



AREA TRAINING CHAIR ORIENTATION AND GUIDE

This Area Training Chairperson Orientation and Guide is designed to provide a set of “Best Practices Suggestions” for Area Training Chairs. It is organized into two major Segments:

- ORIENTATION for new Area Training Chairs
- and a GUIDE for on-going efforts

Within each of these major segments you will find discussions of most aspects of Area Training Chair’s initial and on-going role.

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WELCOME

- Congratulations on being selected to serve as your Area's Training Chair. By your influence, each of your Councils can substantially increase the level of leader training, thereby improving the experience provided to our youth. As with all BSA training, this Guide is designed to help you better understand and perform your role.
- *"The key to successful leadership today is influence, not authority."* (Ken Blanchard) You support the Council Training Chairs by mentoring and coaching since you have no direct authority over this group. Area Training Chairs work in true servant-leadership fashion by convincing the Council Training Chairs to perform in ways that improve overall training in their Councils.
- Successful and effective influence depends on building positive relationships with the Region Training Chair, the Area Program Chair, the Area Training Committee, and the Council Training Chairs. Building a relationship is a two-way activity, but you need to take the initiative. By conducting yourself in a humble, helpful, and friendly manner, you demonstrate your knowledge, integrity, and character. People learn that you are willing and able to support them. Because they will value the connection with you, they will reciprocate and help you do your job.

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FORMAL POSITION REQUIREMENTS

APPOINTMENT

- You have been appointed to the Area Training Chair position by the Area President in consultation with the Area Program Impact Chair and the Area Director.
- You are appointed annually.
- You normally serve in this position for a period of three years.

MAJOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Support the efforts of the Area's Council Training Chairs and teams in improving training results and measurements.
- Provide leadership to the Area Training Committee and the Council Training Teams, including selection, vetting with local Councils, and recruiting of quality training volunteers to serve as members of the committee.
- Establish Area Training procedures consistent with National Policies.

- Support Councils in planning, coordinating, communicating, and scheduling an effective, year around unit level leader training program using the current training methods of the BSA
- Encourage and assist Councils in planning and implementing a total growth and development plan for all leaders regardless of position.
- Develop procedures for evaluating the effectiveness of the Councils' training progress
- Coordinate Area training events.
- Select, recruit, and train trainers for Area training events.
- Approve applications for and ensure the integrity of content and action of Council Leadership Development Courses.
- Promote and support National and Regional training events held in National venues
- Serve as a member of the Area Program Impact Committee.
- Serve as a member of the Regional Volunteer Training Committee.

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MAKING SURE YOU ARE “SET-UP” OR “ON-BOARDED”

You will go through a formal on-boarding process when the position of Area Training Chair is offered to you and accepted by you. Become familiar with this process through discussions with the Area Director.

- Complete an application for your position. As a result, you will be set up as a formal member of your Area’s Committee in the National registration system. You should receive a registration card within a few weeks.
- Be diligent until you are sure you have access to all reports, distributions, and information channels available to you. Make sure you know your options. Your Area Director and Commissioner can help you understand these options and help you “Get Set Up.”
- Create a “Checklist” so you can check things off when complete:
 - Application
 - Registration Card
 - Access
 - Reports, etc.
- Depending on your leadership style you may wish to have access to additional information, distributions, or reports. The administrative assistant for your area, your Area Director, and/or the Area Commissioner can help. If permission or training is needed, they will guide you in this process.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

OBTAINING CONTACT INFORMATION

- Obtain contact Information for all Council Training Chairs and other training related positions in your Area. Your Area Director or Area Administrative Assistant will provide this information.
- Ask for an organizational chart of the Area Committee and the Regional Committee. Use these charts to make sure you are not missing any key contacts. Creating a roster of the entire Area Committee and Regional Committee with contact information will pay off in the long run.
- Make initial courtesy contacts with all your Councils as soon as you have the Training Chairs, Program Vice Presidents, and Council Executives contact information. Identify yourself and your position. In conversations, you should find out if there are additional contacts any of them want in the loop.
- Organize all this in a format that best fits you and can be effectively communicated and understood by all your contacts.
- After completing your initial version return it back to all your contacts. Ask them to provide any edits, suggestions, additions, or corrections. Request that they get feedback to you; 3 to 4 weeks.

MAINTAINING CONTACT INFORMATION – GOING FORWARD

- Update all contact information periodically from information distributed at Area meetings, through e-mails, position announcements, and/or during phone conversations or conferences. Include revised contact information on any agendas or mail outs; “Updates in Council Training Positions Information.”
- Send revised contact information to all contacts asking for any updates at least twice each year.
 - At the beginning of each year after district or regional positions may have changed.
 - Just before the annual new unit and new leader recruitment period.
 - More often if there is reason to believe changes have occurred.
 - Ask for feedback by a specific date.
- Always re-distribute after changes are recorded. Be sure you indicate updates, either with notes or highlighted updates. Be sure to distribute to any National or Regional leaders with a need for updates.

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INITIAL GUIDELINES

** The Area Training Chair job description is of course your primary guide.

- Ask for any additional Area and Regional operating guidelines:
 - Discuss with the Area Director, Area Vice President of Program/Impact, Regional Training Chair, any Regional positions as directed by the Regional Training Chair, etc.
 - As you work with the Area Leaders, be sure to ask if there are others they want you to work with. Be sure to add them to your contact information / data base
 - Consistently use the same discussion format.
 - You may be assigned additional responsibilities.

- Ask for general guidance during those initial conversations. Very Important: Record instructions completely and accurately. Let all the appropriate positions know details as needed.

- Learn and know which issues require approval or consultation. Many of these requirements are available in course materials and administrative guides.

- Develop a clear and comprehensive understanding of all tasks that are assigned to you, including details beyond the position description. It is best to receive guidance in writing.

- Make sure everyone in your circle of influence is aware of the details of your role. It is best that Area leadership members inform council members of the details of your role, especially additional duties.

- Ask Area leaders who they wish to have on your Area Training Committee. Normally, it will be the Training chairperson from each of your Area's Councils. If your Council members wish to add other individuals to your committee, you should make your Area Director aware.

- Request that Area and Regional leaders share clear guidelines for what they want to be informed of or what they need to be involved in. Record and maintain accurate notes. Keep your Area Committee informed (Area Training Committee discussed later).

Note: Going forward, always request leadership guidance when you do not have a clear understanding of procedures, approval requirements, communication norms, or unusual issues. Use the rule of thumb: "When in doubt, consult the boss" as you need input or approval.

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LEADERSHIP SUPPORT

National, Regional, and Area Leadership Structure Review:

- Area, Regional, and National Volunteer and Professional Leadership Teams are all very similar:
 - 1) KEY positions: President, Commissioner, and a Director/Staff Advisor.
 - 2) Vice Presidents of Executive Committees to oversee topics related to finance, membership, marketing, programs, leadership development, nominations, and other topics that must be addressed.
 - 3) Training committees report to the Vice Presidents of Outdoor and Program impact.
 - 4) National, Regional, and Area Training Committees are all similar in structure.
 - 5) For example; your Area Committee consist of Area level sub-committee members reporting to you and responsible for segments of the overall Area training responsibility. All the Council Training Chairs are also on the Area Committee.

Support for your Area Training Mission:

- Ensure that Area Training Committee members and Council Training Teams, as well as Council leadership, understand that the training mission is well supported by Area and Regional leadership.
- Communicate the fact that Area, Regional, and National leaders support your training efforts and specific initiatives by obtaining letters or statements of support and encouragement from them. Include these letters or statements in your first report on the state of training in your Area.
- Take every opportunity to ask these leaders to support various initiatives by directly communicating with them as appropriate.

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- Be aware of opportunities to market your efforts using support statements and other communications. Sound marketing and support activities are a natural result of good communications with Area, Region, and National leadership.

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REGION COMMUNICATION

Communications with the Regional Training Team (at first and on-going)

The Regional Training Chair is your primary Regional contact. He or she will be your primary source of Regional information. You will be responsible to provide key information to the person in this position as asked or required.

- Communicate your Area's training goals and progress toward attaining these goals on a periodic basis as the Area Training Committee Chair.
- Report specific information to the Regional Training Team as requested.
- Share National and Regional program information to Area and Council Teams and personnel as it becomes available. The Area Training Team has the option to "filter" information being shared with Council and District Training Teams (i.e. Need to Know).
- Review applications of those who present Regional courses that are being held in the Councils headquartered in your Area. Approve and track the progress of the presentations of these courses.
- Report any issues concerning these courses expediently to the appropriate National, Regional, Area, and Council Volunteer and/or Professional as required or as you identify needs.
- Inform Regional personnel of training impacts (expected attendance of National and Regional courses and conferences, suggestions for improvement, situations requiring approval, key events in your Area, reports, etc.); as you are the primary feedback source for your Regional counterparts.
- Attend and/or participate in Regional courses and conferences. Communicate with your Regional Training Chair to plan details and specifics of your attendance and participation.

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GET STARTED – DEVELOP A PLAN

Most Important: It is time to develop relationships now that you know with whom you will be working and how you can communicate with them. Knowing the professionals and volunteers involved in training should be your first priority.

- Consult with your Area and Regional Training Leaders to write a step-by-step course of action for developing good working relationships with Council Training Teams. Your primary plan should include steps aimed at getting to know your Councils, Area, and Regional counterparts.
- Ask Area and Regional Training Leaders what training issues they would like you to focus on. Note their ideas.
- Utilize the contact information you have as you plan and initiate actions.
- If possible, you should plan to include a face to face visit with your Council Team members to nurture relationships with them. Otherwise, develop steps that require meaningful contact through phone calls, e-mails, conference calls, etc.
- Plan the dates for each step in your plan depending upon your time and budget restraints and each Council's needs, times available, and wishes. This will be discussed in more detail. Include steps in your initial plans that address not only getting to know Council training teams but providing information to them, obtaining their feedback, and detailing results of that feedback.
- Determine the makeup of each Council through discussions with each of your Councils. Lists of phone contacts, conference calls, e-mail groups, or combined groups should be documented and verified.
- Your first report to Area, Regional, and Council leadership should be the final step to your initial plan of action. (This will be discussed later in more detail.)
- Your initial plan may require two to four months. If possible, plan to complete your first report in time for the annual Area meetings or other events where Council leaders gather. As you work to schedule your planned activities, you should "back schedule" from a target date.
- Place in writing a list of "first steps" that are realistic, achievable, and logical.
- Obtain final approval of your plan from Area leadership. Ask how they will want you to report.

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Ask to be placed on the agenda during the annual Area wide meeting or other Area meeting opportunities to present the report. Ask for enough time to adequately present your report including time for audience questions and answers.

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INITIAL VISIT OR COMMUNICATIONS

- Analyze your “To Do” list of completed tasks to date. Take time to recognize the tasks that have been completed and those that must still be completed.
 - Your contact list is complete and accurate.
 - You have introduced yourself to members of the Area Council Teams.
 - You have a basic understanding of your Area Leadership expectations.
 - You know what your Regional Leaders expect from you and your team.
 - You know communication preferences for all those you will communicate with.
 - You have created a list of “First Steps into your councils”.
- Consider the following basic “First Step” options.
 - Make personal visits and plan other team building options/events.
 - Identify information that needs to be provided.
 - Identify information you need to know.
 - Document what you have learned.
 - Communicate collective information to Council Teams and ask for feedback.
 - Report the results of your “First Steps” to Area and Regional personnel.
- Remember when meeting with your Council Teams that they should come away feeling that you can be counted on and can help them reach their training missions. Servant leadership, passion for training, facilitator, mentor, coach, friend are all key words that should permeate your mission. (Smile even though you just hit your toe with a hammer.) Contact the Council Training Chairs to schedule a visit. (Special called meetings work best.) Focus on training topics. Make sure you secure the approval of your Area Director, Council executives, and others with key training leadership roles. REMEMBER, VISITS ARE BY INVITATION.
- Consider optional meeting forums including roundtable meetings, training team meeting, or committee meetings.
- Lay the groundwork for face to face visits by creating a list of discussion points for all conversations.
- Arrange conference calls or other forums with members of your Councils when face to face visits are not possible.

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- Invite suggestions for your meeting or communications from others besides the Training Committee members. Include Commissioners, The Key Three, Vice Presidents of Program, etc.
- Provide and receive information that is pertinent to the training mission. The following are examples.
 - National and Regional information about upcoming training tools, decisions, courses, goals, and plans for improving training results.
 - Details of each Council including size, programs, districts, headquarters, camps, and leadership, both volunteer and professional.
 - Take photos if you are able to meet face to face.
 - Solicit a detailed list of each Council's Training Plan.
 - Inquire about expected attendance at National and Regional training events or conferences.
 - Ask how many Council courses will be offered (Wood Badge, NYLT, Leader training).
 - Document the goals and objectives of each Council.
 - Ask how the Area Team might help.
 - Find out which metrics they know about or need. Insure that they know how to access, interpret and use them.
 - Insure that they have access to all course syllabi and administrative guides.
 - Document any discussion about needed tools or reports that are not currently available. Offer support to help Council members to ensure the accuracy of record keeping.
 - Document non-training Committee suggestions.
- Be prepared when fielding questions. Anything else you can think of ???
- Maintain complete and accurate notes.

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FEEDBACK AND SUGGESTIONS

NOW, what to do with all this information:

- Organize all that you have learned into logical categories. You should have three ultimate goals in mind:
 - To communicate all your documentation back to all your councils for verification.
 - To obtain additional information: Once they see what you have documented they will have additional inputs (something that was missed first time around).
 - To prioritize all in process and planned training actions and plans.
- Create a “combined” list of in-process and planned training initiatives going on in all your Area’s Councils.
- Create a method for “Prioritizing” this list. A points system usually works best. For example; a priority of 1 could be the most important thing a Council can be doing to improve training results in that Council; a 10 could indicate the least important plan of action.
- Send out your “Feedback Package.” Remember, you are sending all the information you have from all your Councils back to them for validation, edit, and/or additions. Suggest that they assign a specific individual to coordinate each Council’s feedback.
- A most valuable exercise is to ask them to analyze and prioritize the cumulative list of in-progress or planned improvements and actions. Ask them to provide a single prioritized list for their Council. This way they can meet and make Council level decisions.
- Ask them to get the package back to you by a specific date. One month should be sufficient.
- Make necessary adjustments to any data or specific information provided back to you.
- By combining all the priority feedback, you will have an AREA WIDE prioritized list of planned actions.

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- Hopefully, by now you have all the information you need to report on the “State of the Area’s Training Programs.”

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FIRST FORMAL REPORT

- Issue a formal report as the last step in developing your Initial Action Plan. This is your opportunity to share the cumulative knowledge of all the Councils in your Area. By now, you have collected Action Plans for all your Councils. As a result of summarizing plans and obtaining feedback, these plans have been prioritized. This prioritized list represents the cumulative knowledge of many years of training successes. It allows you to know what has worked and what has not worked and results in better potential planning overall.
- Include data and other helpful information for the National and Regional Training Committees.
- Ensure each Council's learning goals are documented.
- Segment the suggestions (action plan) list. Most suggestions will fall under the category: "Suggestions for District and Council Training Teams". Other potential groupings include: Key Three, Area, Region, National, Commissioners, Leadership Committees, Wood Badge, NYLT, etc. Many suggestions will apply to more than one grouping.

REPORT CONTENT OPTIONS

- Include Area, Regional, and National "letters/statements of support" in your report to the Area. Ask those leaders who provided the letters/statements to provide you with a picture. Include them with the letters/statements. This personalizes those support statements
- Consider including Group or Council pictures in your report.
- Include copies of policies or procedures that have proven to be successful in one or more of the Councils in your report.
- Consider including a "Where to Now?" segment in your report. Offer suggestions based on what you have learned to date. Include on-going efforts, strategic planning, and continuous improvement ideas. These will be important success factors over time.

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- Share a personal statement titled “From the Heart” in your report. This statement should include comments that reflect dedication and servant leadership. Commitment from you to the readers will be important.
- Encourage all Councils to consider adopting mandatory or other training policies.
- Consider the timeframe for distributing your report. If you have been lucky enough to manage your efforts to a time-phased plan, it is suggested that you share your report at a key Area event, such as an Annual Area meeting. Coordinate with your Area Director.
- Ask for feedback! At this point you are ready to move on to “ON-GOING EFFORTS”
- Summarize training goals by learning categories for both direct and indirect contact leaders in all your Area’s Councils.
- Document Regional and National Course attendance expectations.
- Include the numbers of planned leadership courses for each Council in your report.
- Choose from two options: 1) Your report to your Area can be formatted so that it can be distributed upstream thus serving a dual purpose. 2) You may issue a separate report or reports to the Regional Training Chair and/or National Training Committee members.

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REFLECTIONS TO DATE

Now that you have completed your initial Personal Action Plan which ended with your first Formal Area Training Report, you should be very familiar with the demographics, status, plans, and needs of the Councils within your Area. Take some time to review what you know.

- Think about building your Area Training Committee. Every Area has different needs.
- Form this committee with the purpose of providing support aligned with the needs of the Councils (by program, by functional support category, or other).
- Create or obtain a job description for each position that you will include in your Area Committee.
- Discuss ideas with your Area Director and your Regional Training Chair as you form this committee.
- All Council Training Chairs are included in the Area Training Committee. This is mandated in their position descriptions.

It is also time to start thinking about the details of how your committee can help and facilitate change in all your Councils. Have discussions along these lines with your Region and Area counterparts. You should be preparing for on-going efforts. It is always a good idea to continue maintaining a written action plan.

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COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

STRUCTURE YOUR AREA TRAINING COMMITTEE

- Consider organizing the Area Training Committee make-up/positions in the following ways:
 - Program (Boy Scouts, Cub Scouts, Venture Scouts, etc.)
 - Technology, Communications, and Reports Expertise
 - Leadership Development (NYLT, Wood Badge, etc.)
 - Categories of Direct Leader Training (Digital, Face to Face, etc.)
 - Non-direct Leader Training, etc.
- Review the Training Metrics in order to form a good idea of the program strengths and weaknesses.
- Study your notes to glean additional ideas and approaches.
- Talk with other Area Training Chairs and your Regional Training Chair to find out how their committees are organized.
- Discuss your thoughts and ideas with your Area Director and Vice President of Program Impact once you have decided how you want your committee to be organized. Present existing job descriptions at this time.
- Have job descriptions approved by the Regional Training Chair and your Area Director once they are developed. The approved job descriptions will form the basis for recruiting efforts and announcements.
- Create an Organizational Chart. Use this chart during recruitment, vetting, approvals, and announcements.

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RECRUIT YOUR AREA TRAINING COMMITTEE

Note: Any new Training Committee positions will need to be reviewed and approved by the Area Director and by those to whom you report.

- The Regional Training Chair and your Area Director can help find examples of the most common Area Training committee position descriptions. Depending on how you want to organize you may have to develop position descriptions yourself. Again, always obtain approval as mentioned.
- Begin the recruiting process once you have the final approved versions of job descriptions and the Area Training Committee Organization Chart. Discuss and agree on your recruiting plan with your Area Director.
- Ask your Area Director to lay the groundwork for you to start the recruiting process in the Area Councils.
- Distribute the Organizational Chart and job descriptions to all Council Executives. This will allow Executives to involve people in discussions as needed.
- Work with Executives to be sensitive to and to avoid “taking talent” away from Councils.
- Ask Council Executives to recommend candidates. Find out as much as you can about the candidates, especially as it relates to qualifications and experience that match the job descriptions.

Decide on a candidate for each position through discussions with Council and Area Leadership. Ask for approval from all those involved with this candidate as well as your Area Director. Attempt to find candidates from various Councils: Big/Small, West/East, North/South, etc. However, you want to recruit the “Best Possible” individual for each position.

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ANNOUNCE APPOINTMENTS

- Draft an announcement which includes information about the job responsibilities, the short biography, contact information, and a photo of the person who accepts the position.
- Send a draft of the announcement to the person being appointed. Ask for feedback and edits from that individual.
- Distribute the final draft once it is ready to everyone who needs to be notified that this position has been filled. Inform your Area, Regional, and all Council Training Teams as recommended by your Area Director.
- Consider asking the home Council Executive of the candidate to make a local announcement to Council membership.

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ONBOARD NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Refer to the section on “Onboarding” to set the appointee up for his or her responsibilities. All Committee members will need to go through the onboarding process just like you did.
- Consider any special accommodations required for this position in order to function well and access reports, permissions, etc. Communicate special needs of the position to the Area Administrative Assistant.
- Consider supplying each new Committee member with two gold shoulder loops and an Area Committee Patch.

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NATIONAL REPORTS

- Become familiar with all Key Performance reports which are distributed by the National BSA team. These reports contain training statistics that are broken down by Region, Area, and Council. You should be familiar with these reports and distribute them to the correct Area and Council Training Teams.
- If you or any of your Council Training Teams sees the need for a new report, sees a way to improve existing reports or finds issues, you should provide adequate documentation to your Regional Training Chair. He or she will pass it on.

REPORT ANALYSIS

- Compare data during the same month in different years in order to make a “Point in Time” comparison. In any given category of measurement, this is the best way to compare data and to determine if real progress is being made. Scouting activities or phases vary from month to month throughout the year.
- Educate all Council Training Team members to understand both standard and custom reports available to them. Train them how to use the report data. Measuring results is the best way to assess whether Area or Council actions have resulted in improvements.
- Assign a “Go To” person to provide reports, custom reports, or reports that provide specific information to those who need data. This could be you or another person who is on the Area Training Committee or someone from the Commissioner ranks.
- Ensure that all Training Teams know how to obtain ALL needed information.

“WHAT GETS MEASURED, GETS DONE! BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU MEASURE, IT JUST MIGHT GET DONE.” BY: AN OLD SCOUT TRAINER

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REPORTING SUCCESS AND FEEDBACK

- Ask for feedback from your Councils and from members of your Area Training Teams. Involving others can be a most productive exercise.
- Report success stories and new ideas back to training teams in your Area. This has proven to be a major factor in the success of any Area's Councils.
- Ask for feedback three to four times during the year. Report back to Councils as soon as possible after you receive input. This will allow Councils to modify plans and reap the benefits in a timelier manner. The most important questions to ask yourself are "When do I report? How do I report?"
- Put a "feedback inquiry" reminder on your personal schedule
- Include summaries in all formal reports you issue.
- Share summarized points in key meeting reports.

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KEEP COUNCILS ADVISED OF ALL CURRENT TRAINING TOOLS

- Insure that you are familiar with the sources for all training materials and other resources. All courses have a training code. Know how to ensure that you have the most current list of resources.
- Position yourself or a designated person on your Area Training Team to share answers regarding sources and methods with Council Training contacts. Most courses have a “Face-to-Face” hard copy guide consisting of a syllabus, a training guide, an administrative guide, and/or supporting materials.
- Facilitate the sharing of “Best Practices” among Councils, especially those relating to specific course effectiveness. Physical settings often limit the tools available for use by trainers. Change and adapt.
- Become familiar with courses that are available in digital format. Know how to use these online tools so you or someone on your Area Training Team can instruct and advise Council Teams upon request.
- Maintain an up-to-date list of BSA learning tools and resources as they are often changed. Know how to communicate with your teams when tools or resources change. This responsibility may be delegated when needed. If delegated, find a method to assure that this is being done.

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TRAINING METHODS

- Insure that you are up to speed on all training protocols that are available in Scouting Programs, including coaching, mentoring, specific certifications, leadership, and other facilitated methods.
- Encourage collaboration with Scouting Executives, District Executives, Committee members, and Commissioners for advice concerning methods for gathering information and knowing options.
- Encourage creativity, use of props, humor, and initiative when training others

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ADVISING COUNCIL AND DISTRICT TRAINING TEAMS

- Facilitate the planning process with those responsible for training in your Area. The status of District and Council Training Teams is a critical factor in determining when and how to use available tools and methods.
- Coach the Training Teams as they develop Council and District Training Plans. Tools and methods should be suggested based on your assessment of the individual strengths and weaknesses of each Council or District.
- Consider venues, travel distances, availability of Wifi, availability of training facilities, and the concentration of effective learning leadership assets when guiding those who are developing plans.
 - Suggest scheduling training activities in councils that have a strong Training Teams, adequate training facilities, and effective trainers.
 - Suggest scheduling training events in Districts that have strong support from their Council Teams. Combining district events is always a factor.
 - Create a “Road Show” to showcase the most effective Council and District Trainers TO areas that need support. Encourage a District “Building” events while offering training. Model the effective use of tools and methods to those in these districts.

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WORK WITH OTHER POSITIONS

Working with other positions can be a helpful exercise for Trainers. Here are some points and suggestions to pass on to your council training teams:

- Commissioners are always up to speed on the status of the Units, Districts, and Councils' strengths and weaknesses.
- Ask Commissioners for assistance in developing Plans of Action for improving training results.
- Communicate with Membership Chairs. They are another source of communication you will want to have. They can keep you up-to-date on new Units, failing Units, etc. and assist you in making more effective plans.
- Consult with the Area Vice President of Program and other Program Committee function leaders, looking for opportunities and helpful information.
- Recommend that your Council Training Chairs follow the above-mentioned model assuming there is an understanding between the Council Training Chair and the Council Leadership.

Sound strategy does not happen in a vacuum.

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ENCOURAGE WORKING ACROSS COUNCILS

- Facilitate and encourage opportunities for Councils to work together. Large Councils will have all the resources needed to carry out the learning missions. Logically, large Councils should reach out to “Next Door” smaller Councils when possible as learning opportunities are recognized.
- Act to facilitate cross functional solutions when possible as you or your Area team recognizes that a small Council does not have all the pieces in place to accomplish a goal.
- Recognize opportunities across Councils for planning, combining events, sharing participation, and sharing resources as you become familiar with each Council in your Area. Combining events is one of the most common opportunities.
- Encourage Councils to communicate often and to think creatively for ways to work together.

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PROMOTE AREA TRAINING EVENTS

- Work with others “Outside Your Area” to gain knowledge and to explore new ideas. Regional and National learning events represent the “Best” and most “Up-To-Date” opportunities outside your Area and Councils.
- Ensure that your Area Team is in the communication loop with all National and Regional learning opportunities. You can help insure that this happens by using the On-Boarding process in the Orientation section.
- Encourage participation passively or aggressively to take advantage of opportunities and to improve results in your Area and your Areas’ Councils.
- Forward all flyers, communications, notices, and electronic communications to your Area Team and your Council Teams.
- Plan group trips. Take the lead by arranging hotel and/or transportation options. You may want to assign an Area Event Coordinator if a National event is or can be significant to your Areas’ learning plans or goals. This is especially important when comes to Regional Course Director Conferences and other required learning events.

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PROMOTING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL EVENTS

- Work with others “Outside Your Area” to gain knowledge and to explore new ideas. Regional and National learning events represent the “Best” and most “Up-To-Date” opportunities outside your Area and Councils.
- Encourage participation passively or aggressively to take advantage of opportunities and to improve results in your Area and your Areas’ Councils.
- Forward all flyers, communications, notices, and electronic communications to your Area Team and your Council Teams.
- Plan group trips. Take the lead by arranging hotel and/or transportation options. You may want to assign an Area Event Coordinator if the National or Regional event is or can be significant to your Areas’ learning plans or goals. This is especially important when comes to Regional Course Director Conferences and other required learning events. Pick and choose strategically.

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COUNCIL AND DISTRICT TRAINING INITIATIVES AND POLICIES

Discuss the following with each of your councils:

- Ask your councils to discuss the development and implementation of Training Policies at the Council and District levels. This could be a valuable option in accomplishing learning goals and objectives.
- Encourage training initiatives for non-contact positions within the Council and in the Districts. In some cases, the people in these positions actually do the training. There are often unrecognized impacts to overall learning successes.
 - District Chairs, Commissioners, and Committees
 - Merit Badge Counselors
 - Unit Committee members / Chartered Organization Representatives
- Encourage Councils to recruit a Training Committee member to serve as a District Liaison to accomplish the following tasks:
 - Coordination of combined scheduled training and resource sharing
 - Development of training materials unique to the Council or District
 - Recruiting District Coordinators with the same goals
- Encourage and advise Councils in the following Focus areas:
 - Direct contact leader training policy
 - Non-direct leader training policy
 - Youth protection training methods
- Suggest that District Committees provide final approvals and implementation plans for Districts.
- Suggest that Council Executive Committees and the Council Executive Boards provide final guidance and approval of implementation plans for Councils.

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MANDATORY TRAINING POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

- Ask Councils to discuss assigning mandatory leader training as a way to reach goals and objectives. Councils must have the proper infrastructure in order for a mandatory policy to be implemented successfully.
- Advise Council Training Chairs and their Committees in the following areas:
 - Are there enough resources in all Districts?
 - Are there enough Council resources to assist less prepared Districts?
 - Is there enough support to deal with challenges?
- Councils should insure there are enough trainers to respond to Council Training needs. This includes a variety of delivery methods such as scheduled courses, on-demand training for units or groups of nearby units, webinars, support for online training, and other creative delivery techniques.
- Suggest that Councils have Trainer-guided programs that engage and excite the participants. This always comes from knowledgeable, skilled, prepared, and enthusiastic trainers.
- Always support and promote training starting with the top Leaders of the Council.

These characteristics are the same as those needed for non-mandatory training. Once these are in place, the training numbers should increase. Mandatory training requirements can help move the numbers from high to very high but will not work if the current numbers are low.

A long-term plan is required to effectively implement mandatory training. The length of the plan depends on where the Council currently stands with training. In addition to the characteristics listed above, the plan should include steps to convince Scouters of the value and need for the mandate.

"If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea." (Antoine de Saint-Exupery)

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IS CULTURAL LEARNING CHANGE A BETTER PATH?

We have discussed your role in facilitating Council and District Training Policies and/or mandatory training policies, Now, let us consider the alternative.

- One of your key initiatives is working to change the cultural approach to learning within Councils and Districts.
- Become the change agent for learning within your Area. Always use the following arguments:
 - We expect Scouts to learn Merit Badges. We should set the example.
 - We expect Scouts to complete all rank advancement requirements. We should set the example.
 - When our Scouts look at us as leaders, they should see the example.
 - We are coaches.

Think about it in this way: The more we work to help change the learning culture, the fewer policies or mandatory policies we will need. In theory, we should not need learning policies.

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PARTICIPATION IN COUNCIL EVENTS

- Participate in or visit Council events upon invitation. Acceptance, is of course, subject to your schedule, budget, and view of the benefit. Council Leadership will understand if you are not in position to accept any invitation.
- Respond to Council leadership in writing if you can or cannot accept an invitation.
- Use every opportunity to inspire improved performance when working with Council members. The fact that you are invited to events should be viewed as beneficial.
- There are times when you may wish to attend an event. Use good judgement and diplomacy by discussing the possibility and method of an invitation with the council executive.

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SPECIAL COUNCIL VISITS

- Visiting with your Councils (upon invitation) as special needs arise is an option.
- Ensure that the Area Director is aware of any such plan and agrees with the need and value of your actions to support the Council. The Directors will often be able to lay the groundwork for such a visit.
- Be flexible and accommodating when Councils invite you to help them. Most often, Councils will respond positively.
- Take specific actions when the need for focused missions occur. Some examples include:
 - Explaining major National initiatives and decisions
 - Rolling out new programs or training tools
 - Major changes in Area, Regional, or National policies effecting learning
- Distinguish between focused meetings and annual visits. Annual visits should be pre-arranged as part of your annual action plan to support and know your Councils.

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PROMOTING RECOGNITIONS

- Understand that you have a role in training recognitions even though these are a part of Annual Council Banquet and District Recognition Banquet processes.
- Communicate with all the Councils in your Area at the beginning of the annual nominating period. Encourage them to identify all eligible recipients within their Councils.
- Inform everyone of any new training awards or changes to existing requirements when communicating with Councils.
- Provide any valuable suggestions to your training chairs because the nominating awards process often fails in identifying all deserving candidates.
- You or your team may be able to provide filtered reports which councils can use to identify candidates and vet qualifications. Provide these reports at least two months prior to the nominating period.

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COUNCIL TRAINING EVENT PROMOTION TO THE AREA

- Be aware of all approved or planned training events in your Councils. This duty may be assigned to someone on your Area Training Committee. Most events can usually be viewed on Council calendars.
- Review planned events to reveal cross Council opportunities. Consider the following.
 - Opportunities for Council members to attend another Council's events if their own training does not have enough attendees.
 - Opportunities to combine resources and have a training event across two or more Councils.
 - Opportunities for leaders that missed events in their own Councils might attend a nearby training.
- Promote invitations and attendance from Council to Council when working with Council Training Committees. Use Area Training Committee communications networks.

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ANNUAL AREA MEETINGS

Every Area has an annual Areawide Meeting. Learning and Leadership (Training) is and should be a part of the Agenda for this meeting:

- Discuss your role at Area wide meetings with your Area Director.
- Request to be on the agenda of Area wide meetings.
- Present key facts, accomplishments, initiatives, and plans.
- Recognize Learning accomplishments of Councils in your Area.
- Make every effort to recognize and include members of your Area Training Committee.
- Promote cultural change and learning initiatives.

This meeting provides a great opportunity for interaction and knowledge sharing with all the other functions operating to serve Scouts in your area.

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AREA TRAINING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- If possible, schedule a once a year face-to-face meeting so everyone can know the “Face behind the voice”. This might happen at the same time and venue as an Area wide event. However, it is suggested that your committee meeting occur separately and at times that do not interfere with the overall Area Committee meeting.
- Consider the geographic makeup of your Area as well as other factors when determining the method and venue for an Area Training Committee meeting. Use phone conferences if face-to-face meetings are prohibitive.
- Communicate to each Council Training Chair that they do not need to wait for a Team meeting to contact you for suggestions, questions, or information.
- Seek to find the best day and time for meetings or phone calls so you have representation from each Council.
- Create an agenda and distribute it at least one month before each meeting. This will allow team members to prepare and gather information that will be shared.
- Consider the following to be included on a meeting agenda.
 - Welcome and roll call
 - Training position changes
 - Corrections to the minutes of the last calls or meetings
 - National or Regional training updates
 - Cluster reports (if the Area has clusters for trainings)
 - Reports on completions and/or recruitments of scheduled National or Regional training courses within the Area (WB, NYLT, Powder Horn, etc.)
 - Course Director Conference information
 - Trainings at National Scouting venues
 - Sharing of Council Training events
 - Training needs
 - Training successes and Best practices discoveries
 - Other topics as needed
 - Next meeting/call date

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- Suggest distribution of meeting minutes within ten days of any Area Training Committee meeting to everyone on the roster. Include the person on the Area Committee that you report to as well as the Area Director. (Make sure they are aware of all scheduled meetings should they wish to participate.)

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AREA TRAINING CONFERENCES

National and Area Training conferences are offered at National venues throughout each year. In these conferences you and your Area, Council, and District Teams receive the latest and greatest learning information from the best leaders our movement has to offer. Actual learning occurs in the Councils and Districts within your Area. So, why consider having an Area Wide Training Conference?

- Consider the following reasons and content for having Area Training Conferences.
 - To discuss National and Regional Conference information
 - To discuss new Area wide initiatives
 - To talk about Area wide opportunities
 - To review “Best Practices” across all Councils
 - To network among Councils and Districts
 - To offer visible Area Leadership support
 - To share success stories, strategic planning ideas, initiatives
 - To discuss special topics
 - To participate in breakout problem solving exercises

- An Area Training Conference should not:
 - Mirror the National and Regional Conferences
 - Focus on things everyone is already aware of
 - Have any actual training occurring with the exception of possibly Youth Protection Training

- Discuss ideas for an Area Training Conference with the Area Training Committee as well as the Area Director before scheduling it.

- Begin planning an Area Training Conference at least four months in advance of the conference. Send a “Save the Date” communication to all who will be invited.

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- Organize a Conference Team to plan and execute the conference. Consider the following:
 - Venue, budget, agenda, promotion, presenters
 - Logistics including set-up, meals, religious service
 - Materials, copies, visual aids
 - Registration, hotel, and map links
 - Block room discounts and contracts, etc.

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PROMOTING NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEARNING EVENT PARTICIPATION

- Take time to promote all National and Regional training opportunities during the Area Training Team, Area Committee meetings, and Area Training Conferences.
- Ask the Council Training Chairmen to share course information with their Councils and Districts via flyers, Facebook, the Council Website, the Area Website, etc. which your Committee receives from National and Regional sources.
- Share the National promotional materials with the Area Councils as you receive them.
- Supplement Councils with your own “Communications of Encouragement”. In many cases, your Councils are on the distribution list for promotional materials. Try not to duplicate those communications.
- Look for ways to get your Area Teams to attend National and Regional events. You or one of your assigned Area Committee members might consider working on group travel arrangements, group hotel rates, etc. Discuss other opportunities with the National or Regional Event Leaders.

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COURSE DIRECTOR CONFERENCES

- Know the differences between Course Director Conferences (required) and other National and Regional learning opportunities.
- Consider the possibility of different transportation modes (car pool, van, bus, train, plane) to attend as a group in order to reduce the cost of travel.
- Suggest the possibility of renting block hotel rooms with discounts, using conference facilities or camp sites, using church housing, staying in local volunteer homes, renting Bed and Breakfasts, etc. to reduce the costs of accommodations.
- Obtain attendance estimates from all of your Area's Councils. Share these numbers with Regional Training leadership folks.

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REVIEW OF OVERALL SUCCESS

- Remember that you and your team, the Area Training Committee, have no direct effect on training results in your Area. That said, you are successful if you have helped move the needle.
- Use all available measurements to review and assess the results of Area wide trainings at least every quarter.
- Compare 3 key learning measurements at a high level.
 - Direct Contact Leader Training
 - Non-direct Contact Leader Training
 - Youth Protection Learning results
- Make two comparisons. Compare the percent of leaders trained within the same period in the past years. Compare the percent of leaders trained for the last year by month. The best way to accomplish this task is to create graphs to show results from the last 12-18 months.
- Review all details with your Committee. Reviews of learning results by position code is suggested.
- Decide on the graphs and metrics for reviewing success that you and your team will review before training is held. Ask your Councils what they would like to see in terms of reviewing success. You or one of your Committee members should be responsible for obtaining information, maintaining data, and distributing reports.
- Ask your Committee to review these results with you with the goal of answering a pre-determined set of questions.
 - Are we improving? If not, why?
 - What needs more attention?
 - How should we revise our plans and suggest actions to our Councils?
 - What do we need to change? What needs more attention?
 - What conclusions can we make?
 - What suggestions do we want to make to our Councils?

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Note: You may want to have a predetermined set of questions or an assessment form for use in this review. If so, it should be a product of interaction with your Councils.

- Encourage: Plan, execute, and evaluate for continual improvement.

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AREA AND COUNCIL WIDE CONTINUAL IMPROVEMENTS

- Recall that in the early stages of your efforts, you worked with the Councils to develop an Area wide list of planned actions. The final list that was shared with all Councils was prioritized by the Councils.
- Obtain input from each Council regarding the continued accuracy of the list and line item priorities of individual steps on the list.
- Consider the following items when revising this list.
 - Add any new suggested tasks
 - Change any priorities based on feedback
 - Re-distribute the entire list of in-process or suggested action plans.
- Include additional information which might be helpful to Councils, the Region, or National operations in a quarterly or an annual review and report back to your Councils.
- Conduct a quarterly performance and quality reviews. This takes a great deal of effort. Continual improvement only works if you go through the required steps in a timely manner. The payoff may be long term, but when you look back, you will see the value of this process.
- By combining the results of the Overall Success review with this Continual Improvement exercise your Area's Councils can reap significant benefits in terms of Quality action plans. Share the knowledge.

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SELF ASSESSMENT

- Conduct the self-assessment near year end so you can factor in how successful your team's mission has been. This should be done upon the completion of your initial action plan, as well as, periodically (at least annually) during the remainder of your time in this position. Many new leaders come into the program at the end of the 3rd quarter.
- Review your own performance by reviewing your initial action plan. If you did not complete every planned step to your own satisfaction, you should determine why not. This will form the basis for good reflection and corrective actions.
- Review your job description. Have you been doing your job in the spirit of your formal job description and other guidance you have received?
- Discuss your self-assessment with all Area and Regional Leadership. Obtain their honest evaluation in all categories of performance.
- Contact all your Council Training Team Leaders as the final segment of your 360 Review. Find out if they have any complaints, suggestions, or issues. Take away key suggestions from this phase of your evaluation.
- Revise your personal plans based on the 360 Review with your Council, Area, and Regional leadership.

*** If, for any reason, you do not feel that you are able to perform to expectations based on your assessment, the spirit of your job description, your Committee members, or the opinion of Area leadership, it is in the best interest of Scouting that you take appropriate actions. One outcome might be to modify your action plan and direction. Stepping down may be in the best interest of the program. Discuss this with your Area Leadership. There may be a more fitting position for you.

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PROJECT TEAM

Area Training Chair Guidelines Project Team:

Ernie Froemel	Central Region	Area 7
Pam Startzel	Northeast Region	Area 4
Lyle Mills	Western Region	Area 4
De Tan Nguyen	Scouting U	Professional Advisor
Gene Stewart	Scouting U (SR A2)	Chair
Anthony Sitz	Southern Region	Area 8

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