

Roundtable Hot Topic

Leader Succession Planning

Having a great leadership team helps ensure you have a great Scouting unit. Successful leaders provide a welcome atmosphere to potential families and keep current families engaged in the program.

Scouts who have families involved generally stay in the program longer, but being a Scout leader is not a forever job. Career and family commitments may change, or Scouts leave the program and the family 'retires' with them. Other times, a unit may be growing rapidly and needs additional leaders to help run the program.

Finding new leaders when positions are vacant can be stressful for the unit, so it is important to have a leader succession plan in place. Succession planning is an ongoing process where current leaders are regularly identifying potential new leaders, and then are helping them learn and grow to be experienced leaders themselves. A succession plan can create a culture of volunteering within your unit and will improve overall unit success.



Here are some ideas to help you with your succession planning!

- Identify roles to be filled – make a list of unit positions, and when you will need a successor for that position. Describe the responsibilities of each role – knowing what is expected will make new leaders more comfortable with volunteering.
- Know who is available – make a list of adults who are not currently in a leadership role or adults who are ready to try a new role.
- Determine the skills of your potential new leaders – use parent/family surveys, either in writing or through conversation. This helps you understand which skills, abilities, and previous experiences potential new leaders have.
- Ask for help – sometimes new members aren't sure how to begin volunteering or even if they are welcome to join. By asking for help, even if for small jobs at first, you can make these new members feel welcome and needed.

- Get the commitment – be sure the new leader understands and accepts the responsibilities for the position they are filling and that other leaders are all on board, and then complete the paperwork for membership.
- Train the new leaders. After a volunteer has committed to take on a leadership role, be sure to provide them with all the necessary training to do the job. Because you planned ahead, your new leaders can shadow your experienced leaders to help ensure a smooth turnover.
- Say thank you! While most Scout leaders do not volunteer to receive recognition, it is always a good idea to take the time to thank your leaders for the work they do and for giving their time to Scouting

Resources:

Roundtable Support Page

<https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/roundtable-support/roundtable-planning-resources/>

Aaron on Scouting - Succession Planning for Cub Scout Leaders

<https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/podcast/succession-planning-for-cub-scout-leaders/>

Aaron on Scouting - Why Succession Planning is a Must in Every Scouting Unit

<https://blog.scoutingmagazine.org/2017/01/06/next-up-why-succession-planning-is-a-must-in-every-scouting-unit/>