

Creating an Invitation List for your Unit

Why an Invitation List?

The most effective way to bring new members into your Unit, is with a personal invitation. The number one response to “Why isn’t your son or daughter in Scouting?” is “We’ve never been invited.”

We can send flyers, talk to lunchrooms and handout stickers, put up posters, get our sign-up events up on websites and social media; and still so parents who see these things feel like they have not been invited to join.

There are a lot of opportunities for young people today to participate in evening activities with their friends. Few parents are out there actively searching for one more thing for their child to get involved in. This means our general invitations, like flyers, posters, and website postings are not even making it through the filter when the opportunity to join Scouting comes in front of parents. To bypass that filter, we need to begin using more “personal” invitation methods.

What is an invitation List?

An invitation list is simply the collection of names and contact information for prospective Scouting families. It is used to extend a personal invitation to families to come to your events and join Scouting.

A personal invitation:

- Acknowledges an existing relationship
 - o *“Your child is in the same class as our Scout Johnny.”*
 - o *“You signed up for more information at the Back to School Picnic.”*
- Gives a genuine personal testimonial
- Asks the invitee to take action and come to a specific event with the intention of joining Scouting.

We should not turn our back on the general invitations we put out when planning and promoting our sign-up events. However, for every 1 family that joins we hand out 100 fliers. In contrast, for every 4 personal invitations 1 family will join Scouting.

How do you Get and Build an Invitation List?

There are many ways to build this list. The suggestions below are not all-inclusive but represent the best practices other Units have found success with.

School/Class Directory – Many schools provide a directory of students. Sometimes this is available in print, sometimes it’s available digitally in programs like Powerschool, and other times it’s available to parents by request from a classroom teacher or school principal.

Churches – Churches also keep a directory of its member families. Your Units members may be able to receive this for their own churches. If your Chartering Organization is a Church, providing this list is a way they can help grow their Units.

Clubs/Sports/Other Activities – For many active families, it's not uncommon to see each other a few times each week at different activities. Are there families at other activities your Scouts are involved in that you think would have fun in Scouting? Add them to the list!

Buddies – Give your Scouts five blank contact info cards and tell them to write down the names and contact information (may need their parents' help on this) for five of their friends who aren't in Scouts that they want to invite. Each card returned is good for one ticket in a prize drawing, and you have a handful of names to add to your Invitation List.

Community/School Events – Set up a table at events in your community, or at events at your school like Open Houses, Registration Days, or Parent Teacher Conferences. You can use your Unit Information Sheet and Calendar as a handout, but also collect their information for your Invitation List.

BeAScout.org – Sometimes, families either search online for Scouting or see the BeAScout.org, and go to the website to request information from your Unit. If your Unit has received BeAScout leads, be sure to add these folks to your Invitation List!

How to use your Invitation List to Promote a Sign-Up Event.

Consistent contact with your invitation list is important. Everyone on your invite list should get a monthly email that invites them to a meeting or activity or shares something that your unit is doing that highlights the fun and value of Scouting.

However, leading up to a specific recruitment event requires more frequency and focus. Here is a 30-day communication plan for your invite list leading up to a Sign-Up Event.

- 30-days out
 - Send your Scouting Professional a copy and a postcard will be sent to everyone inviting them to your Sign-Up Event.
- 20-days out
 - Send an informational email about Scouting, your sign-up event and specifically ask them to come and join Scouting. Include an RSVP.
- 10-days out
 - Send a personal follow-up email to everyone who hasn't RSVP'd.
- 7-day out
 - Call everyone who has not RSVP'd to invite them to come.
- 3-days out
 - Send reminder email to the whole list with all prospects blind-copied
- Eve of Event
 - Send an email to everyone that has RSVP'd giving details for the event along with the online application link. This email is crucial because it

reminds them of their commitment to attend and provides them with the details for the event.

How to Manage an Invitation List.

Keeping your list updated is important. We recommend using a free Subscription from a web-based tool like [ConstantContact](#). This will give you all the tools you need to manage your list.

- When a family joins your unit remove them from your Invitation List.
- When a family says they can't or don't want to join, follow up to find out why. If they request to be removed from the list, ensure to honor that.
- If a family says they have conflicts with meeting nights, recommend another nearby Scouting Program. If you don't know any surrounding programs, pass along their information to your Scouting Professional to share with another Unit.
- If a family says they can't come or join right now, let them know you'll keep them on your list to get an invitation to your next sign-up.
- When a family says they're no longer interested remove them from your invitation list.