

Scouting America

Heart of New England Council

2024 Cub Scout Recruiting Plan

Part One

“Back to the Pack!”

Get your program off to a great start!

Concept:

Somewhere amidst all of the hustle and bustle of Sign Up Night, many returning youth members do not get contacted to come back from summertime activities. As a result, youth are lost along with potential leadership from their parents. The “Back to the Pack” Program is an effort to get all returning Cub Scouts together prior to Sign Up Night.

Time Frame:

The last two weeks of August, units report the date, time and location of their Back to the Pack event to their District Executive.

Activity:

We are encouraging every pack to conduct a “Back to the Pack” promotion sometime in late August for all of its existing members. The purpose of the meeting will be to get old members signed up for the upcoming Scouting year, recruit leadership to fill vacancies (whether it be for Cubmaster, Assistant Cubmaster, Den Leader(s), Committee Chair, or Committee Member), and to discuss plans for pack activities for the fall.

We encourage you to make this a fun event for your returning Scouts and parents. Suggested activities include: an ice cream social, watermelon feast, pool party, carnival, sports, etc. The meeting is designed to make sure that your pack is organized prior to receiving new boys and parents. To incentivize your unit to have a Back to the Pack event the Heart of New England Council will reimburse your pack up to \$100 dollars for expenses. Expenses could be for food or entertainment at the Back to the Pack event.

Promotion:

Each Cub Scout pack should personally contact all members to get a commitment for their attendance. Research has shown many youth will not continue without being personally contacted. In other words, in their minds, they have only taken a vacation during the summer and are waiting to be contacted about when to start attending the meeting again.

Remember: in July or early August, all Cub Scouts should be contacted about the “Back to the Pack” meeting and encouraged to become active in Cub Scouts for the fall. Parents are requested to attend as well.

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Suggested Agenda for the “Back to the Pack” Meeting

(To be held in late August)

Circulate Attendance Roster, Or Better Yet, Sign Everyone In As They Arrive

1. Welcome “Back to the Pack”
2. Introduce Cubmaster, Assistant Cubmaster(s), Den Leaders(s), Committee Chair & Committee Members, etc.
3. Announce Pack plans for the fall (recruit organizers/chair persons if needed).
4. Assign Cubs to dens and determine space for new youth joining at Sign Up Night.
5. Recruit Den Leaders to fill vacancies in existing dens.
6. Discuss Fall Sign Up Night for your pack.
 - a) Encourage Cubs to assist with recruiting, developing recruiting incentives for your pack.
 - b) Ask Cubs wear uniforms to school on day of Sign Up Night.
 - c) Ask parents’ assistance in locating potential members and leaders.
7. Announce date of next Pack Meeting.
8. Questions from parents?
9. Collect Attendance Roster.
10. Activity – swim party, ice cream social, watermelon feast, carnival, sports, etc.
11. Adjourn.

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Part Two

Join Scouting Sign Up Night

Concept:

Many units have found success by designing their sign up night in such a way that families can walk in anytime and not miss out on important information.

This model asks for five stations to walk parents through the information they need and to get them signed up.

Time Frame:

Units conduct two sign up nights in the month of September. Sign Up Night dates, times and locations will be reported to the units District Executive. All new youth paper applications will be submitted to the council service center or on-line applications accepted via the application manager on My.Scouting.org with in 24 hours of the sign up night.

Sign-Up Night Stations:

- Station 1: Welcome/Sign In
 - o Families sign in while a greeter provides a brief overview of the stations.
- Station 2: What We Do
 - o Share the excitement of Scouting.
 - o Introduce leaders.
 - o Talk about what makes your unit special.
 - o Answer any questions.
- Station 3: Registration Form
 - o Help families complete applications.
 - o Answer questions about fees.
- Station 4: Check Out (complete applications)
 - o Make sure that applications are properly filled out.
 - o Accept payment.
- Station 5: Den Leader Q&A
 - o Make sure that families know when and where the first meeting is.
 - o Answer any additional questions they might have.

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After the Sign-Up Event Is Over

Turn in the applications and registration fees to the council service center or accept any online application via the application manager on My.Scouting.org. Unit leaders and the New Member coordinators should review and complete applications after the Sign Up Night. Applications, registration fees, and one copy of the attendance roster are to be turned in to the district executive within 24 hours of the event.

Welcome your new families and members. Don't wait! Be sure to invite all families to first-night den and pack events the very next week. These meetings are a chance to make a great first impression, have fun, and involve new parents in the life of the pack. Den leaders should make welcome phone calls to the parents of the new Cub Scouts and/or send welcome email messages with meeting dates, location, pack calendars, and any other important information.

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. Address any concerns the person may have, offer to assist them in completing an online application or invite them to the first meeting or your council's new scout event so they can see Cub Scouting for themselves.

Part Three

Promoting the Sign Up Night

Time Frame:

Promotion of the Sign Up Night will start six weeks prior to the Sign Up Night. Your District Executive can assist you in promoting your unit's Sign Up Night.

Concept:

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 six weeks out from your sign-up event(s).

How much access you have to promote Scouting in your schools will help you decide the best ways to market your sign-up event. Here are some suggestions – but these are just thought-starters. Don't limit yourself. The more ways you 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 event fliers the week before the sign-up event
- Posters and yard signs around school
- School rallies or Scout talks at the school
- Back-to-school open house events, school carnivals, and conferences
- Electronic backpacks
- Invite current youth and parents to attend lunch at school in uniform
- Videos on in-school video networks

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- School newsletter or website
- School marquee signs
- Scout Talks

Scout talks can make a huge difference when signing up new Cub Scouts! Schools that provide access to Scout talks are the way to go. A Scout Talk is simply visiting each classroom and getting the children excited about Scouting.

The Scout talk is where youth excitement is created. The district's Cub Scout sign-up training will help give you the skills to put on an effective Scout talk. Scout talks work best by going class-to-class and giving a five-minute promotion on the fun that Scouting has to offer. If this scenario is not feasible then a school assembly will work; however, classroom talks are best. When speaking with the school, thank them for working with us in the development of youth and their community.

Helpful hint: Consult with your district executive to conduct your Scout talks. These energetic in-school presentations will dramatically increase the success of your recruitment!

Out-of-School Promotion

Here are several ideas for promoting the Sign Up Night outside of the schools. These tactics can be done either in tandem with your in-school promotions or on their own if you are not able to get full access to the schools.

- Ask current members to use social media to let their friends and family know about sign-up event nights
- 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

Six-Week Backdater for Sign Up Night

Week 6

Task: Confirm event date, time, and location.

Action: Secure venue and necessary permits.

Details: Coordinate with the location manager and confirm booking.

Week 5

Task: Develop promotional materials.

Action: Design flyers, posters, and social media posts.

Details: Ensure materials highlight key details and benefits of joining Cub Scouts.

Week 4

Task: Distribution of promotional materials.

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Action: Post flyers in community centers, schools, and other high-traffic areas.

Details: Utilize email lists and social media to reach a wider audience.

Week 3

Task: Reach out to local media.

Action: Send press releases to local newspapers, radio stations, and community websites.

Details: Highlight the benefits of Cub Scouting and the upcoming event details.

Week 2

Task: Finalize event logistics.

Action: Confirm volunteers, arrange for refreshments, and gather necessary materials.

Details: Ensure there are enough handouts, registration forms, and informational packets.

Week 1

Task: Reminder campaign.

Action: Send reminders through email, social media, and phone calls.

Details: Ensure potential attendees are aware and excited about the event.

Event Week

Task: Event execution.

Action: Set up the venue, welcome attendees, provide information, and facilitate registration.

Details: Have a clear plan for the event flow, activities, and follow-up.

By following a six-week backdater, organizers can systematically prepare for the sign up night, ensuring nothing is overlooked and maximizing the chances of a successful turnout.

Social Media Top Ten List of Best Practices

Effective use of social media can significantly boost your Cub Scout pack's recruitment, engagement, and overall visibility. Here are some best practices for managing Cub Scout social media accounts:

1. Create a Social Media Strategy

- Goals: Define what you want to achieve (e.g., recruitment, event promotion, community engagement).
- Audience: Understand your target audience (parents, potential scouts, community members).

2. Choose the Right Platforms

- Facebook: Great for community building, event promotion, and sharing updates.
- Instagram: Ideal for sharing photos and stories of activities and events.
- Twitter: Useful for quick updates, announcements, and engaging with the community.
- YouTube: Perfect for sharing videos of events, activities, and informational content.

3. Content Planning

- Content Calendar: Plan your posts in advance to ensure consistent and varied content.
- Themes: Use themes like "Meet the Scouts Monday," "Throwback Thursday," or "Fun Fact Friday."

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4. Engaging Content

- **Visuals:** Use high-quality photos and videos to showcase activities, events, and achievements.
- **Stories:** Share stories of scouts' experiences, testimonials from parents, and highlights of past events.
- **Interactive Posts:** Use polls, Q&A sessions, and live videos to engage your audience.

5. Promotion of Events

- **Event Pages:** Create Facebook events and share details across platforms.
- **Countdowns:** Use countdown posts to build excitement leading up to events.
- **Reminders:** Post regular reminders and updates as the event approaches.

6. Community Engagement

- **Respond Promptly:** Reply to comments and messages in a timely manner.
- **Encourage Participation:** Ask questions, encourage sharing of personal scout stories, and invite followers to post their own photos.
- **Collaborate:** Partner with other local organizations, schools, and community groups for cross-promotion.

7. Safety and Privacy

- **Permissions:** Ensure you have permissions for any photos or videos of scouts you post.
- **Private Information:** Avoid sharing any personal information about scouts.
- **Moderation:** Monitor comments and interactions to maintain a positive and safe environment.

8. Consistency

- **Branding:** Use consistent colors, logos, and hashtags to build recognition.
- **Posting Schedule:** Maintain a regular posting schedule to keep your audience engaged.

9. Analytics

- **Track Performance:** Use platform analytics to monitor the performance of your posts and adjust your strategy accordingly.
- **Adapt:** Learn from what works and what doesn't, and continuously refine your approach.

10. Compliance

- **Guidelines:** Follow the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) guidelines and policies for social media use.
- **Ethics:** Ensure all content is in line with Cub Scout values and ethics.

By following these best practices, you can effectively use social media to enhance your Cub Scout pack's visibility, engagement, and community involvement.

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Part Four

Normal Friend Activities

Time Frame:

One Normal Friend Activity each month in October, November & December.

Concept:

Normal Friend Activities (NFAs) are low-pressure unit events where units invite non-Scouting families to join them for an afternoon or evening of fun.

An NFA might be a hike, a picnic, an ice cream party, a service project, a trip to a local sporting event or anything else you can dream up.

At NFAs, Scouts and adult volunteers should dress in normal “street” clothes instead of uniforms — a tactic that will help visitors feel more included.

Speaking of, the focus of an NFA should be on Scouts (and their families) getting to know one another — not on high-pressure recruiting pitches and be patient. It might take some families a few NFAs before they feel comfortable and ready to join.

By removing recruiting as the primary focus, units instead work on building relationships.

Normal Friend Activities can be offered in any month — even in winter.

Why NFAs make sense

They’re inherently fun and inclusive to all — even those without any Scouting experience.

They’re easy to plan and generally low-pressure.

They allow families to get to know your unit and your fellow leaders as people first.

They remove elements that may be seen as a barrier to joining, such as uniforms.

At an NFA, where uniforms aren’t worn, that non-Scouting parent will see themselves as equal to everyone else.

Best practices for NFAs

Hold NFAs monthly.

Ask each of your unit families to invite three other families to each NFA.

Use a multichannel approach to promoting your NFA, such as email, Facebook, text messages, printed fliers and word of mouth.

Check with your local council to see if they are hosting any NFAs and invite families in your network to join you at them.