the SM, ASMs and Recruiting Chair mingle with the parents during the meeting
- Don't forget to send a follow-up email thanking the AOLs for attending the event and expressing the Troop's desire to have them join when the AOLs Crossover



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# Give the AOLs an Incredible Webelos Woods Experience

- This is your Troop's time to pull out all the stops to show the AOLs how much fun and different Scouts BSA is compared to Cub Scouts
  - Let the AOLs experience the Patrol Method while setting up camp, making meals, etc
  - Provide plenty of new hands-on experiences\*
  - Play games that involved a newly learned skill or simply play a game or two just for fun
  - Help the AOLs earn their 'Scouting Adventure'
  - Have the SPL and other youth leaders engage with AOL parents, not just the SM /ASMs
- Ideally, your Webelos Woods is an overnight experience\*\* but day activities are fine, too
- Make sure to also fete the parents – break out the crowd-pleasing Dutch oven recipes, etc. Ideally, you are cultivating these parents for future volunteer roles in the Troop
- Don't forget to send a follow-up email thanking the AOLs for attending the event and expressing the Troop's desire to have them join when the AOLs Crossover



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\* Remember to review the Guide to Safe Scouting for what is permissible for AOLs to do

\*\* AOL parents need to spend the night

# Get the AOLs to Commit Early

- Now that you have cultivated the AOLs over several months, you need to lock them up in January.
- Send a letter and ask for the AOL Scouts commitment by a certain date so that the Troop can prepare accordingly. While sending a letter is 'old-fashioned', when is the last time a youth received a letter addressed to him/her?!
- If a Scout does not respond, you have the time to reach out to the Den Leader and parent to diagnose the situation and react accordingly vs finding out at Crossover.



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\* See the Appendix for an example

# Don't Forget About the Parents!

- AOL Parents need to learn what Scouts BSA is all about and how it operates
- Create a New Parent Orientation document that covers the key essentials and then present the material in an in-person meeting or a video conference
- This is also an opportunity to begin the volunteer cultivation process



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# Kick-Start Their Scouts BSA Experience

- Now that you have all the AOLs, you want to get them off to a fun and fast start!
- Make sure they earn the Scout rank right away
- Make sure the PLC plans easy and fun outings in the Spring so that the new Scouts can learn the Patrol Method and work on rank requirements while bonding with their new Troop
- Encourage all new Scouts to sign-up for Summer Camp



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# Task 2: Recruit Middle School Youth



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# Determine Your Buzz-worthy Event

- Put yourself in the shoes of a middle schooler – what would you want to see or do?
- There are lots of ideas that other units have used\* or use your imagination! But ask your current Scouts that are in middle school to make sure that THEY think the recruiting idea is cool and fun.
- Don't be afraid to spend some \$\$\$ put on an awesome event – if you get a good turn out, it was worth the investment.
- Ultimately, you want these prospective youth to be excited about coming to your Troop event



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\* See the Appendix  
for a list of ideas

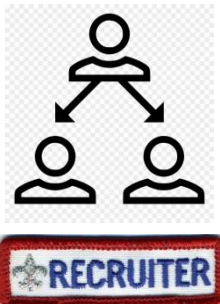
# Create Awareness

- You and your Scouts know your community better than we do — you need to use this knowledge to build your communications plan in order to make middle schoolers and their parents aware of your event.
- But don't rely on 1 tactic only – use several tactics like the ones below to drive awareness\*

## ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE TACTICS!

- Challenge your Scouts — Offer an incentive to Scouts that are successful in getting a friend to join
- Plus – it's a 1<sup>st</sup> Class Requirement

### Key Influencers / Word of Mouth



### Signage



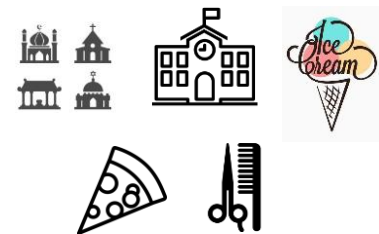
### Social Media



**Unpaid Advertising:** Share events and info to local interest groups and among current parents

**Paid Advertising:** Create an ad or event and pay to have it sent to an audience within your community via GeoFencing\*\*

### Houses of Worship, Schools, Eateries, Barber/Salon



### Public Relations



**Target Audience:**  
Middle School Youth and  
their Parents



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\* See the Appendix for more tactics. Also, PPC provides free recruiting materials to units

\*\* Go to <https://www.scouting.org/recruitment/> to learn how to GeoFence – it's really easy!



# Put Your Best Foot Forward

- So, you've got a buzz-worthy event planned and all the middle school students and their parents know about it....don't disappoint them with a poorly run event!
- Key tips:
  - Make sure the PLC knows the importance of this event so that they plan an action-packed agenda – this is their chance to show the AOLs what Scouts BSA is all about
  - Have designated greeters (SPL, Troop Guides, Den Chiefs) for AOLs, and a check-in station manned by the Recruiting chair and ASMs to greet parents
  - Have a sign-in sheet or laptop to capture contact details for follow-up
  - Provide key info about your Troop, its activity calendar, fees, etc
  - **START AND END THE EVENT ON TIME!**
  - Integrate AOLs into the Troop meeting; provide parents with an orientation on how Scouts BSA is different than Cub Scouts as well as provide key info about your Troop, its activity calendar, fees, etc. Have the SPL introduce himself/herself to the parents.
  - Have the SM, ASMs and Recruiting Chair mingle with the parents during the meeting
  - **Close the deal!** Bring a laptop so that parents can sign up via BeAScout.org (use your phone as a hotspot) and be prepared to accept credit cards, Venmo, etc. for unit fees.
  - And don't forget to send a welcome email with key info



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# Follow-up! Follow-up! Follow-up!

- Seems simple, right? But too often, we don't do this well enough. Here is a suggested timeline:
  - **24 hours after the event:** Follow-up with an email with all key info on how to join via BeAScout.org and Unit info, etc
  - **5-7 days later:** Forward your original email but now invite the youth to the next Troop meeting or outing
  - **10-14 days later:** Ask if the parent has a question about the program, etc – something to elicit a response from the parent so that you can engage with the person and understand barriers to joining
  - **21 days later** – invite the youth to the next Troop meeting or outing
  - **30-35 days later** - invite the youth to the next Troop meeting or outing
  - **40 days later** - At this point, the youth is probably not going to join – it happens, but you tried your best to get that youth to join



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# Do it Again!

- A unit that wants to grow conducts recruiting events in the Spring and the Fall
- Use Troop outings as recruiting events, too, so that current Scouts have a 'hook' to invite their friends
  - Plus prospective parents can see a Troop event in action while also interacting with current parents to get the 'un-official' report on what Scouts is like.



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# Tips and Advice

- BSA has a lot of free marketing, on-line digital materials and additional suggestions. Go to <https://www.scouting.org/recruitment/>
- Actively engage with the Cubmaster and AOL Den leader to see how the Troop can help the Pack
  - Help assist in the running of the Pinewood Derby, with the Pack's camp-out, etc
- In the Fall, schedule your activity early in the school year
- Overall, use the Journey To Excellence Model to improve your unit



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# One Last Task...

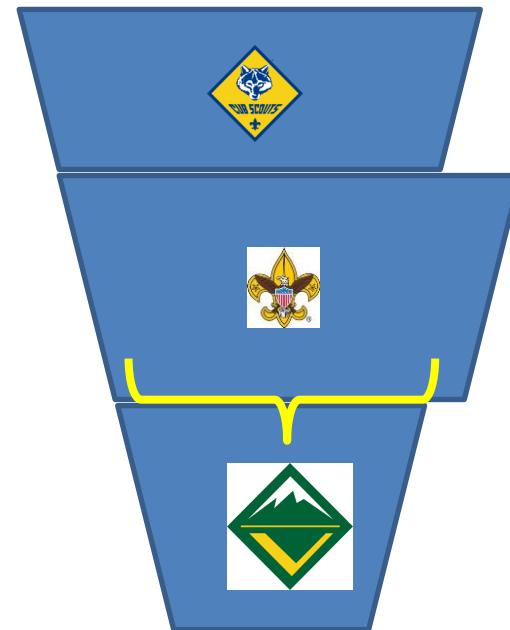
## Help Increase the membership of Venturing Crews

- **Situation:** Too many Scouts BSA members do not join Venturing
- **Objective:** Increase the size of Patriots' Path Council Venturing Crews
- **Strategy:** Assist Venturing Crews by promoting Venturing to your Scouts 14+ years old
- **Rationale:** By making Scouts BSA members aware of Venturing, like AOLS, we can 'cross-over' those Scouts and help grow Venturing Crews organically

### Current State



### Future State



- Encourage Scouts 14+ to check out and join Venturing
- Consider starting your own Crew



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# Appendix



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# Recruiting Event Ideas

- Open House
- Model rockets
- Fishing
- Open .22 shoot at MASR or WSR
- Free hamburgers and hotdogs made at Model camp-site
- Capture the flag, man-hunt and other games that middle schoolers would like to play (but schools won't let them!)

**Remember** – these events can also double as Troop activities so that not only your Scouts can enjoy them but also, they can invite their friends.



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# Awareness Building Tactics

## In-School Promotion

- Distribute sign-up event fliers the week before the sign-up event
- Posters and yard signs around school
- School rallies or youth talks at the school
- Back-to-school open house events, school carnivals, and conferences
- Electronic backpacks
- Videos on in-school video networks
- School newsletter or website
- School marquee signs

## Out-of School Tactics

- Recruit-a-friend and other peer-to-peer recruiting initiatives – this is also a requirement for 1<sup>st</sup> Class
- Ask current members to use social media to let their friends and family know about sign-up event nights
- Create unit profiles on Facebook and Instagram and join local 'mom' and town groups to promote the Troop
- Personalized invitations, emails, and personal phone calls to prospective parents
- Fliers and youth talks at after-school programs
- Houses of worship and community websites, calendars, and bulletin boards
- Press releases
- Posters and yard signs in the community
- Community fairs, parades, and other events
- Hang flyers at the local barber / salon, ice cream shop, coffee shop, deli's, etc — wherever youth hang-out



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