
COUNCIL COMMISSIONER



THE ROLE OF THE COUNCIL COMMISSIONER

The role of a council commissioner involves just five things:

- To **envision** what effective unit service in a council will look like and what goals must be accomplished during their term of service to fulfill that vision.
- To **represent** volunteers and Scouts to the council's executive board, executive committee, and its professionals.
- To **recruit** assistant council commissioners and an adequate number of other administrative, roundtable and unit commissioners to provide effective unit service.
- To **retain** commissioners and units (ensuring commissioners are given assignments that fit well with their passion, potential, and priorities and recognizing their achievements and that units receive effective service to support retention).
- To **enable** commissioners to be successful (including ensuring commissioners complete onboarding, and training, are given assignments that are a good match for their passion, potential and priorities, are provided with a clear definition of success and are recognized for their achievements).

BY THE BYLAWS: THE COUNCIL COMMISSIONER

The role of the Council Commissioner is defined by a local council's bylaws and typically includes:

"The Council Commissioner is responsible for seeing that the unit service function is performed.

The council commissioner shall:

- (a) Supervise the activities of the commissioner staff and preside at regular meetings of district commissioners.
- (b) Lead efforts to recruit an adequate commissioner staff to provide continuing and effective commissioner service for each unit.
- (c) Provide a year-round training program for commissioners in all districts. Conduct an annual commissioner conference.
- (d) Assist district nominating committees in selecting district commissioners as needed.
- (e) Maintain the standards of the Boy Scouts of America, uphold national policies, promote good uniforming, and lead efforts to hold regular roundtable programs in the district.

- (f) Be concerned with proper recognition of unit leaders. Maintain their morale, periodically reporting unit conditions to the Executive Board.
- (g) Help the district commissioners maintain a good working relationship with their respective district executives.
- (h) Maintain procedures to assure maximum on-time unit charter renewal by district commissioner staffs.
- (i) Work with the President to secure the help of committees in meeting unit needs.

The Council Commissioner must be at least 21 years of age and election is subject to approval and issuance of a commission as Council Commissioner by the Boy Scouts of America.

The Council Commissioner serves as a local council representative to the National Council of the Boy Scouts of America during the term of office.”

Council Commissioners should review their local council’s bylaws to ensure they are familiar with their role and responsibilities as council commissioner in particular and as an officer of the council in general.

BY THE BYLAWS: THE COMMISSIONER STAFF

A local council’s bylaws also provide information about the commissioner staff and typically includes:

“The commissioner staff may be composed of the local council commissioner, one or more assistant council commissioners, district commissioners, assistant district commissioners, roundtable commissioners, and unit commissioners. All individuals selected to serve as commissioners shall be approved by the Council Commissioner and Scout Executive. Each such Scouter shall be 21 years of age or over and upon appointment be approved for and hold through their tenure a commission for such position issued by the Boy Scouts of America.

The council/district commissioner staff shall be selected as required and in such a manner as is in the commissioner manuals of the Boy Scouts of America for the local council's adopted plan of council and district organization, the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, and these bylaws.

Each member of the commissioner staff shall carry out the mission of the position for which commissioned in cooperation with the council’s plan for the delivery of its programs to chartered organizations and community groups and in accord with these bylaws, policies, procedures, and the Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America.”

QUICK REFERENCE FOR COUNCIL COMMISSIONERS

The Council Commissioner

- Is:
 - Leader of all the council's commissioners
 - Top uniformed volunteer
 - Chief morale officer
 - Chief accountability officer (for Unit Service)
 - Representative of council's youth and uniformed volunteers
 - Member of the council:
 - Key 3
 - Executive committee
 - Executive board
 - Other council committees (as appointed)
 - Officer of the local council
 - Local council representative to the National Council
- Enables:
 - Fulfillment of our mission:
 - The mission of Unit Service is to help units better serve more youth through Scouting
 - Fulfillment of our vision:
 - Unit Service will enable units to better serve more youth by providing an adequate number of trained commissioners who provide a link to district operating committee resources in support of a quality unit program.
 - Achievement of our objectives:
 - Supporting unit growth and retention through the journey to excellence.
 - Making meaningful unit contacts that capture in commissioner tools their strengths, needs, and a unit service plan that enables continuing improvement.
 - Linking unit needs to district operating committee and other resources.
 - Supporting timely unit, district, and council charter renewals.
 - Supporting unit leaders by delivering effective roundtables that provide program ideas, relationship development, and timely communication.
 - Achievement of our goals:
 - Unit Retention: Improve retention rate of traditional units
 - Unit Contacts: Support implementation of the unit service plan through detailed assessments and an increased number of significant unit contacts

- Unit Performance: Improve the performance rating of units using Journey to Excellence metrics
 - Use of contemporary Unit Service tools and techniques:
 - The Unit Performance Guide Methodology
 - The Unit Key 3
 - The Unit Service Plan
 - Journey to Excellence
 - my.Scouting tools (including Commissioner Tools)
 - Continuous recruiting
 - Assigning available resources to the greatest needs
- Ensures:
 - Orienting, training, and onboarding of all new commissioners
 - Continuous training of all commissioners (annual conference, college of commissioner science, commissioner meetings, etc.)
 - Recognition of commissioners
 - Reporting progress toward all Unit Service goals
 - Assessing the commissioner corps and implementing changes as needed
 - Developing succession plans for the commissioner corps

RELATIONSHIPS

Effective Unit Service is dependent upon building and maintaining relationships. Council commissioners should build strong relationships wherever possible in Scouting, but some are particularly important:

- Council President – the council president and council commissioner are both members of the council’s Key 3. Together (and with the council executive) they are responsible for ensuring all four of Scouting’s functions (Finance, Membership, Program, and Unit Service) are enabling the council to better serve more youth.
- Council Executive – Together (and with the council president) they are responsible for ensuring all four of Scouting’s functions (Finance, Membership, Program, and Unit Service) are enabling the council to better serve more youth.
- Professional Liaison – some councils will appoint a member of the professional staff to support the council commissioner and Unit Service.
- Professional staff members – commissioners and BSA professionals share the “wreath of unit service” in the design of their badge of office, just as they share responsibility for serving units. Council commissioners should strive to build strong personal relationships with professional staff members and seek to enable effective relationships between all volunteers and professional staff members.
- Assistant Council Commissioners – the council commissioner appoints assistant council commissioners to be accountable for key elements of Unit Service. Those may include geographic areas of the council (e.g., service areas), elements of Unit Service (e.g., training, recognition, data analysis and reporting, etc.), and/or special initiatives (e.g., implementation of my.scouting tools, etc.).

- District Commissioners – the council commissioner relies on the district teams to provide effective unit service.
- Area Commissioner – the area commissioner is a council commissioner’s link to the national Unit Service organization and can provide access to current information and a variety of resources.

KEY 3 MEMBERSHIP

The council commissioner should be an active, engaged member of the council’s Key 3. In that role, the council commissioner should attend and participate in meetings of the council’s Key 3, executive committee, and executive board. It would also be appropriate to serve on other council committees as appointed (examples could include strategic planning, compensation, scout executive selection, etc.).

As the council’s chief uniformed volunteer leader, it is appropriate for the council commissioner to attend meetings in uniform.

The role and responsibilities of the council commissioner were identified earlier in this section. The council president and council executive have equally clearly defined roles and responsibilities.

- Council President
 - Top volunteer officer
 - Chair of the council board
 - Officer of the local council
 - Working with the council nominating committee, fills key board and committee openings
 - Sets priorities and objectives consistent with the council’s strategic plan
 - Includes major council issues on the council executive board’s meeting agenda
- Council Executive
 - Chief executive officer of the local council
 - Corporate secretary for the executive board and committee
 - Director of the council’s professional and administrative staff
 - Responsible for executing policy decisions and the council’s strategic plan
 - Adviser to the council president and council commissioner

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

As the council's chief uniformed volunteer, the council commissioner is a member of the council's executive board and responsible for representing all uniformed adult volunteers in council matters. However, the council commissioner should not vote from that perspective alone but, rather, use good judgment to vote on all council matters for the good of the council overall.

As noted before, the council executive board president's responsibility is to preside over the council executive board.

There is a difference between the council executive board's governing role and the scout executive's administrative role:

- *Board governance* sets policy and strategy, makes strategic decisions, and oversees implementation.
- *Scout executives* implement policy and strategy as set forth by the board, manage day-to-day operations, and ensure achievement of goals

In summary, the council executive board has three primary roles:

- Policy formulation
- Decision making
- Oversight

There are also three legally-mandated duties of council executive board members:

- The duty of *care and due diligence*
The board must be knowledgeable of all reasonably available council information and act with appropriate prudence and care. It's not acceptable for a board member to claim lack of knowledge.
- The duty of *obedience*
Board members must ensure that the council is obedient to its central core purpose as described in its articles of incorporation and to the BSA's mission statement.
- The duty of *loyalty*
Board members must discharge their duties unselfishly to the benefit of only the council and not their personal interests. This means that board members should:
 - Disclose potential conflicts of interest
 - Avoid competition with the council
 - Refrain from discussing confidential board business with others

IT STARTS WITH A VISION

Every council commissioner should have a vision for their term of service: a picture of what success will look like when that term is finished.

A starting point should be our national vision for Unit Service:

Unit Service will enable units to better serve more youth by providing an adequate number of trained commissioners who provide a link to district operating committee resources in support of a quality unit program.

A council commissioner's vision should support our national vision **and** be responsive to local needs.

Council commissioners should strive to identify three to four short term goals within 30 days of assuming the position. Those may focus, for example, on starting to build key relationships, reviewing available data on current Unit Service performance for the council and its districts, and soliciting feedback from Key 3 members and professional liaison regarding perceived strengths and needs of Unit Service.

Following that, council commissioners should seek a deeper understanding of the current strengths and needs of Unit Service in the council and use that to develop a vision for their term of service. District commissioners should be encouraged to develop corresponding vision statements that are supportive of the council commissioner's vision and also responsive to local district needs. SMART goals should be established to enable fulfillment of vision statements.

Council commissioners should strive to establish vision statements within 90 days of assuming the position.

RESOURCES

- Getting Started as a Council Commissioner – Council Commissioner Basic training in the BSA Learn Center – The First 90 Days
 - <https://my.scouting.org/>
- Recruiting Commissioners
 - <https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Recruiting-Commissioners-FINAL.pdf>
- Commissioner Awards and Recognition
 - <https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Commissioner-Awards-and-Recognition-FINAL.pdf>
- Unit Service Plan
 - <https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/The-Unit-Service-Plan-FINAL.pdf>
- Self-Assessment of Commissioners
 - <https://www.scouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Self-Assessment-of-Commissioners-FINAL.pdf>
- Orientation, Onboarding, and Training Commissioners – BSA Learn Center

- <https://my.scouting.org/>
- Journey to Excellence Scorecards
- Journey to Excellence Tracking Workbooks
 - <https://www.scouting.org/awards/journey-to-excellence/>
- Using Commissioner Tools – BSA Learn Center
 - <https://my.scouting.org/>
 - Key Segments:
 - *Accessing Commissioner Tools*
 - *The Units Tab*
 - *Simple Assessments*
 - *Entering a Unit Contact*
 - *Unit Assessment Scoring Matrix*
 - *The Detailed Assessment for Commissioners*