
DISTRICT COMMISSIONER



THE ROLE OF THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

The role of a district commissioner involves just five things:

- To **envision** what effective unit service in a district 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 district committee and district professionals.
- To **recruit** assistant district commissioners and an adequate number of 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 DISTRICT COMMISSIONER

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

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

The district commissioner shall:

- (a) Supervise the activities of the district commissioner staff and preside at regular meetings of assistant district commissioners, roundtable commissioners and unit commissioners in the district.
- (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 the district.
- (d) 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.
- (e) Be concerned with proper recognition of unit leaders. Maintain their morale, periodically reporting unit conditions to the District Committee.

- (g) Maintain a good working relationship with the district executive.
- (h) Maintain procedures to assure maximum on-time unit charter renewal in the district.
- (i) Work with the District Chairman to secure the help of committees in meeting unit needs.

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

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 older 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 DISTRICT COMMISSIONERS

The District Commissioner

- Is:
 - Leader of all the district's commissioners
 - Uniformed volunteer
 - Chief morale officer for the district
 - Chief accountability officer (for Unit Service) for the district
 - Representative of district's youth and uniformed volunteers
 - Member of the district Key 3
 - Other council committees (as appointed)
- 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, national commissioner conferences 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. District commissioners should build strong relationships wherever possible in Scouting, but some are particularly important:

- District Chairman – the district chairman and district commissioner are both members of the district’s Key 3. Together (and with the district executive) they are responsible for ensuring all four of Scouting’s functions (Finance, Membership, Program, and Unit Service) are enabling the district to better serve more youth.
- District Executive – Together (and with the district chairman) they are responsible for ensuring all four of Scouting’s functions (Finance, Membership, Program, and Unit Service) are enabling the district to better serve more youth.
- Assistant District Commissioners – the district commissioner appoints assistant district commissioners to be accountable for key elements of Unit Service. Those may include geographic areas of the district (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.).

KEY 3 MEMBERSHIP

The district commissioner should be an active, engaged member of the district’s Key 3. In that role, the district commissioner should attend and participate in meetings of the district’s Key 3. It would also be appropriate to serve on other district committees as appointed (examples could include strategic planning, membership plan development etc.).

It is appropriate for the district commissioner to attend meetings in uniform.

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

- District Chairman
 - Top volunteer officer of the district
 - Officer of the local council
 - Working with the district nominating committee, fills key district committee openings
 - Sets priorities and objectives for the district, consistent with the council’s strategic plan
- District Executive
 - Director of the district’s professional and administrative staff
 - Adviser to the district chairman and district commissioner

IT STARTS WITH A VISION

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

District 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 district, and soliciting feedback from Key 3 members regarding perceived strengths and needs of Unit Service.

Following that, district commissioners should seek a deeper understanding of the current strengths and needs of Unit Service in the district and use that to develop a vision for their term of service. District commissioners are encouraged to develop 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.

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

RESOURCES

- Getting Started as a District Commissioner – District 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
 - <https://www.scouting.org/awards/journey-to-excellence/>
- 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*