



Dear Scoutmaster and Crew Advisors,

I would like to thank you for the time you're giving to the youth of our community.

I know your time is precious and that Scout recruiting has gotten harder, and that's why the council is sending you this **Open House Guide**. If you read it carefully, you'll find that it can help you save time in organizing an Open House to attract new members. This year, the Three Fires Council is focused on working with our Scout, BSA Troops and Crews to recruit middle and high school age boys/girls in addition to Webelos that cross over.

The Open House Guide includes lists of ideas and tasks that you can specifically delegate to the boys/girls and parents of your Troop/Crew. This guide will help you plan an Open House program that's right for your unit. It includes preparation lists, ideas to form a program, and a task-by-task schedule that will help you stay on track. Just fill out the schedule as you go. Also, you'll find convenient forms that you just need to fill in the details, make copies, and hand them out.

The Three Fires Council has materials to help promote your Open House too! We have Scout flyers, postcards, peer-to-peer cards, e-mail templates and promotional videos. We can help connect you with the council resources you need to succeed. If you are interested in holding a Troop/Crew Open House, please contact me at 224-422-8296 or [Zachary.Knoch@Scouting.org](mailto:Zachary.Knoch@Scouting.org).

Good Scouting,

*Zach*

Zach Knoch  
Field Director  
Three Fires Council

## **Important Steps to a successful Open House**

### **Plan to create a list of prospective members**

The best way you can get prospective members to show up is to invite them using a post card, an e-mail, a phone call, and a personal connection. In order to best do this, you will need to make a prospective member list from:

- friends of Scouts in your troop
- dropped Cub Scouts list the district can provide
- presentations at the school that your district can help with
- school directories
- friends of your Scouts' parents

### **Phone calls connect in a way that other methods don't**

In our times of text messages and emails, it is often intimidating to make phone calls to prospective members, but we all know that the phone calls are what will often get prospective families to attend your Open House. You will need to coach both Scouts and parents to make those calls. One of the easiest ways to start right is to use this simple script:

*This is First name Last name from Scout Troop/Crew #. We got your number from \_\_\_\_\_, and we would like to invite you and your son/daughter to our Troop/Crew's Open House on \_\_\_\_\_. Do you have 3 minutes to talk? (If not, set up a time.)*

*Great! At the Open House, you'll see the kinds of fun and rewarding things Scouts do, and if you like it, your son/daughter can even sign up right then. Can I email you the invitation details? (get email address)*

The best and sometimes the simplest way to recruit is Word of Mouth. Have Scouts/Ventures, parents and leaders personally talk with friends and invited them to your Open House.

### **Planning a program for your Open House**

Who knows what kids want? Other kids! Get the Scouts in your Troop/Crew involved with the Open House. Their first responsibility should be to pick a program that they know other kids will like. However, you can make some suggestions. Does your Troop/Crew like to ride horses? Go horseback riding! Does one of your Scout's parents have a special skill or hobby, like Radio Control aviation? Ask around, there's a very interesting program topic just waiting to be uncovered. The key is to get other people involved to ensure the kind of diverse program that gets boys/girls interested and keeps them interested.

### **Planning to integrate Scouts quickly into patrols with the right leader**

It's very important that new Scouts are integrated as quickly as possible into patrols. If you plan to start a New Scout Patrol with your new Scouts, you will need to choose as a Temporary Patrol Leader who has certain leadership qualities that other kids will quickly recognize. Some of these traits are based on common sense, if you put your frame of mind into that of a boy/girl for a moment.

Kids tend to naturally choose a peer as their leader because they perceive that the leader is friendly and personally charismatic. Kids also respond better to a leader who is closer to their age. You probably have a deserving Scout in your troop who fits these qualities and would make a good "ambassador" to your new prospective Scouts. If it works out well, you may have a new patrol and a new patrol leader. Remember, the traits you should consider when choosing a Temporary Patrol Leader are: Deserving of a formal leadership position; Friendly; Outgoing; Skilled; Close in age.

### **Briefing the Scouts in your Troop/Crew**

It's very important that the Scouts in your Troop/Crew realize the importance of welcoming new members and treating new members as they would like to be treated. For starters, new members mean more leadership positions are available, offering opportunity to learn and advance. Remember a Scout is; Friendly, Courteous and Kind.

### **Make sure your Troop/Crew is prepared for the Open House**

Make sure your unit has its calendar, budget, fees, summer camp plans are up to date. Parents today want to walk into a program that is organized and well-planned.

## **Getting others to help with the Open House**

Getting multiple parents and Scouts involved in the execution of the Open House will make for a successful night. Depending on the size of your Troop/Crew, these roles can be combined with the goal to make sure the roles are assigned. We highly encourage a Scout/Venture to work with an adult for each role.

### **Committee Chairman**

- Recruit an Open House Chair, Refreshment Chair, and Publicity Chair
- Work with troop committee to make sure troop calendar and information pieces are ready for the Open House
- Lead the parent discussion at the Open House. It is highly encouraged that a youth also help with the presentation
- Make sure new families are welcomed quickly and added to troop communication system

**Scoutmaster/Advisor**

- Work with the Senior Patrol Leader/President and Senior Scouts to plan the activities for the Open House
- Provide direction for behavior and uniform for the Open House
- Work with the PLC to make sure a fun and inviting campout is planned within 30 days of the Open House
- Keep Troop/Crew parents informed of the plans for the Open House
- Make sure new Scouts are integrated and welcomed into the unit as quickly as possible

**Senior Patrol Leader/President**

- Work with patrol leaders to plan the program of the Open House
- Appoint Scouts to help with publicity, the program, refreshments, and follow up
- Lead by example by thinking of friends to invite to the Open House
- Make sure Troop/Crew is prepared for the meeting, including opening and closing ceremony
- Secure 100% attendance from Scouts in the Troop/Crew for the Open House

**Open House Program Chair**

- Work with Senior Patrol Leader/President and PLC/Vice Presidents and the Scoutmaster/Advisor to make sure the program for the evening is well planned and executed
- Coordinate with the district for their support and resources
- Communicate with Troop/Crew leadership the ongoing plans for the Open House
- Get Open House box from the district and make sure all supplies are ready for the Open House

**Publicity Chair**

- Coordinate with the district to get the post cards, peer-to-peer cards and flyers needed for the Open House
- Coordinate with the district to visit the school(s) and set up school presentation(s)
- Get list of dropped Cub Scouts/Webelos from the district
- Work with Scouts and Parents to make a list of friends to invite to the Open House
- Make sure presentations, post cards, emails, community promotion and phone calls happen

**Refreshments Volunteer**

- Secure refreshments, and paper goods for the night of the Open House
- Responsible for set up and cleanup of the refreshments

**Treasurer**

- Collect membership fees
- Have cash on hand to make change and electronic payment option if possible
- Have information on the costs of the uniform, dues, camping, transportation, and food fees.

## Open House Timeline

<b>8 Weeks Before the Open House</b>	
<i>Action Taken</i>	<i>Responsible</i>
Appoint/Recruit parent to oversee the open house	Committee Chairman
Appoint/Recruit a parent and Scout to oversee the publicity	Committee Chairman
Appoint/Recruit a parent a Scout to oversee refreshments	Committee Chairman
Set up meeting with school principal and District Executive to discuss school promotion for the open house	Open House Chair or Committee Chairman
<b>6 Weeks Before the Open House</b>	
Let Scouts know about Open House and discuss the general plan	Senior Patrol Leader/President
Handout / send out the Letter to Scout Parents	Scoutmaster/Advisor
Set up meeting with school principal and District Representative to discuss school promotion for the open house	Open House Chair or Committee Chairman
<b>5 Weeks Before the Open House</b>	
Finalize date for school presentation	Open House Chair/District Executive
Hand out and collect the Friend Invitation list to Scouts	Senior Patrol Leader/President
Hand out and collect the Friend Invitation list to Scouts	Publicity Chair or Committee Chair
Get list of dropped Cub Scouts (Webelos) from your District Executive	Publicity Chair or Committee Chair
Finalize the program for the Open House	PLC
Order Scout promotion flyers and Post Cards	Publicity Chair or Committee Chair
Brainstorm locations to distribute promotion materials with Scouts and Parents	Publicity Chair/Parents/Scouts
<b>4 Weeks Before the Open House</b>	
Review Open House Plans with the Troop/Crew	SPL/Open House Chair
Assign Specific Part of the Open House Plan to Members in the Troop	SPL/Open House Chair
Complete Unit Slide Show	Publicity Chair
Update Troop/Crew Calendar and Information hand out.	Committee Chairman
Assign Parents/Scouts to get the flyer distributed around town	Publicity Chair

<b>Planning a Troop Open House (cont'd)</b>	
<b>3 Weeks Before the Open House</b>	
Hold School Presentation(s)	Publicity Chair/Scouts/District Executive
Finalize Friends on Invite list	Senior Patrol Leader/President/Publicity Chair
Promotional materials posted around town	Scouts and Parents
Address invite cards to all potential new members identified from school presentation, friend to invite cards, and dropped Cub Scout (Webelos) List	Scouts and Parents
Mail the invite cards	Publicity Chair
Divide Invite list among Scouts/Parents to follow up with phone calls	Publicity Chair
<b>1 Week before the Open House</b>	
Hold mock Open House with youth	SPL and Open House Chair
Make Phone Calls and personal invites, inviting potential members	Scouts and Parents
Double Check the supply list	Open House Chair
Get supplies from District Executive	Open House Chair
Print Troop/Crew Calendars and Contact Lists	Committee Chairman
Remind Scouts of uniform and expectations for the night	Senior Patrol Leader/President
Confirm refreshments and who is bringing	Refreshments Chair
<b>Day of the Open House</b>	
Arrive early	Scouts and Parents
Prep room and make sure it is neat and clean	Scouts and Parents
Run Open House	Everyone
Run Activities for the Scouts	Senior Scout
Lead Parent Discussion	Committee Chairman/Youth Rep
Collect Applications, payments and sign-in sheets	Open House Chair
Invite all new Scouts to next Campout	Open House Chair
<b>No Later than 1 Week after the Open House</b>	
Turn in applications	Membership Chair/Committee Chair
Send welcome email to new families	Committee Chairman
Follow up with those that did not sign up inviting them to next activity/outing if they are still interested	Publicity Chairman
Send Thank You to School Principal	Senior Patrol Leader/Committee Chair

## Open House Agenda

<b>Meeting set-up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the Scouts/Ventures come in well in advance to set up the chairs and tables needed.</li> <li>• Remember to have a table set up for sign-in, the Treasurer, and to fill out youth and adult registration forms.</li> <li>• Make sure the flags are ready to go, and everyone is present.</li> <li>• Make sure the materials for the program are on hand.</li> </ul>
<b>Attendee sign-in</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the Open House Parent staff the table with the sign in sheet and keep the photo album handy for boys and parents to look through.</li> </ul>
<b>Opening/Flag ceremony and Pre-Program</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior Patrol Leader/President leads youth in Scout Oath and Law.</li> </ul> <p>Description of Troop/Crew:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead by Scouts and elected Senior Patrol Leader/President</li> <li>• Weekly meetings</li> <li>• Frequent campouts</li> <li>• Summer camp opportunities</li> <li>• Uses patrols with elected Patrol Leaders</li> </ul> <p>Possible Power Point presentation of former campouts.</p>
<b>Patrol Corners</b>	<p>Try to have youth as active as possible. Let the new prospects interact with the program. You might try a new game to test the skills taught during the program. Have the patrols ready to teach a Scout Skill to the prospective Scouts. Have the Senior Patrol Leader/Senior Scout visit each of the patrols to learn the skill the patrol is teaching. Also have the Senior Patrol Leader/Senior Scout talk about the fun they have camping and upcoming campouts they have planned. Also, have the prospective boys/girls fill out their membership application. After patrol corners, have them give their applications to their parents to sign.</p>
<b>Parent Meeting</b>	<p>While their youth are meeting in patrol corners, gather the adults in a group to discuss the importance of Scouting. Describe some of the Scouts as examples of boys/girls who have benefitted. Possible topics are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goals of the Troop/Crew</li> <li>• Introduction of Adult Leadership</li> <li>• Youth Leadership</li> <li>• Troop/Crew Calendar</li> <li>• Financial and Fundraising requirements</li> <li>• Parent Involvement</li> <li>• Campouts</li> <li>• Summer Camp</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have Parents Sign Youth Applications</li> </ul>

<b>Game</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Play a game, one suggested by the Scouts, perhaps that will test the skills learned during the program.</li></ul>
<b>Closing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Close with a quality Flag Ceremony and Scoutmaster Minute</li><li>• Give announcements reminding everyone of the next meetings and campouts</li><li>• Collect any applications that were not already collected</li></ul>

## Open House Announcement to Troop/Crew Parents

Dear Scout Parent,

This year, our Troop/Crew is planning a first-class recruiting effort for new members. Your son/daughter, the Scouts and I are planning an Open House to show off our Scout Troop/Crew. We need your help.

The more friends your son/daughter has in Scouting, the more they'll get out of it. We're asking you to talk to your friends and neighbors who have middle and high school age youth and tell them about the fine program that Scouting is and describe the benefits that your son/daughter receives as a member of our Troop/Crew. This is probably one of the biggest ways you can support one of your son's/daughter's favorite activities.

Scouting benefits you might mention are:

Friendship: Boys/Girls join an activity because their friends are in it.

Skills: Your son/daughter receives training in fun skills that other kids don't.

Confidence: Your son/daughter gets to practice skills and leadership at their own pace.

Self esteem: Your son/daughter has an opportunity to test their skills and advance.

How to invite someone over the phone:

*This is First name Last name from Scout Troop/Crew #. (We got your number from \_\_\_\_\_,) and we would like to invite you and your son/daughter to our Troop/Crew Open House on \_\_\_\_\_. Do you have 3 minutes to talk? (If not, set up a time.)*

*Great! At the Open House, you'll see the kinds of fun and rewarding things Scouts do, and if you like it, your son can even sign up right then. Can I email you the invitation details? (get email address)*

When you have someone interested, please invite them to the Troop/Crew Open House. Here's the details:

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_  
Place \_\_\_\_\_ Contact \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Remember, the benefits your son/daughter receives from Scouting will double when one of his/her best friends becomes a Scout.

Thank you,  
Scoutmaster/Advisor



### **Friend invitation list**

List your friends the Troop/Crew should invite to the Open House.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Friends Name	Phone	E-mail



### **Friend invitation list**

List your friends the Troop/Crew should invite to the Open House.

Your name \_\_\_\_\_

Your Friends Name	Phone	E-mail

## **Supplies Needed**

<b>We have</b>	<b>What to Get</b>	<b>Where to Get</b>
	Extra Pens	District
	Applications	District
	Sign in Sheet	District
	Promotional Material	District
	Troop/Crew Calendar	Troop/Crew Provides
	Troop/Crew Contact Information	Troop/Crew Provides
	Open House Guide	District
	Snacks	Troop/Crew Provides
	Troop/Crew Flags	Troop/Crew Provides
	Program Supplies for Patrol Corners	Troop/Crew Supplies
	Change for Registration Fees	Troop/Crew Supplies

## **Open House Report**

The information you supply will be used to improve our resources for Troop and Crew recruiting efforts. Thanks for taking the time to fill it out and return to [Zachary.Knoch@Scouting.org](mailto:Zachary.Knoch@Scouting.org).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Troop \_\_\_\_\_

1. What was your Troop/Crew new youth recruiting goal? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many new youths came to your Open House? \_\_\_\_\_
3. How many new youth joined your Troop/crew? \_\_\_\_\_
4. How Many new adults completed an application to be a leader? \_\_\_\_\_
5. What did you plan for an Open House program?

---

---

---

---

6. Rate the Open House Guide on a scale of 1-5 (5 High). \_\_\_\_\_

7. How can we improve the Open House Guide/resources?

---

---

---

---

---

8. What was the most successful thing your unit did to recruit new youth?

---

---

---

---

---

Please turn this in with all applications and money collected.