

# ACTIVITIES AND CIVIC SERVICE COMMITTEE GUIDE



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA®

# Activities and Civic Service Committee Guide

**Activities and civic service are important responsibilities of the program function—one of the four major functions that every district and council must fulfill in order to provide successful Scouting within its boundaries. These four functions are described more fully in two basic references:  
*The Council, No. 33071, and The District, No. 33070.***

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# The Program Function of Activities and Civic Service

## **Scouting means doing.**

Scouting means doing. Everything in Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting, and Venturing is designed to have boys and young men and women doing things. And so, Scouting is activities.

But most activities are kept within a single pack, troop, team, crew, or ship. You are not directly concerned with these.

Your role is with the big activities that involve more than one Cub Scout pack, Boy Scout troop, Varsity team, or Venturing crew. It may be a district event such as a camporee; a council event such as an arena show or exposition; or a nationwide event in which your council and its districts take part.

In such events, your leadership is essential. When the word “activities” is used in this booklet, it refers to the type of Scouting event that involves two or more Scouting units, usually the entire district or council.

# The Council Activities and Civic Service Committee



The council activities and civic service committee, like the other council committees, has the primary responsibility of helping units succeed. If your committee does its job well, youth will have happier experiences in Scouting. The council activities and civic service committee responsibilities are:

Four members of the committee should be selected to handle four basic categories of council activities:

- Display events (Scouting shows, shopping mall shows).  
The more visible, the better.
- Competitive skill events
- Civic service projects
- Scouting Anniversary Week celebration

Each of these Scouters should recruit enough people to help with his or her particular kind of big activity. (See Figure 1 on page 5.)

1. Set policies and procedures for activities.
2. Set goals for activities.
3. Plan and run councilwide activities.
4. Submit a budget to the council finance committee.
5. Promote activities and civic service events in and for units.
6. Establish guidelines for coordinated district activities such as camporees, recognition dinners, etc.

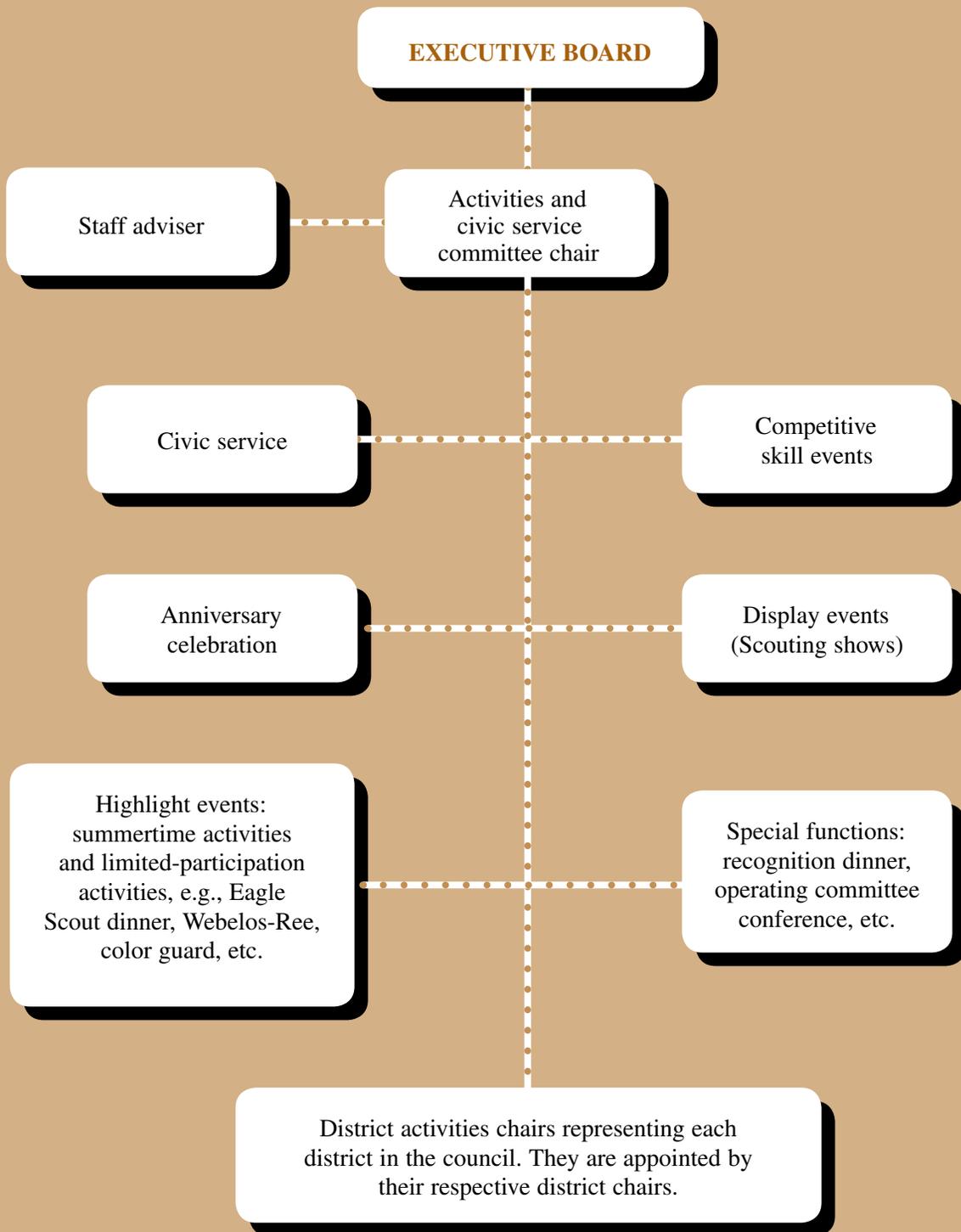
The council activities and civic service committee, then, has two different kinds of jobs: (1) It must make broad outlines of program plans, costs, and goals; and (2) it must carry out these plans down to all the details for each activity that is councilwide or requires council coordination.

Your committee membership should reflect two kinds of responsibilities: (1) It should be headed by community leaders with a keen appreciation of the value of Scouting and much experience in Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting, and Venturing; and (2) it should include people with specialized talents—display artists, entertainers, radio and TV program people, conservationists, sports players, etc.

Since your committee is responsible for a balanced annual program in the council, it not only schedules councilwide events but also gives leadership to the district activities committees or program teams as they schedule district events around the council schedule. Make sure districts don't plan an event so close to a council event that they will compete for youths' interest. **Also make sure that districts don't schedule so many activities that they will supplant the normal programs of units.**

In such events, your leadership is essential.

Council and district activities should support and enhance unit programs, not replace them.



# The Council Activities and Civic Service Committee

Figure 1.

# The District Activities and Civic Service Committee



A council is no stronger than the districts that make it up. The district activities and civic service committee or program team has two major objectives:

1. To carry out its part in councilwide activities. (The best-planned council activity will be a flop unless districts do their part in promoting it and making it a success.)
2. To supplement council activities with other activities on a district basis.

## Committee Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the activities and civic service committee to support units through the plan, promotion, and operation of multi unit events that supplement, but do not supplant, unit program.

A district activities committee does the following:

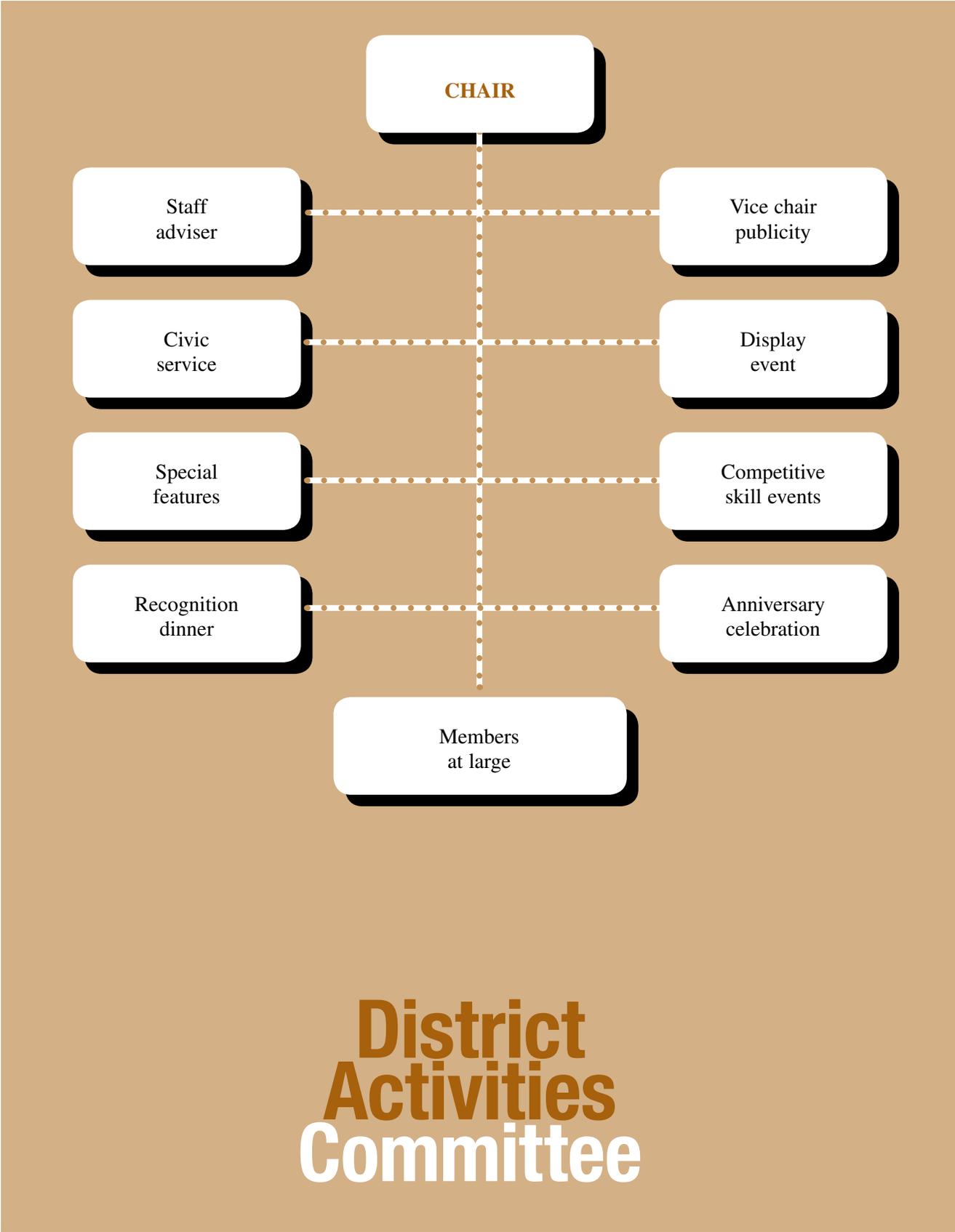
1. Plans and promotes a well-balanced schedule of district events, and recruits teams to carry them out.
2. Decides how Scouting can become involved in selected needs and interests of communities in the district. Helps Scouting units take part in community service projects in such a manner that youth members learn qualities of good citizenship.

3. Plans and promotes service projects at a district and unit level.
4. Promotes and assists with the planning of council events (such as the council show or Eagle Scout or Silver Award dinner).
5. Promotes and carries out the district's share of national events (such as Scouting Anniversary Week or a national jamboree).
6. Conducts an annual poll of unit leaders to determine unit needs and interests for district activities.

Be sure the committee includes people familiar with Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting, and Venturing.

## Committee Operation

Council and district activities should complement one another. Each provides organized activities which are adventurous for Scouts.



**Figure 2.**

In planning and conducting districtwide activities, you interpret and dramatize Scouting for the public. In a sense, activities are public relations devices as well as special events for Scouting units. Knowing this, you can make activities not only serve Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, Varsity Scouting, and Venturing, but also promote community support for Scouting.

As you get involved in planning and running an activity, you'll find that you need support from district or council professional Scouters, other district Scouters, and unit volunteers. Don't expect to do everything. Scouting is a network of cooperating volunteers and professionals. Ask for cooperation and use the network.

In the fall, probably November, your committee must plan the coming year's district activities. In addition, the committee should check on the schedule for upcoming council activities.

Overall coordination is the duty of the committee chair. Other committee members are responsible for specific district activities or your district's part in the council recognition dinner, the anniversary celebration, the councilwide Scoutingarama, etc.

Specific event chairs and committee chairs are recruited with a starting date and an ending date specified for each event. The organization chart, Figure 2, shows the makeup of the district activities and civic service committee in most councils.

## Your Chair

The chair gives leadership to the district activities and civic service committee and moderates committee meetings during the committee breakout sessions of the monthly coordinated district committee meeting. Moreover, the chair is responsible for recruiting, organizing, and training enough committee members to carry out the activities function of the district. (See Figure 2 on page 7.)

The chair helps the council plan its activities. He or she is the link between your committee and the council, and represents you on the council activities committee. This Scouter meets at least once a month with the district executive for a briefing and to review plans for current and future activities.

### The four basic categories of activities:

- Competitive skill events
- Civic service activities
  - Display events
- Scouting Anniversary Week

# How the Council and Districts Work Together

To ensure a coordinated, well-balanced program, the council activities committee must draw up a master plan for a year of activities. Each district makes its input into the master plan through its chair. Unit leaders also have a voice in the master plan through the annual activity poll.

When the master plan is completed, each district activities committee plans for its part in the council plan and, also, supplements it with district activities.

The master plan system benefits the council, its districts, and units. From the council and district point of view, this plan:

- Avoids last-minute announcements of council and district activities—an irritant to unit leaders.
- Gets more participation from youth, parents, and leaders because the units are given plenty of time to incorporate council and district events in unit plans.
- Permits good timing of big activities, with less likelihood of scheduling too many or too few.
- Improves the quality of council and district activities because project or task force members can be assigned well in advance and there is more time to recruit experts whose special skills may be needed.

From the unit point of view, the master plan system:

- Lets the unit incorporate council and district activities into its annual plan.
- Suggests challenging unit programs leading up to each council or district event.
- Avoids clashes between unit plans made long in advance and spur-of-the-moment plans for council and district activities.
- Helps units give their Scouts a well-rounded, adventurous program.

## Balancing Activities

There are four basic categories of council and district activities that potentially can involve all units. In addition, there are smaller events that involve selective participation, such as recognition dinners, conferences, Webelos-Ree, and Eagle Scout and Silver Beaver Award dinners. Each has well-defined purposes. The council master plan should

provide for one activity per year in each of the **four categories—competitive skill events, civic service, display events, and anniversary celebrations.**

## COMPETITIVE SKILL EVENTS

These are activities designed to help boys improve their skills. They also prepare boys to strive for continual self-improvement in adult life. In this category are events such as a camporee, rally, bike rodeo, first-aid contest, klondike derby, advancement hike, Quest sports event, swim meet, or whatever else you can think of that meets the aims and purposes of Scouting.



## CIVIC SERVICE ACTIVITIES

Service projects are often coordinated to include more than one unit. The important objective is to help youth learn specific qualities of citizenship through service to others.

You might choose a project to serve in any of these areas: children, Scouting for Food, senior citizens, safety, conservation, emergency service, recreation, hospitals,



improving the community physically, helping community government, taking part in celebrations, or emphasizing historical, patriotic, or international heritage.

Any activity you select or create must have a definition and purpose, be real to the Scouts, involve them through democratic processes, require some kind of preparation from them, become a significant action, and be compatible with the objectives of the Scouting movement.

The committee should monitor all unit and district service projects and make sure that the results are entered into the Journey to Excellence service hours website so that proper points can be earned in the Journey to Excellence program.

## DISPLAY EVENTS

This type of activity shows the community what Scouts can do and helps youth to develop poise before an audience. Scouting skills become polished for such demonstrations, too. It interprets the current council, district, and unit program.



Plan these in the most public places possible so the general public can see the value of Scouting.

Here you might choose a booth show where the public walks from booth to booth, an arena show where the show is performed before a seated audience, a combination of the two, a camporee-show combination, a Scout parade that develops a theme or story as the parade passes, a shopping mall show, and so on. Make generous use of the Display Award, No. 7119.

## SCOUTING ANNIVERSARY WEEK

This annual activity marks the birth of and focuses attention on the Boy Scouts of America. You can capitalize on the national news and publicity that runs during February. Project a good Scouting image and explain its purpose. This also sets the climate for the annual Friends of Scouting campaign.

## SPECIAL NOTE ON COMPETITION

It is a long-standing policy of the BSA that competition, reward, and recognition in Scouting are based on youth reaching a standard of excellence and not on a championship/winner-takes-all system. This youth development practice in Scouting is based on the doctrine "On my honor, I will do my best," not "We will beat the other team at all costs." This Scouting principle motivates youth to reach their maximum potential, to help others to reach their personal best, and to expand the sense of Scouting fellowship.

Competition at national jamborees, council events, district activities, and in unit program and individual youth member achievement is that in which all who can match an established standard can be declared winners. (This is not to discount patrol competition in the troop where the Scoutmaster can observe week-to-week progress of patrols and adjust interpatrol activity for all to benefit.)

District and council activity committee members should help others throughout the council to understand this important Scouting tenet.



You might have rededication ceremonies, a Scout parade, a Scouter recognition dinner, a Scouting community leadership day, Uniform Day, window display contest, a Boy Scouts of America rally, pilgrimages, shopping center demonstrations, Scout “courtesy” recognitions, report-to-the-community ceremonies, or non-Scouting community programs. Encourage religious service attendance in uniform, speakers at service clubs, etc.

Remember, each year hold one event chosen from each of the four categories. Get a seasonal spread and have an event each quarter. Never hold two major events closer together than seven weeks.

This balanced activities approach is a good way to measure your plans. If you have proposed too many events, the excess ought to be cut from the events that duplicate one category. If you have too few, suggestions ought to fill the categories left out.

Remember, the council activities and civic service committee is responsible for all council activities; the district activities and civic service committees are responsible for the district programs; and unit leaders have a voice in both.

## Be Creative

When you’re planning a public performance, include people whose jobs demand imagination and creativity—public relations counselors, display managers, writers, drama teachers, radio and TV programmers, and people whose hobbies reflect creativity—service club program chairs, amateur theater group members, and so on. Challenge them to come up with as many different program ideas as they can. You can later select the best ones for final consideration. Remember to think big and involve specialists. Pay particular attention to the following specific points:

- Ceremonies at the beginning or end.
- Use of flags (each unit has two; dens and patrols have their own).
- Scripts and rehearsals for smoothness.
- Scenery and equipment, if needed.
- Make your own stage if you have to, but be sure the entire audience can see clearly.
- Adequate lighting, if the event is indoors or at night.
- Audio (install it if you have none already set up). Slides, videos, or PowerPoint, using rear-screen projection, if possible.
- Music or background effects.
- Build what’s needed to carry out the staging.

The larger the event, the harder youth members and unit leaders will try to improve their parts. Large events also attract a large audience and make Scouting exciting and colorful. **Whatever size the program, though, it helps bring Scouting out from behind the meeting doors and away from the secluded campsite into the public eye.**

**Remember to think big.**

# How to Plan an Activity Program



Completed annual council and district activities programs are due in the hands of pack, troop, team, and crew leaders before May 1. To meet these deadlines, follow the schedule below:

**October:** Executive staff drafts pencil copy.

**November:** Council activities and civic service committee develops tentative schedule; district activities and civic service committee conducts Unit Leaders' Activities Poll.

**December:** Council activities and civic service committee refines tentative schedule; districts plan their programs around this tentative schedule.

**January:** Council activities and civic service committee sets up the complete council activities program.

**February:** The executive staff fits this program with the other council dates on the calendar.

**March:** Council executive board reviews and approves the council calendar; calendars with both council dates and district dates are published.

**April:** Pack, troop, team, and crew leaders get the calendars.

## Planning in Detail

The calendar obviously represents a lot of work. You must be wondering exactly what you must do. This elaboration should help you.

The pencil draft is a plan proposed by the professional staff of the council. It is a suggestion from which volunteers make the final decision. The pencil draft gives you something concrete to work on and saves you some time.

At the planning conference in November, the council activities committee lists traditional activities, reviews the pencil drafts, lists other possible events under the balanced activities categories, eliminates those that don't measure up, determines whether events will be councilwide or held by district, selects two or three in each type from those left, and lists them for consideration by unit leaders.

At the roundtable in November, the district activities committees or program teams get the unit leaders' opinions. Usually, there is an introductory presentation, after which the Unit Leaders' Activities Poll sheets are handed out. (See Figure 3 on page 13.) These are the sheets formulated by the council activities committee. Discuss the possibilities, let leaders complete the poll sheets, collect them, and turn them over to the council activities committee for tabulation and study. This roundtable might also be a good time for a short training topic on the six criteria for using unit civic service projects to help youth learn qualities of good citizenship.

In December, the council activities committee sets the final council events and dates.

Working from the list you made in November and from the Unit Leaders' Activities poll sheets, select one display event involving all Scouting programs, one competitive skill event for Scout troops/Varsity teams and one for Cub Scout packs, one service project for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, Varsity Scouts, and Venturers, and a Scouting Anniversary Week celebration emphasis.

The December meeting in the district sets up district activities revolving around the council calendar and what

# Unit Leaders' Activities Poll for the Coming Year

Check your preference in each of the following categories:



Cub Scout



Boy Scout



Venturing

## • DISPLAY •

- Exposition booth show
- Arena show
- Combined booth and arena show
- Combined booth show and camporee
- Parades

- Exposition booth show
- Arena show
- Combined booth and arena show
- Combined booth show and camporee
- Combined arena show and Boy Scout encampment
- Parades

- Exposition booth show
- Arena show
- Combined booth and arena show
- Combined booth show and camporee
- Executive board demonstration or display
- Parades

## • COMPETITIVE SKILLS •

- Pinewood derby
- Space derby
- Raingutter regatta
- Kite fly
- Bike rodeo
- Cub Scout field day
- Cubmobile derby
- Other

- Camporee
- First-aid contest
- California gold rush
- Klondike derby
- Roundup rally
- Swim meet
- "Operation Deep Freeze"
- Other

- Safe driving road rally
- First-aid skills meet
- Ironman competition
- Quest sports day
- Ranger day
- Sailing regatta

## • CIVIC SERVICE •

- Book collection
- Chartered organization Good Turn
- Scouting for Food
- Toy collection
- Clothing collection
- Conservation project
- Bike safety event
- Other

- Chartered organization Good Turn
- Conservation project
- Scouting for Food
- Clothing collection
- Flag ceremonies
- Youth obesity prevention
- Not-for-profit shelters
- Other

- Chartered organization Good Turn
- Conservation project
- Scouting for Food
- Habitat for Humanity home build
- Violence-prevention forum
- Public fitness assessments and counseling
- Children's hospital service

## • ANNIVERSARY •

- Shopping mall show
- Display contest
- Rededication

- Shopping mall show
- Display contest
- Rededication

- Shopping mall show
- Display contest
- Rededication ceremony
- Report to the mayor, governor, etc.

## • OTHER •

- Other

- Other

- Other

Figure 3.

the unit leaders in each district requested on their poll sheets. Set all this information against the specific needs of your district.

In January, February, and March, the council activities committee's job is coordination and promotion. At the February meeting you have a chance to work with other council committees on major projects, and will be able to work out the details of sharing responsibility. When the council calendar is published in March, it should be divided by districts, so that each district gets a calendar showing its events and the council events.

Finally, at the April round-table, distribute calendars to leaders and take the opportunity to create excitement and enthusiasm for the coming program year. Try to help individual units plan their first meetings to take advantage of that enthusiasm.



## Using National Programs

Frequently, there will be a national theme or Good Turn that you will want to incorporate into your council and district activities plans.

The Scouting Anniversary Week celebration of the Boy Scouts of America each February is nationally coordinated. It occurs annually in the week containing February 8. It includes special ceremonies with national youth representatives, members of Congress, and officials of the federal government. Councils, districts, and units have special programs in which Scouts and Scouters rededicate themselves to Scouting.

The national high-adventure bases for older Scouts are to be used by council or unit groups. They are:

- **Northern Tier National High Adventure Programs, Minnesota**
- **Florida National High Adventure Sea Base, Florida**
- **Philmont Scout Ranch, New Mexico**



In addition, a national jamboree is held every four years, and the Boy Scouts of America participates in world jamborees.

Promote special ceremonies for February 8, Anniversary Day. Encourage units to plan their programs around the national theme, particularly in February. Let a public-speaking contest uncover talent; you'll want speakers for service clubs, ceremonies, and so on. Plan your program to lead up to the national/world jamboree.



## Getting Unit Participation

You want to involve every Cub Scout, Boy Scout, Varsity Scout, and Venturer in the district or council, depending on the scope of the event. That requires good promotion on your part.

Start to work with unit leaders when you hand out the district calendars. Follow-up bulletins, emails, council websites, special releases, signing up units for the events (if possible), and personal contact with the unit leader all lead to full participation. Following is a list of promotional tools and channels with brief comments on each:

**Printed District Calendars.** Calendars quickly and easily list the year's program and enable units to plan in advance. Comment on this when you distribute the calendars to unit leaders.

**Activity Summary Sheets.** On a separate sheet of paper for each event, distributed with the calendars, briefly describe the purpose, general program, benefits, attendance requirements, and so on. Use these to help you sell events to unit leaders.

**Council and District Bulletins.** These can be used to announce an upcoming event early. Continue using the bulletins to keep people aware of the plans and goals until the event is over and, later, of the contributions of those who planned and ran the activity.

**Special Releases and Instructions.** These allow you to get more specific than you have earlier. You might include signup sheets for units to complete and return.

**Unit Program Planning Charts.** Charts make it easier for units to list council and district events and see the year's program spread out.

**Program Notebooks.** Available when the calendars are released, notebooks give units ideas and information for preparing for some activities. Encourage units to use these to build up to the activities; it's a great way to get them involved in activities.

**Roundtables.** These meetings permit face-to-face talk with people you want to involve. Tell them why the event is exciting. Get them to ask questions about it, for that gets them involved in the program. They may see new ways in which it can help them.

**Special Rallies.** Rallies give you more time to present the plans, benefits, programs, and so on. They let the unit leaders give their full attention, and they may make the event seem more important.

**Commissioners.** When commissioners are briefed on the plans, they can pep up unit leaders at their regular visits. They also can point out how the activity will benefit the unit.

**District Committees.** District committees can get more people involved and get whole committees helping out on those events in which they have special interests.

**Personal Visits.** The commissioner will be in regular contact, but you should also visit personally with unit leaders. Assign activities personnel and special event participation committee members to visit selected units. Assign one member for every five units.

## Theme Activities

An innovative theme, with the promise of fascinating adventures, sparks a Scout's curiosity and imagination. A theme can help increase unit participation in camporees and other district activities.



# Unit Program Planning Conferences

Some councils and districts hold annual conferences to help unit leaders plan their unit programs. Such conferences are, naturally, ideal times for explaining council and district activities and for boosting unit support for them.

The prime purpose of these planning conferences is to show unit leaders how to plan their unit programs and to get them started on actual planning for the next 12 months. The secondary purpose is to explain the council services (leadership training, activities, advancement, camping, roundup, etc.).

Leaders from each unit are invited to attend. At the conference, various district Scouters discuss the council and district services and the activities planned for the next year. Then the commissioner staff takes over. Commissioners (preferably one per unit) meet with unit leadership to help plan their unit's program.

Careful planning and preparation, beginning three months before the conference, are necessary to ensure maximum attendance and effectiveness.

The following schedule is recommended for a council that holds a conference in each of its districts over a two-week period:

**3 months before** Formalize plans.

**first conference date**

**8 weeks before** Visit district commissioner staff meetings to interpret programs and make assignments. Commissioners begin calling on units to promote attendance at the conference.

**3 weeks before** First-reply postcards due back from units, reporting probable attendance at conferences. Send reminder emails.

**2 weeks before** Recruit "presiders" (one per unit, if possible) for individual planning sessions at the conferences. Presiders are unit commissioners.

**1 week before** Second-reply postcards due from units. Send reminder emails.

**2 days before** Training for presiders.

**Conferences** May be spread over two weeks. Commissioners should follow up on units not represented and arrange to help them plan.

The commissioner's role is crucial to the success of the council or district conference on unit program planning. He or she is responsible for:

- Recruiting leaders from each unit to attend the conference
- Reporting on the number and names of unit leaders who will attend
- Attending presider training
- Presiding at a unit planning session during the conference

# The Event Committee

Each activity, whether for the council or a district, should be run by a committee that is solely responsible for the particular activity. If the event is councilwide, an executive staff member will be assigned to work as adviser to the committee; if it is districtwide, the district executive will act as adviser.

The staff adviser and event committee chair, who is assigned from either the council or the district activities committee or program team, are the core of the event committee. The event chair sets up the rest of the committee and is responsible for seeing that everything gets done. (See Figure 4 on page 18.)

## Preliminary Planning

The first thing you do as an event committee chair is get all the information you can about the kind of activity you are planning. At this point, you will be working with only the staff adviser.

If a similar event was held last year, study the file on it. Review the council's file of activities ideas. Take advantage of the resources of your staff adviser. When you have completed your preliminary planning, prepare a new description of the event, including its purpose. You may want to start from the activity summary sheet that was handed out with the calendar, but this version should take into consideration anything you learned from your research.

## Work Plan

You should next secure a work schedule of all the preparatory steps that need to be taken before the activity can be held. This can be developed from the professional's work schedule. Tools are available for the process of backdating.

Schedules spark efficient planning and keep others aware of how plans are progressing. By helping the event chair and adviser budget their time, you help them keep enthusiasm that might be lost planning a project that seemed unmanageable. Keeping district Scouters aware of the deadlines and target dates increases interest in the program.

## Organizing the Committee

Now you need to get help with the job:

- Get a few district activities Scouters.
- Use the help of other related organizations, if their talents and activities are appropriate.

- Recruit people with the talent and skills you need.
- Be sure you have enough help.

It's your job to be sure that your committee is doing its job; failure by one person can ruin the entire activity. Have a written job description for each member. You may need only to keep in touch with these people, or you may need to convene the whole committee to keep things going. Be prepared to replace people if their job is not being done. In short, recruit the best people you can.

Generally, the committee is composed of subcommittees, each with its own chair. However, not every subcommittee is needed for any one event.

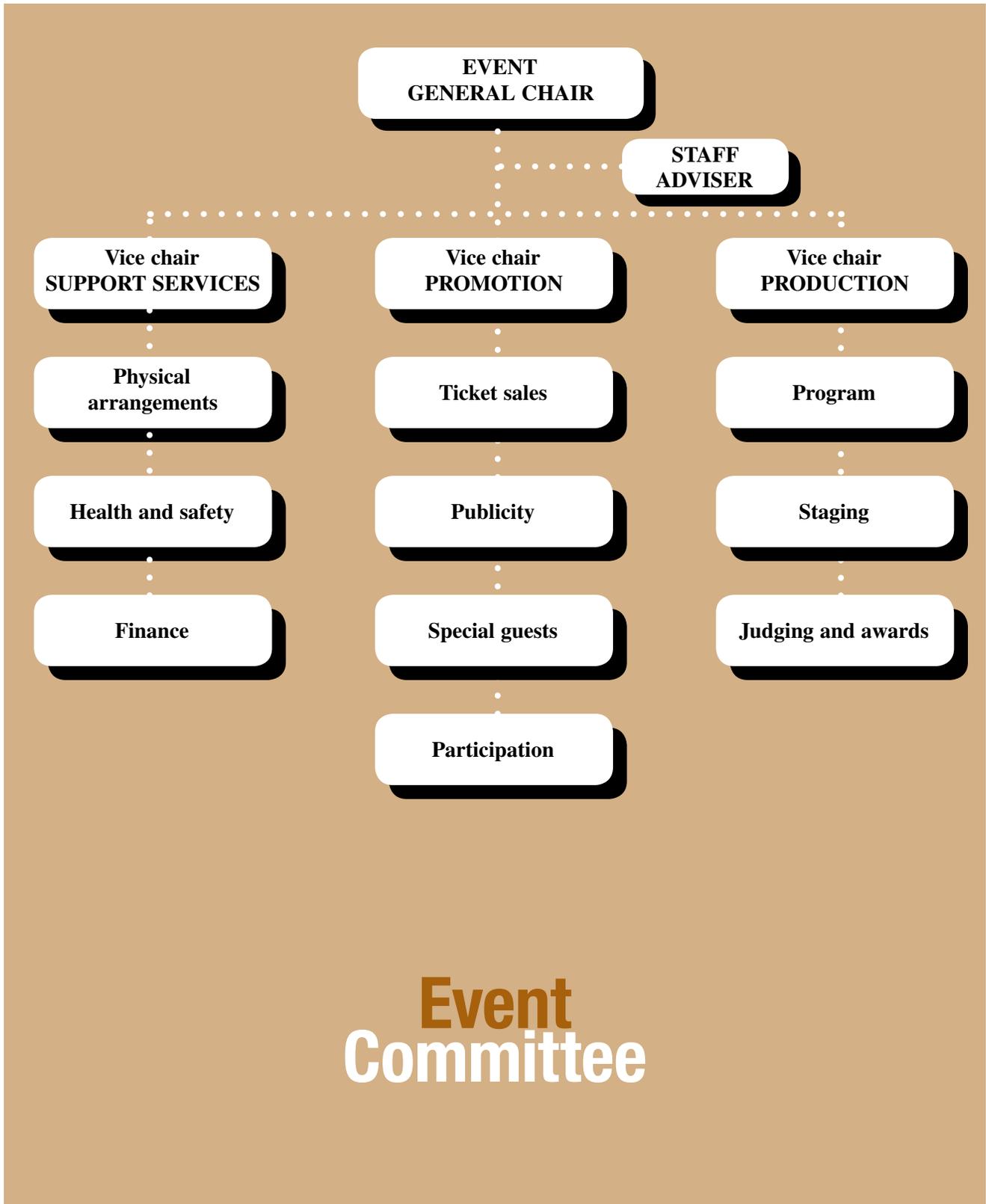
**Program.** This subcommittee establishes the theme on which the event, its preparation, and promotion, centers. It develops a story line that is appropriate, working in ideas that units have submitted. It then details the program into events or acts, the number of units to take part, where and how they are to be arranged, what facilities and equipment will be needed, who is in charge of each portion of the activity, and what the timing of each part will be.

**Promotion.** The responsibility for getting every unit involved belongs to the promotion subcommittee. How the members contact the units is up to them, but they certainly should use the promotion experts of the district activities committee or program team and the commissioner staff to get participation by unit leaders.

They should keep a running record of units signed up and keep after those who aren't. Getting information and applications to the leaders, handling the applications which come in, and keeping the program committee aware of the participation figures are their responsibilities.

**Staging.** For arena shows and recognition dinners, you'll need a staging subcommittee to prepare the final script, recruit the cast, and arrange the stage traffic. They take the story line and add narration (as little as possible) and sound and lighting (as much as can be well-handled). To select the cast, assign program segments to Scouting units that will select the individual youth. Give key units the most difficult parts. Special groups like Order of the Arrow dancers or crews that do living history may be needed. Except for special parts, hold rehearsals by units. Have a walk-through for the key people on the show site before the show opens.

Arranging the stage traffic involves setting up the stage or performance area, having it clearly marked, having a large, well-identified crew, allowing for the flow of actors on and off the performing area, and providing adequate backstage space and entertainment for actors awaiting their cues.



**Figure 4.**

**Judging and Awards.** This subcommittee, which might involve an outside group such as a service club or veterans' organization, follows a rating system that is widely publicized to recognize all participating units.

**Physical Arrangements.** This subcommittee is responsible for the event facility and all the physical properties needed. If needed, 24-hour guard duty is your responsibility. Lighting, loading and unloading of equipment, and distribution of printed programs are also your responsibility.

**Health and Safety.** This subcommittee must clear fire-control measures with the fire department or any other regulatory agency; clear traffic control with police; arrange for parking; run a first-aid station; arrange for safety control in all areas; and provide and supervise a service corps to handle crowd control, lost children, and so on. This job requires both clear thinking and an ability to work with authorities on meeting the regulations. The importance of this job cannot be stressed too much.

**Finance.** Setting the budget is a critical responsibility. Rallies, camporees, and other types of events should not produce much profit, but they should be budgeted to control expenses. Any income earned should be used to expand the program services of the council and to increase youth membership, although this decision is up to the executive board.

Income probably will come from participation fees, profit from concessions, and ticket sales. Expenses might include rent for facilities, printing, postage, PA system or sound or music, equipment rental, stationery and supplies, awards and prizes, commissions (if tickets are sold), and support services. Be sure you have arranged for adequate insurance coverage. Be sure you exercise budgetary control and audit the final statement.

**Ticket Sales.** Such a subcommittee is involved only for income-producing activities. You must develop a sales organization on council, district, and unit levels using youth as salespeople. This means printing tickets and sales material; providing incentive to the youth, unit leaders, and district ticket sales committee; setting up a system for accounting for unit returns so they can get their cash commissions; following the progress of unit sales; and encouraging sales through emails, notices, and the commissioner staff visits with units.

**Public Relations.** This subcommittee is responsible for inviting, through letters and personal contacts, the special guests of the activity. Arrange for their reception and provide Eagle Scouts, Arrowmen, or similar guides to escort them.

You must publicize the event ahead of time if the public is to attend, and while it is going on and afterward, whether it is open to the public or not. Remember that Scouting

activities help sell the Scouting program to the community. It's up to the public relations subcommittee to make the public aware of the event. You might use newspaper stories, photos, or editorials; radio spots or interviews; TV spots, interviews, demonstrations, panels; posters in windows or cars; billboards; signs at the site; announcements or talks by youth for service clubs and other organizations; the Internet; parade or motorcade; and windows and in-store displays at local Scouting distributors.

Give local units guidelines on running their own campaigns. Prepare copy for all releases. Arrange for photographs of preparations and for photos or videos of the actual event. Arrange for media coverage and set up a reception area for the press at the event.

The printed program for the event is also your responsibility. Programs in which you sell advertising space should be carefully considered. Many are so complicated and expensive that they will probably only cost money in the end and may hurt other council finance efforts.

## On-the-Spot Leadership

The activity may be directed by the chair of the event committee or by someone recruited because of his or her special talent. For a large activity such as a Scouting show, an executive staff member may be a director. In any event, such a staff member should be there during the entire activity.

## Follow-up

Prepare thank-you letters ahead of time and mail them the day after the activity. Hold a critique of the activity and make recommendations for next time. Compile a workbook of all materials you developed and used. File all this post-event information in the council files for reference next time around.

# Events Involving Units From More Than One Council



There are occasions when units conduct activities or events that involve other units.

Units that wish to host events involving other units must have the approval as outlined below. This includes events for packs, troops, teams, crews, and ships from the same council; neighboring councils; the same region; or other regions.

1. The proposed unit event must contribute directly or indirectly to the strengthening of participating units' program.

2. The proposal, including a written statement of the objectives of the event, must be submitted to the local council Scout executive for approval.
3. If units from councils within the same region will be involved, the Scout executive must then forward the proposal to the region for its approval.
4. If units from other regions will be involved, the proposal must be forwarded to the appropriate division of the national office for review and approval.



# Civic Service Activities



From its congressional charter in 1916 to its present vision statement, the Boy Scouts of America has embraced training young people in citizenship as one of its primary purposes.

Many Scouting units, however, may not regularly plan community service projects as part of their program. They need prompting; they need guidance; and they need recognition—and that’s a job of the activities and civic service committee. **The district activities and civic service committee is literally the conscience of the district for practical citizenship training projects for youth members.**

## Why Community Service Is Important

Scouting has a unique opportunity and responsibility to teach better citizenship to American youth.

1. Community service projects are the most important way to teach good citizenship because they are an active involvement in which most all of a youth’s senses are engaged, not a passive condition of only listening.

2. Many youth are finding it increasingly difficult to find meaning and satisfaction in life. Young people are seen as a liability on the family budget instead of an economic asset as in the early part of the 20th century. Youth may see the world as a place that is already shaped, is beyond their influence, and where they are, for the most part, not needed.

One of the great contributions of Scouting service projects is to provide youth with major areas of life which they can shape and where their ideas are listened to and valued. Service projects are activities that make youth feel competent and capable.

**The district activities and civic service committee is literally the conscience of the district for practical citizenship training projects for youth members.**

**Journey to Excellence provides a super framework for council, district, and unit service projects. Make sure that all service projects are entered on the service hours website.**

3. Amid an atmosphere of cynicism for public life and government office, Scouting service projects can help youth have a more positive experience in civic participation.
4. More than any past generation, today's youth need good adult role models outside of the home. Scouting provides additional role models of law-abiding citizens involved in their communities. Scouting members learn to take responsibility in the civic arena by working side by side with these role models.
5. In a cultural environment that places heavy emphasis on material things, Scouting service projects place emphasis on the value of human individuals and "helping other people at all times."
6. One of the most important functions of a good Scout unit is giving youth a much-needed sense of belonging. Unit service projects deepen this function by giving not only youth members, but the entire unit a greater sense of belonging to their communities.
7. Service projects help foster community pride.

## **Criteria for Selecting a Project**

Youth and adult leaders should be guided by the following considerations as they select civic service projects for units, districts, and the council:

**Be Real  
Be Clearly Defined  
Know Your Purpose  
Be Democratic  
Be Informed  
Be Action-Oriented**

1. The potential of a project for teaching youth about the responsibilities of good citizenship is the most important factor in project selection. It is the prime end result of our efforts.
2. Some degree of existing interest in the project by unit adults or Scouts is important for a project.
3. Strong consideration should be given to projects that can impact needs and problems in the communities where unit members live. District Scouters can help units be alert to things of local public concern.
4. Youth interest is a factor but can best be stated as a project in which youth interest can be aroused by skillful leadership. Encourage Scouts to keep their eyes open for opportunities to be of service to their neighbors, communities, organizations, and the environment.
5. Good projects are often ones that can be carried out in collaboration with other organizations in the community or that can be linked to some existing effort.
6. Selecting projects with a realistic expectation for completion is important for achieving the learning outcomes for youth.
7. The opportunities for fun, group fellowship, and the use of Scouting skills are other factors to consider.

## **An Idea Bank of Community Service Projects**

Ideas should be kept in a bank based on their popularity and further potential for teaching qualities of good citizenship.



## How to Be Sure a Project Teaches Citizenship

How a community service project is carried out is far more important than the nature of the project itself in determining whether young people learn citizenship.

**The following six criteria will help ensure that a project actually teaches qualities of good citizenship:**

**1.**

**BE REAL—THE PROJECT MUST BE REAL FOR YOUTH MEMBERS.**

**It must deal with situations that youth can see, that they understand, or in which they can easily become interested.**

**Real problems that need attention by people acting as citizens either of their group or their community provide the best project ideas. A civic service project is not real if youth regard it as a “make work” kind of project, if it involves doing something artificial, or if it does not really need to be done. One of the things that can make projects real is the actual evidence of people in need of help or problems needing solutions.**

**2.**

**BE CLEARLY DEFINED—YOUTH AND THEIR LEADERS MUST KNOW WHAT THEY ARE GOING TO DO.**

**A project must have a clear beginning and ending with logical steps in between. This kind of focus enhances the reality of the project for youth and makes it more manageable for them. A project is not well defined if youth are not clearly aware of what steps will be taken, who is to take the steps, and when the steps are to happen.**

**3.**

**KNOW YOUR PURPOSE—YOUTH MUST KNOW WHY THEY ARE DOING THE PROJECT.**

**Leaders should know what specific citizenship knowledge or attitudes youth will get from the project. They should have in mind how they will relate the purpose and how the project will be carried out so their youth will grow from the experience.**

## 4.

**BE DEMOCRATIC—  
YOUTH MEMBERS  
MUST BE DIRECTLY  
INVOLVED IN  
SELECTING,  
PLANNING, AND  
CARRYING OUT  
THE PROJECT.**

**If there are changes in plans during the course of the project, youth should be allowed to express their thinking about the changes before they are carried out. Certainly adult leaders should offer direction and coaching, but as much as possible, they should allow youth to put together and complete the project.**

## 5.

**BE INFORMED—  
YOUTH SHOULD  
BE INVOLVED  
IN GATHERING  
FIRST-HAND  
INFORMATION  
RELATED TO  
THE PROJECT.**

**Leaders help youth discover where to get information: key people to talk with, organizations to contact, things to read, surveys to take, places to visit, and observations to make. Help leaders and youth realize that without becoming well-informed about a community need or problem, their project might easily fail or even make the problem worse.**

## 6.

**BE ACTION-  
ORIENTED—YOUTH  
MUST TAKE SOME  
MEANINGFUL AC-  
TION AS A RESULT  
OF THE PROJECT  
AND BE ABLE TO  
UNDERSTAND  
THE RESULTS.**

**If citizenship training is to take place, youth must be able to see, hear, or feel how their personal involvement results in some positive results. Thus, they gradually learn to know that in our society, individuals and groups can and do make a difference.**

**Leaders must set aside short periods of positive reflection to assess the project experience, what the project accomplished, and how the Scouting ideals served as guidelines as they planned and carried out the project.**

**Leaders also need to plan some form of recognition for a successful project conclusion. It may include some public notice or commendation as well as generous informal comments of a “great job,” or “you really helped make a difference.”**

## Emergency Service Projects

### SET UP FACILITIES FOR DISASTER CONTROL

In cooperation with the American Red Cross and local authorities, Venturers or older Scouts make a survey of public buildings and develop a plan for their use during a disaster. They help distribute lists of needed equipment and help collect supplies and equipment the community is willing to donate. They may help publicize the location of disaster facilities.

**SNOW SHOVELING GOOD TURN**  
After a heavy snowfall, troops can provide a much-needed service by keeping fire hydrants clear of drifts. A troop could assign every patrol a certain number of fire hydrants, or appoint each Scout one or two hydrants near his home. Assignments could also be made to clear snow from the sidewalks and house steps of senior citizens and shut-ins.

### LOST-PERSON SEARCHES AND BACKCOUNTRY RESCUES

Some troops, teams, and Venturing crews have become expert at finding lost people and participating in back-country rescues. Excellent training is a must and should be undertaken with the cooperation of local search-and-rescue authorities.

### CONDUCTING CLOTHING DRIVES

A fire, flood, or other disaster can leave many people without sufficient clothing. In conjunction with local authorities, units can take part in campaigns to collect used clothing in good condition for distribution to those who need it. Collection, repair, and distribution of furniture and household items might also be done.

**PRUNING COMMUNITY TREES**  
Trees in some communities are damaged by disaster or severe weather conditions. Units taking part in a cleanup day can reduce the danger from broken branches by pruning limbs and gathering them for disposal. Careful planning with an authorized tree expert is essential to determine where and how the work should be done.

## Conservation Projects

### PLANT SHADE TREES

A municipal shade tree commission or civic beautification group may be able to use Scouting help in planting shade trees on curb lawns and in parks. Consult state forestry experts for the best varieties in your climate. Units may be assigned to care for the seedlings for the first year. In some communities, a unit may run a tree planting campaign or contest.

### ADOPT A STREAM, WOODLAND, POND, PARK, OR HIGHWAY

Everyone knows of a piece of land or water that needs help. With the assistance of a conservation agency or group, a survey can be made to determine how the stream, pond, park, or woodland may be improved through proper planning and subsequent conservation practices. Plan a big cleanup day. Improve the area's appearance by removing trash, repairing or marking health hazards, and adding activity interests.

### PARTICIPATING IN CONSERVATION WORK

Scouts who enjoy hiking, camping, canoeing, and other outdoor activities can be of great service by taking part in service projects that help protect and restore the environment. From trail repair and streambed enhancement to meadow restoration and erosion control, there are dozens of opportunities for Scouts to roll up their sleeves and do something good for the land.

An essential element in the success of conservation work is to plan it in cooperation with those in charge of the area. No park ranger will be happy to have a troop show up unannounced on a Saturday morning to "do some conservation." However, nearly every land manager will be delighted to engage in the long-term planning of conservation work that is beneficial to the environment and appropriate for Scouts.

## Health and Safety Projects



### CONDUCT SUBSTANCE ABUSE WORKSHOPS

Organize a series of workshops on drug abuse if other agencies are not providing similar educational programs. It is absolutely essential that only factual information be given. Young people will respond to authorities and to people who have seen the drug scene firsthand. They will be turned off by hand-wringing and emotional pleas about the danger of drugs. Use BSA Drugs: A Deadly Game! resources.

### BICYCLE SAFETY EDUCATION

Plan a campaign to teach children and parents about bicycle safety practices. Units may cooperate with local licensing officials in setting up bike checking stations and explaining ordinances related to bikes. As a community service, units could provide reflective tape for all bikes in the community. They could also organize a bike circus or rodeo skills contest for younger boys and girls.

# Neighborhood Improvement Projects

## PLANT FLOWERS

Build large boxes from heavy lumber, treat them with a preservative, fill them with rich soil, and plant annual flowers in them to beautify the central area of your community. Place boxes at street corners, street dividers, or other public areas. Have a unit assigned to maintain each box during the summer and fall. The unit can take the box in during the winter and be responsible for its storage and repair or arrange for the city to maintain it.

## HONOR COMMUNITY LEADERS

Many communities have outstanding leaders in service agencies and fine government officials whose efforts are rarely recognized. Plan a dinner or special observance for them. Each unit might select and "adopt" one person to whom it would pay special honor.

## "CLEAN-UP, PAINT-UP, FIX-UP"

Sponsor or assist in a communitywide "clean-up, paint-up, fix-up" campaign day. Consult with city officials to determine where Scout efforts can best be focused. A Scout troop might coordinate the efforts of other Scout troops, too, and enlist the aid of other youth groups and service organizations to make this a truly community wide undertaking. Such an activity may be cooperatively sponsored with a newspaper, sanitation department, urban renewal authority, chamber of commerce, or other group. Awards could be made for the cleanest and most attractive blocks. Youth and adult members might serve as clean-block captains.

## BUILD A TOT LOT

Plan, build, maintain, and staff a neighborhood play area or tot lot. Set up a schedule of units or teams of youth to help run it.

## SURVEY COMMUNITY NEEDS

Residents in neighborhoods sometimes lack local interest in their community. To stimulate a feeling of kinship with their neighbors and to get them thinking about the welfare of the community, a unit could conduct a survey of community needs. Crews might hold man-on-the-street interviews, using a simple checklist. Record the thinking of residents on priorities of community needs—libraries, more schools, hospitals, parks, playgrounds, etc. From these interviews sum up their needs and concerns and publicize them. The results may bring about group meetings by many residents to consider ways and means of securing new facilities for the community; a side effect will be to create community spirit by bringing people together.



## Children's Service Projects

### **CHILDREN'S HOME PARTY OR OUTING**

Many organizations give parties at children's homes during the holiday seasons, but often the children in such institutions are ignored the rest of the year. Plan and conduct parties or plan an outing for these children at other times of the year. A monthly birthday party with all children whose birthdays occur during the month is another idea. Include a member of the home's staff on your planning committee. Entertainment may, at times, be provided by both the unit members and the children in the home.

### **PUSHCART PLAYGROUND**

This consists of an enclosed pushcart, trailer, or other easily movable container that carries sports equipment, crafts, games, flags, and other program supplies from block to block throughout the summer. The pushcart spends a day on each block by arrangement with neighborhood residents and block groups. Whatever open space is available may be used. This activity can best be done jointly by a Scout unit and a community center or other agency.

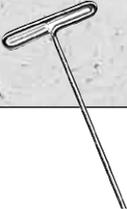
### **COLLECTING TOYS**

In many communities, new and used toys are collected during the holiday season for distribution to needy children. Units can assist in this effort by making posters to advertise the campaign, helping to stockpile toys, cleaning and repairing used items, and delivering toys to agencies that distribute them in an appropriate manner. On a larger scale, districts and councils sometimes spearhead toy drives, involving many units in the effort.

### **STUDY CENTER AND TUTORING PROGRAM**

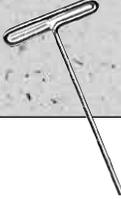
A unit can set up a community study center for children who need a place to do homework. This service can meet a real need in preventing illiteracy. English classes for adults might also take place here. The study center may be operated in partnership with another agency and utilize Venturers, college students, high school students, or volunteer adults as tutors.

## Historical Projects



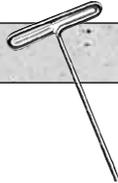
### LIVING HEROES—HISTORICAL TRAIL

Develop a map for other units with a route that includes museums, libraries, industry, historical points of interest, community services, and the names and addresses of real people. Recruit “living heroes,” including people from a variety of minority groups, to talk for five to 10 minutes with groups of Scouts when they stop along the “trail.” Living heroes might be people who have become successful in their occupations, have become educated in spite of major obstacles, or are making some kind of contribution to their neighborhoods.



### RESTORING HISTORICAL SITES

Places of historical significance sometimes fall into disrepair and are gradually forgotten. Reconstructed historical sites and refurbished monuments, on the other hand, are often sources of community pride. Youth can research a site to find out all they can about it and then ask to assist in the restoration effort. Actual restoration work must be done under the supervision of qualified local authorities.



### FIXING UP CEMETERIES

Small cemeteries often suffer from neglect. With the assistance of those in charge, Scouts can return a cemetery to a respectable condition—cleaning and straightening grave markers, cutting grass, removing weeds, planting flowers and shrubs, and identifying unmarked graves.

## Other Community Projects



### GET-OUT-THE-VOTE CAMPAIGNS

A natural follow-up to a voter registration campaign is a nonpartisan effort to get every eligible voter to a polling site. This calls for an educational and promotional push to remind citizens of their right and duty to vote. Before an election, youth members might distribute get-out-the-vote materials. On election day, they could be stationed outside polling sites to babysit young children, assist elderly or disabled people, and hand out “I have voted” badges to voters as they are leaving.



### VISITING NURSING HOMES

Residents of nursing homes are community members who might be very appreciative of the services that Scout units can provide. A unit might conduct a one-time project for a nursing home, or adopt the facility as an ongoing part of its service effort. Meet with the administrators of the home to learn how Scouts can be of greatest benefit.



### AIDING SHUT-INS

Many elderly or disabled people live alone and might have difficulty dealing with some day-to-day tasks. A unit can “adopt” one or more of these people and visit them regularly to run errands, read to them, help them write letters, take them shopping, or simply visit.

## Other Ideas

1. Carry out a Scouting for Food collection for community food banks.
2. Conduct a neighborhood safety hazard inspection.
3. Run an ethnic heritage awareness project (fair, pageant, and/or display).
4. Develop a community service and emergency phone number directory and distribute it to community residents.
5. Provide a county fair service team.
6. Develop crime prevention projects.
7. Promote the community's recycling program.
8. Organize a community rodent control program.
9. Run a safe driving rally.
10. Develop and distribute a "places to go" list for families in the community.
11. Conduct a neighborhood fair or carnival for younger children.
12. Develop, print, and distribute a home safety checklist.
13. Help non-English-speaking residents prepare for U.S. citizenship.
14. Conduct an in-town "health camp" in collaboration with the local public health center/department.
15. Develop and distribute home first-aid guides.
16. Create a video history of the community: people, places, and things.
17. Build trails and/or trail runoff terraces.
18. Assist in disaster cleanup.
19. Conduct a clean-waters campaign to prevent water pollution.
20. Plant food, provide cover, and build nesting devices for wildlife.
21. Help usher; park cars; provide a color guard; or assist in other ways at fairs, festivals, and other community events.
22. Venturers can do fitness screening and exercise/nutrition counseling.
23. Venturers can do mentoring for younger youth who need help.

## Reminders for District/Council Scouters

The following guidelines will help district/council activity and civic service committee members carry out the civic service part of their committee mission.

- Civic service/citizenship training projects must be regarded as an integral part of unit and district program, not as an extra task. They should occur at regular recurring intervals.
- Be sure that projects are carried out in cooperation with other community agencies and organizations whenever possible. Collaboration with other organizations not only results in more effective service projects but also helps teach youth about community teamwork.
- Make certain that units carry out the six criteria to ensure that projects actually teach qualities of good citizenship. Help them realize the importance of articulating to youth how the project related to rights and responsibilities of citizenship. (Simply taking part in a project does not ensure a young person will learn citizenship or grow in character.)
- The Boy Scouts of America needs to do a more effective job today of communicating its citizenship ideals to youth because there is less cultural support for these values than there was in 1910, when the BSA was born. As a district or council committee person, you provide other Scouters with the inspiration, the know-how, the methods, and the ideas to impact American youth.



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