



CROSSROADS
OF AMERICA COUNCIL
BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

TAKE FLIGHT WITH **SCOUTING**

CROSSROADS OF AMERICA COUNCIL, BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

2023 SIGN-UP NIGHTS



“Sign-up” nights have been a cornerstone event in Scouting for years, and for good reason. They work! Sign-up nights give parents and youth an opportunity to get to know Scouting at a personal level, face-to-face, and is the critical first impression many families have with Scouting. Questions are answered, interest is built, and parents see how Scouting is for families like theirs. The objective of the sign-up night is to have every family enroll their child in Scouting.

Your unit will hold a sign-up night at the elementary school your pack serves. At this sign-up night, you will provide basic information about what Scouting offers youth and families in the area. This playbook outlines the most efficient ways to promote, coordinate, and conduct a well-organized and efficient sign-up night. Please use this playbook as a guide to conduct a fantastic sign-up event for your unit.

RECRUITMENT PLAYBOOK



Planning the Sign-Up Night

The key to a successful sign-up event is thorough planning. You will need to work closely with the school you are using, organize volunteers, and be prepared with any necessary materials such as new parent guides, application forms, and pack calendars.

It is proven that sign-up nights have the best results when conducted at elementary schools. The school is a neutral and familiar location for the families we will serve, and most often provides a centrally located facility which refutes barriers due to travel, time, etc.

Planning should begin at least six weeks in advance of the event. Following the five focus points, below, will provide a great outline as you plan for a successful sign-up event.

■ **Coordinate your parents and leaders** - Assigning a unit membership chair and pack sign-up event coordinator are great first steps to a successful recruiting season. Or forget the titles of these positions and ask a couple of parents in your unit to help turn this playbook into reality for your Cub Scout Pack! Work with your chartered organization and unit committee on the planning of the event. The most effective sign-up nights typically require five to six leaders and parents to conduct each station. These are simple jobs that anyone can fill, but it's best to use parents of current Cub Scouts who can talk from the heart about what Cub Scouting means to their family and their kids.

■ **Set Goals** - How many families do you currently serve? Do each of the Dens in your Pack currently have a minimum of 5 kids? How many new Scouts would your Pack need to sign-up in order to have full Dens in the Fall? The strongest Packs base their membership plans around goals specific to each Den they serve.

■ **Know your resources** - The Crossroads of America Council provides many tools to assist your unit with getting the word out about joining Scouting. Fliers, stickers, wristbands, yard signs, bookmarks, interactive activities, material for new parents, and social media templates and videos are just a few of the available resources. You can find these resources, and more, by visiting <https://www.crossroadsbsa.org/resources/recruitment-toolkit/>.

■ **Promote your Sign-up Night** - The Crossroads of America Council is using the "Take Flight with Scouting" theme for packs to build upon during their event planning. You may even consider investing in your pack's membership by creating additional promotions, incentives, or activities that youth can participate in by joining your pack. Further along in this playbook are ways to promote Scouting to families both in school and out of school, however it is important to note here that participating in your school's scheduled "Back-to-School Night" is a vitally important first step to engage families prior to the sign-up night event. Participation in festivals, parades, school functions, and other events in the community before your sign-up will increase awareness of your sign-up night event. Please allow your District Executive the opportunity to provide additional resources for you if your Pack plans to participate in additional community events.

■ **Have Fun!** - Keep the event quick, simple, and engaging for both the kids and adults. This not only makes it better for the parents attending, but also will make it easier for you, the organizer. Speak from the heart, don't stress, and just enjoy the opportunity to introduce new parents to Cub Scouting.



The Timeline of Sign-Up Night

FOUR WEEKS PRIOR

- Have your pack calendar, meeting dates/times/ locations, unit fee and leaders' list prepared.
- Provide all information above to your Unit Commissioner, District Membership Chair, and District Executive.
- Coordinate parent help to utilize personal social media pages, community connections, chartering organization, and school opportunities to promote your Pack and Scouting.

TWO WEEKS PRIOR

- Organize your leaders and parents to produce a well-coordinated sign-up night. Plan for which leader or parent will cover each of your stations, who will return payment and applications to the District Executive after the sign-up night, and who is following up with families who attended but did not pay or fill out the youth application on that evening. It is also worthwhile to organize which adult will be focusing on communicating with the leads and interested families you have gathered to that point and any interest you have from families thereafter.
- Plan for utilizing yard signs with your families and throughout the community.
- Coordinate your agenda to include a parent orientation within your first planned Pack meeting. The parent orientation should not occur at or within the sign-up night.

DAY OF

- Arrive early to set up. Most sign-up nights begin between 6:00 – 7:00pm. This may require you to work with your District Executive or school secretary to ensure you have access to the building early.
- Promote! Day-of social media postings have proven to drive greater attendance to sign-up night events.
- Be prepared with the applications and materials to be able to send to families who have expressed interest but are unable to attend the sign-up night that evening.

AT THE SIGN-UP NIGHT

- Be available to answer questions from parents, leaders, and even interested families.
- Keep it moving! Efficient registration process indicates the unit is well-organized. Be prepared to help and to delegate help where needed.

- Ensure all parents sign in on the attendance sheet and that all families complete and submit a youth application.

AT THE END OF THE NIGHT

- Get the Cubmaster's signature on all the paper applications collected.
- Have the Cubmaster or Committee Chair approve applications submitted online through their my.scouting.org "Application Manager".
- Take pictures or scanned copies of all applications and record dollar amount for fees and form of payment on each application (check #, etc.).
- Make sure the room, cafeteria, gymnasium, etc. is left better than you found it! Please take all yard signs and other Scouting materials with you as you leave the school.
- Contact District Membership Chair and District Executive to submit Reporting Envelope. Applications, registration fees, and one copy of the attendance roster are requested to be turned in immediately following the sign-up night to either District representative.

IN THE FOLLOWING DAYS OF THE EVENT

- Remind parents of new Scouts of any upcoming council wide activities, Pack leader contact list, and the Pack calendar/next meeting. The new parent orientation session is vital to your next pack meeting. Here you can do a deeper dive on Scouting in your Pack. Have leaders run a few short activities for the youth while the parents are going through more details about Scouting.
- Follow up with those families who did not sign up. This is where the sign-in sheet comes in handy. Check your applications against the sign-in sheet and call those families that did not join.
- It's important to reach out to address any concerns the person may have and offer to drop an application by their home or invite them to the first meeting or one of the Crossroads of America Council's fall events so they can see Cub Scouting for themselves.
- If your results don't achieve the Pack's Goal, have a conversation with your District Membership Chair and District Executive about creating other opportunities for families to join Scouting.

A Proven Model: Four Stations

Parents appreciate efficiency. The key to making your sign-up night successful is pre-planning. The following is a proven model, formed from many experiences and best practices, for how to organize your sign-up night. This model features four stations that give parents information about Cub Scouting, get them signed up, and provide everything they need to know, including when the first meeting is, who the leaders are, and more.

Station 1: Welcome/Sign In Station

This is the first place potential Cub Scouts and their parents will stop. Here, they sign in while the greeter provides a brief overview of the process.

1. Greet every family with a smile and enthusiasm and ask them to sign in.
2. Help orient the family with how they will move through the forthcoming stations. The process should not take longer than 30 minutes in total.

Station 2: What We Do

This is where you will share the excitement of Cub Scouting and your Pack's activities. Introduce the leaders and talk about what makes your Pack, and Scouting, special. Leave plenty of time and be prepared to answer questions.

Materials at Station 2:

- Pack calendar
- Listing of Pack and Den Leaders with contact email and phone numbers
- Rank Sheets (Den-specific information based on the child's grade)
- Crossroads Outfitters Uniform information
- New Parent Guide tri-folds



Station 3: Registration

This is the sign-up station where the station lead helps parents complete the actual application. Parents will need time to fill out the application after receiving the materials at station 3. Best practice is to have tables and chairs set up for parents to use when filling out the applications. Clipboards are a great add to this station if the Pack has any available. Make sure another parent or leader is available to help parent's with questions as they fill out the application.

- 1) Have Tablets for online applications and BSA Youth Application paper forms ready.
- 2) Be prepared to answer questions about Pack fee payment plans and/or financial assistance.

Materials at Station 3:

- Tablets/Computers for online sign up
- BSA Youth Applications
- BSA Adult Applications
- Sample Youth & Sample Adult Applications for parents to review
- "Ways to Join Scouting" document
- 2023 Registration Fees sheet
- Pens

Station 4: Check Out (Complete Applications)

Leaders at this station are responsible for final "check out," including payment.

- 1) Making sure the applications are properly completed.
- 2) Collect the proper fee amount for membership, Scout's Life magazine, and Pack dues.
- 3) Upon submission, each new Scout should receive their Balsa Wood Glider Plane.

Note that the Pack leader (either Cubmaster or Committee Chair) should sign each new youth application before it is able to be processed by the Council.

Bring Pack checkbook to pay for registration fees for new members. Checks should be made payable to Crossroads of America Council, BSA. It is encouraged to have one check submitted to the Council at the end of the evening, paired with the applications collected and returned within the Report Envelope.

While not a "Station", after a family finishes with station 4, the new Scout will likely want to be with their friends to build and decorate their new Balsa Wood Glider Plane. Some ideas to engage the new Scouts might be competition for who's plane flies farthest, flies highest, who's plane does a full circle maneuver, who can land their plane in a certain area, who can throw their plane through the hoola-hoop, etc.!

Be creative and have fun!

Materials at Station 4:

1. Calculator
2. Fee collection method (using square readers or Pack-specific Venmo/CashApp/etc. is acceptable and likely appreciated by the new parents.) Please be cautious to not use personal Venmo/Cashapp/etc. accounts when collecting these fees.
3. Envelope for applications and fees

Promoting the Sign-Up Night

Families today are overwhelmed with advertising and marketing messages. To ensure families get the message that it's time to sign up, use various methods of communication and be sure to have a plan. You should start to build the buzz at least two to four weeks out from your sign-up event. Crossroads of America Council will help get the word out through means of paper and digital fliers, stickers, yard signs, wristbands, and more, but most of your success will come from unit marketing.

Parents posting on their personal social media pages is the best marketing tool to a Cub Scout Pack, and it's free!! Parents posting on group Facebook pages (i.e. Mom's of ____ Elementary) has high impact and high visibility when drawing attention to your sign-up night.

Below are some suggestions for additional ways to promote your Pack sign-up night. These are just thought starters. The more ways you are able to reach parents, the more success you'll have.

In School Promotion

If you have full access to promoting your event at the schools, you can employ any of the following best practices.

- Distribute sign-up night fliers the week before the sign-up night
- Posters and yard signs around school and in the neighborhoods of the families who attend that school
- Cub talks given to the students during lunchtime or in a classroom setting
- Back-to-school open house events, school carnivals, and meet the teacher nights
- Electronic backpacks
- Invite current youth and parents to attend lunch at school in uniform
- Videos on in-school video networks and morning announcements
- School newsletter or website
- School marquee signs

Out-of-School Promotion

Here are several ideas for promoting the event outside of the schools.

- Ask current parents to use social media to let their friends and family know about the sign-up night. Also think about other organizations with social media channels such as your school's Parent Teacher Organizations or your unit's-chartered organization. Can they help you 'share' the message?
- Geofencing – Create a social media event around your sign up and strategically promote it to families
- Formally request the school's address roster and send a customized postcard to families in the school
- Personalized invitations, emails, and personal phone calls to prospective parents
- Door hangers and door-to-door invitations
- Recruit-a-friend and other peer-to-peer recruiting initiatives
- Fliers and Scout talks at after-school programs or churches in the community
- Church and community websites, calendars, and bulletins
- Press releases
- Billboards, posters, and yard signs in the community (businesses, churches, etc.)
- Community fairs, parades, and other events
- Conducting a promoting any community service projects the Pack has done in the past or plans to do in the future

Measuring Success

To measure your Pack's success, first determine how many youth were registered at the kindergarten and first-grade level. As the entry point of Cub Scouting, Kindergarten and First Grade families tend to be the largest classes of youth who will attend your sign-up night. Unfortunately, Kindergarten and First Grade youth families have the lowest retention rates in Cub Scouting, so it is vital to your Pack to make sure you are focused specifically on these grades for healthy growth and sustainability of the Pack. A good measure of success is determining if one out of every three youth in kindergarten and first grade is served by Cub Scouts.

Additionally, review your pack's total registration. After the sign-up night is complete, a Pack should be serving one out of every eight students within the schools they serve. If your pack exceeded this number (12-13% market share) that's excellent. If you are showing a lower market share, think about alternative methods to promoting your Pack or even consider 're-doing' your sign-up night. Perhaps more youth will come out to join if given a second opportunity.

Schools Served	Total K-1st Grade Youth	# of K & 1st Grade Youth Recruited	Total K-5th Grade Youth	# of K-5th Grade Youth Recruited

Thank You

Your leadership and determination to growing your Pack and engaging more families in Scouting is what makes this program so special.

And remember, there is no “wrong” time to join Scouting. Growing your Pack is a year-round endeavor and takes a focused commitment. You are not alone! Reach out to your District Membership Chair or District Executive if you run into roadblocks, could use advice, need resources, or simply just want to talk through your thoughts on engaging more families.

Your leadership and commitment to grow your Pack is appreciated and notices.

Happy Scouting and best of luck!



The online version and additional resources can be found at:

<https://www.crossroadsbsa.org/resources/>



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