

ORGANIZING COMMISSIONER TEAMS



Scouting  **America**[™]

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GUIDE OBJECTIVES

As commissioners, we strive to be the single best resource for all Scouting units. We must be ready to adapt to units' strengths and challenges. This guide explores how to improve unit service through customizable organizational structures and presents advantages and considerations of different methods and strategies for district and unit commissioners.

The purpose of this guide is to:

- Equip districts with options for team organizational methods
- Discuss challenges and their potential solutions for different organizational methods
- Enable districts to personalize their organizational structure according to unit needs
- Encourage commissioners to try new methods and strategies to serve their units

HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document is not intended to be read in full. A typical reader should read the entirety of Chapter 1. After the first chapter, readers should reflect on the organizational methods and strategies presented and compare them with the needs of their district's units. Based on this, readers should review a small, select number of methods and strategies presented in Chapters 2 and 3, respectively. Use the "Understanding Your District" sheet in **Supplementary Information** to decide which sections to read.

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Chapter One

Introduction to Organizational Structures

This chapter explores:

- The role of the traditional organizational model
- The importance of different unit service structures
- The definition of organizational methods for unit service
- The distinction between static and fluid methods
- The definition of organizational strategies for unit service
- The integration of methods and strategies into a district's plan



Reflecting on the Traditional Organizational Method

The Purpose of Unit Service

As commissioners we work to Be the Heart, Build Relationships, and Change Lives. Our priorities are to be unit leaders' single best resource; ensure S.A.F.E. programs; and enable significant, sustainable growth. The keys to unit service are supporting, educating, and fostering collaborative relationships with unit leaders. These keys enable unit leaders to deliver a high-quality program that attracts and retains both youth and adults. The job descriptions for individual commissioner roles can be found online.

The Traditional Method

Traditionally, commissioners are assigned to units within a specific area or charter organization. Commissioners are assigned 3 to 4 units within the district. These geographic assignments may not always align with improving unit metrics or commissioner impact.

Adapting to Best Serve Our Units

When deciding how to best support units, district commissioners consider: the number of active unit commissioners, the number and metrics of units, and the geographic spread of units, alongside other items. However, many commissioners are finding that the traditional method no longer works as desired. This guide serves as a tool to help districts find the best methods for supporting their units. Before continuing, you may benefit from reviewing the "Understanding Your District" sheet in [Additional Resources](#). There you will find a brief survey encouraging reflection on your units' needs, district's limitations, and the commissioners' strengths.

The Basics of Commissioner Organizational Structures

What is an organizational structure and why do commissioners need one?

An organizational structure is the comprehensive framework that informs how districts operate and how they utilize their unit commissioners. An organizational structure is made of two parts: an organizational method and organizational strategies. For unit service teams, setting a clear structure is invaluable. A structure provides a framework for fair workloads, clear decision making, and increasing effectiveness.

Why should commissioners explore different organizational structure?

Although the traditional geographic structure worked well in the past, units' needs and abilities have changed. Some districts have fewer commissioners, reduced resources, limited professional support, and greater geographic areas. Unit service teams must adjust their approach so they can best serve according to units' needs and districts' limitations. New structures can help districts accomplish more with less.

Who selects the organizational structure of a commissioner team?

The district commissioner is responsible for the effective organization of the commissioner team to best serve units. The district commissioner can organize unit commissioners according to a structure that meets their needs.

The Types of Commissioner Organizational Methods & Strategies

What is an organizational method?

An organizational method is a system that determines how unit commissioners are assigned to a district's units. Districts typically employ one method, but are free to use more. The methods presented here for unit commissioners are divided into two classes: Static and Fluid.

How can a district implement more than one organizational method at a time?

In general, districts only use one organizational method. However, a district may choose to sub-divide. Often, sub-divisions of unit commissioners are based on geography and called "sub-districts. However, sub-groups can be formed based on unit-metrics or program. If desired, each sub-group may select their own organizational method just as the district does.

What are static methods?

Static methods are methods where one commissioner serves as a unit's primary point of contact on all matters.

ADVANTAGES

- Commissioners form close relationships with their units.
- Commissioners become the best resource for their units.

DISADVANTAGES

- Units may have delayed access to resources.
- Units are limited to one viewpoint.
- Scheduling unit visits may be challenging.
- Difficult for districts with few commissioners.

What are fluid methods?

A fluid method allows multiple commissioners, as a team, to talk and work with multiple units at a time. Fluid methods enable commissioners to change and adapt with unit needs.

ADVANTAGES

- Faster access to district resources
- Many points of view and experiences
- Multiple commissioners serving a unit streamlines scheduling
- Increases impact with fewer commissioners

DISADVANTAGES

- Unit commissioners may not be as familiar with units
- May be confusing with multiple voices and views
- Requires stronger communication and documentation in Commissioner Tools

What organizational methods can commissioners use?

There are five organizational methods. Three are static and two are fluid.

STATIC METHODS

- **Geographic:** Commissioners care for units from a single geographic area.
- **Program-Specific:** Commissioners care for units of one type (e.g., Packs, Troops, Crews, Ships, or Posts).
- **Unit Metrics:** Commissioners support units with similar metric indicators (e.g. 0-2, 3, or 4-5).

FLUID METHODS

- **Joint Team:** Teams of commissioners work together to support units and their needs.
- **Specialist:** Commissioners visit units based on their knowledge areas (e.g., finance, program, membership, culture, or recruitment).

What is an organizational commissioner strategy?

An organizational strategy is a technique used in conjunction with the primary organizational method. In general, districts only use one organizational method, but may use more than one organizational strategy. This gives districts more flexibility to meet commissioners and unit needs. Districts with sub-groups may allow those sub-groups to select their own organizational strategies.

What organizational strategies can commissioners use?

There are six organizational strategies:

- Units with Unmet Needs Team: A small group of experienced commissioners who respond to units' unmet needs based on unit metrics.
- Cross-District Service Team: Commissioners from multiple districts come together to serve a larger group of units.
- New Unit Teams: A small group of commissioners work together to provide additional support to new units and their specific needs.
- Mentorship Pairs: New commissioners shadow experienced commissioners to grow skills and confidence.
- Unit Relatability: Commissioners are assigned according to best fit with a unit. Ideally, assignments reflect the composition of the units.
- Virtual Service: Commissioners primarily serve units virtually. This includes video services like Zoom, Google Meets, or Microsoft Teams.

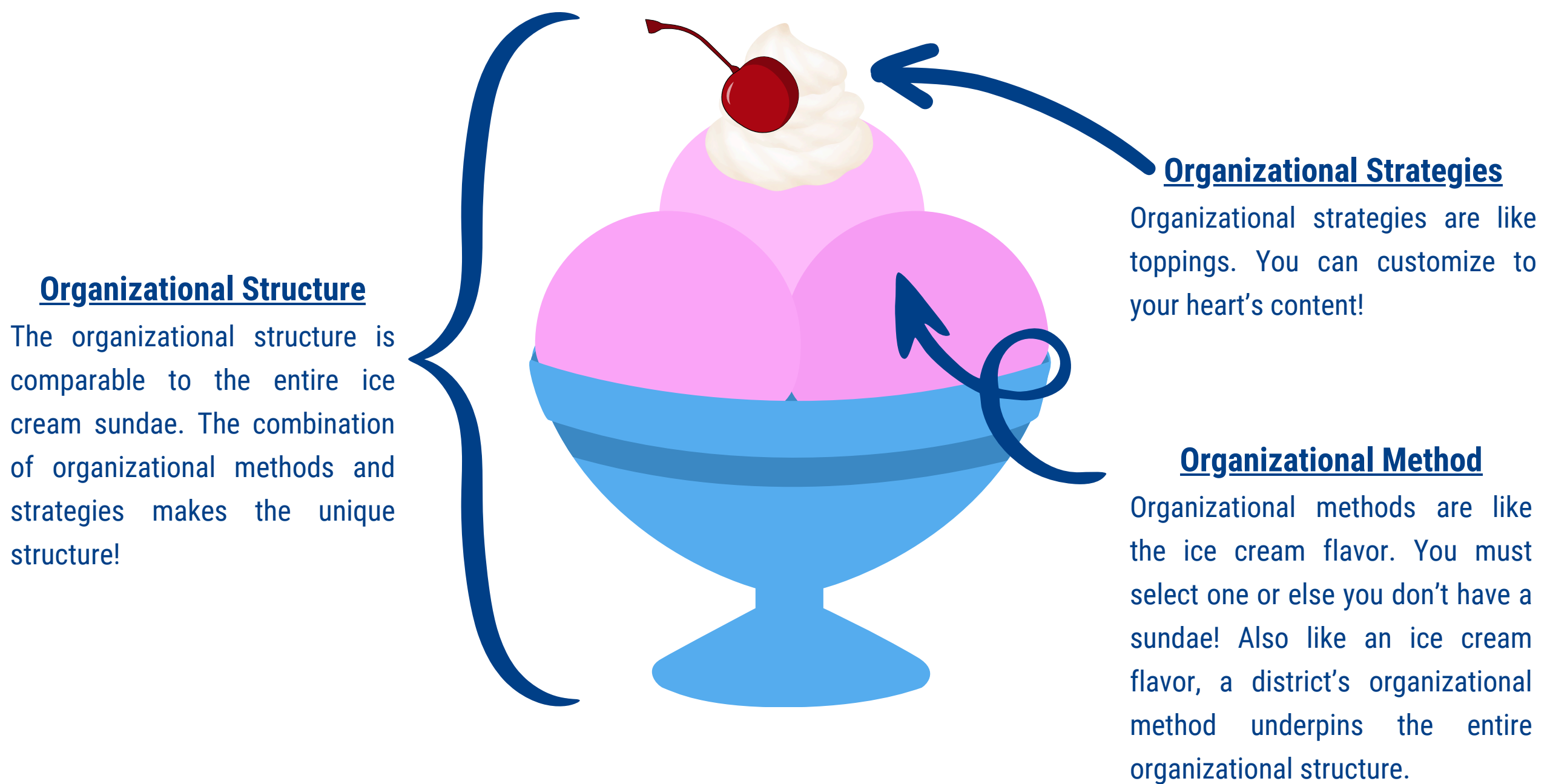
What is an organizational structure?

An organizational structure is the unique combination of organizational methods and organizational strategies that a district commissioner team decides to use to support their units.

The Ice Cream Sundae Analogy

What do commissioner team organizational structures have in common with an ice cream sundae?

They both require two important decisions to be made! In an ice cream sundae, you need to decide on your ice cream flavor and your toppings. In an organizational structure, a district must decide on their organizational method and organizational strategies.



How many organizational methods can a district use?

Typically, a district will select one organizational method to operate under. Depending on the organizational method that a district selects, however, a district may be sub-divided into smaller groups. Most frequently, these sub-divisions are called "sub-districts", but alternative sub-groups can be formed based on unit metrics or unit program areas. These sub-groups may select their own organizational method to operate under, creating a district that contains more than one organizational method.

How many organizational strategies can a district use?

All, some, or none of them! Like the toppings on your sundae, you can add as many as you want. Feel free to keep things simple or fully customize your organizational structure according to your units' needs. Like with organizational methods, districts with sub-groups may allow those sub-groups to select their own combination of organizational strategies.



Before You Continue Reading

If you have not yet, please review the "Understanding Your District" sheet in [Additional Resources](#). There you will find a brief survey encouraging reflection on your units' needs, district's limitations, and the commissioners' strengths that will make these next pages more useful. The next two pages provide an "At-a-Glance" table that includes summaries, advantages, and disadvantages of all organizational methods and strategies. Using these tables and the "Understanding Your District" sheet, decide which methods and strategies would be most useful for your district and read those sections. **Above all, this guide is not designed to be read in full.** We suggest reading the methods and strategies that seem like a good fit for your district and its units. See the "Understanding Your District" sheet in Additional Resources for assistance in determining the methods and strategies best suited for your district.

ORGANIZATIONAL METHODS AT A GLANCE

Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Geographic	Commissioners support units in a single geographic area.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form closer and stronger unit relationships • Assists with connecting local units together • Reduces travel burden on commissioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible disconnect between units and expert resources • Geographic distances can prevent regular face-to-face interaction
Program Specific	Commissioners care for units of one type (e.g., Packs, Troops, Crews, Ships, or Posts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units are paired with commissioners knowledgeable about their program • Assigned commissioners may be former unit leaders with relevant experience • Easier to connect units for joint activities and resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must identify commissioners with specific program background • Increased chance of failing to identify resources beyond the unit's program • May increase travel burden on commissioners
Unit Metrics	Commissioners care for units with similar metric indicators and needs (e.g, 0-2, 3, 4-5)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows familiarity with specific issues units face at different stages • Reduces visits to high-performing units • Enables strong units to support other units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units may shift between commissioners over time • Requires insight of unit metrics • May increase travel burden on commissioners • May overburden commissioners with high-support units.
Joint Team	Teams of commissioners work together to support units and their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Units benefit from more diverse knowledge sources • More reliable and flexible access to commissioners due to flexible schedules • Can result in better fit with less potential for conflict • Easier to distribute workload equally among commissioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces relationship strength of commissioners and units • Requires clear communication and documentation between commissioners through Commissioner Tools • May increase travel burden on commissioners • May result in uneven visits to units
Specialist	Commissioners visit units on an as needed basis depending on their area of specialization (e.g., budgeting, program, membership, or recruitment).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quick access to district experts on specific topics • Roles and focus areas are clearly defined for commissioners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team is limited by specialization areas that commissioners possess • Requires clear communication and documentation between commissioners through Commissioner Tools • May increase travel burdens on specific commissioners

ORGANIZATIONAL STRATEGIES AT A GLANCE

Strategy	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages
Units with Unmet Needs Team	A small group of experienced commissioners who respond to units' unmet needs based on Unit Key Metrics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevents unit commissioner burnout • Provides fresh viewpoints and ideas • Unit commissioners learn new strategies used by the units with unmet needs team 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May create confusion in the unit and the commissioner team, possibly increasing tensions • Less vocal units may not receive the help that they need from the units with unmet needs team
Cross-District Service Team	Commissioners from multiple districts come together to serve a larger group of units.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased flexibility of unit commissioners • Beneficial for districts with a shortage of unit commissioners or large geographic distances between units • Enables pooling of resources and knowledge between districts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a high degree of cooperation and communication between districts • Risks confusion over which commissioners serve which units • Council leaders and professionals may have concerns about cross-district service
New Unit Teams	A small group of commissioners work together to provide additional support to new units and their unique needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides important assistance to stabilize units • Units receive direct and immediate support • Reduces unit commissioner burnout 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May drain resources and manpower away from other units • May be challenged by senior unit leaders
Mentorship Pairs	Experienced commissioners are paired with less experienced commissioners in a shadowing process to help new commissioners grow skills and confidence.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides direct support to new commissioners • Re-energizes experienced commissioners • Strengthens skills learned in training • Reduces intimidation of the onboarding process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May lead to burnout in mentors • Requires careful pairing of mentors to match needs and personalities • Less experienced commissioners may need additional support
Unit Relatability	Commissioners are assigned according to best fit with a unit. Ideally assignments will reflect the composition of the units' Scouts, and Scouters. Examples include language, culture, profession, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improves communication with units • Increases relatability of commissioners to units • Increases acceptance of commissioner by unit leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May require more time and effort to identify unit commissioners who meet individual unit needs • Unit commissioners should learn about their units' background
Virtual Service	Commissioners serve units using virtual methods - such as email, phone call, or video call - in addition to face-to-face meetings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables more frequent communication in geographically large districts • Easier to schedule late-notice meetings • Serve more units in less time • Screensharing enables technical support for units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not enable the same level of connection and relationship building as in-person visits • Can be less engaging and may reduce effectiveness for units

Chapter Two

Commissioner Team Organizational Methods

This chapter explores:

- Different types of organizational methods
- The advantages and disadvantages of each method



Static Organizational Methods

The Geographic Method

In the geographic method, units are grouped by geographic boundaries. Geographic divisions depend on the location of units and the number of commissioners. District commissioners may divide units based on school district limits, county lines, or neighborhoods. Ideally, these commissioners live in or near the assigned area. The key is closeness and ease of travel. Clear geographic divisions of are aided by a map.

Guidelines

A district should have enough commissioners in or near each geographic area who can make visits.

Variations

A district or council may choose to sub-district, where units are divided into even smaller groups. This method can make larger communities or greater distances manageable. The district commissioner may assign assistant district commissioners to serve a sub-district. For each geographic division, the district commissioner may choose to implement a different organizational method that best addresses unit needs. Accordingly, a district could have multiple organizational methods.

ADVANTAGES

- Unit commissioners are likely to form closer and stronger relationships with their units.
- If commissioners are from the same community as their units, they may have local insights on school districts or community activities.
- This method improves local inter-unit bonds.
- Assigning units close to a unit commissioner's work or home can reduce the travel time.

DISADVANTAGES

- Districts may not benefit from the typical advantages of a geographic method (like knowledge about the local community) if there are no commissioners from the same geographic area as their units.

The Program-Specific Method

In the program-specific method, unit commissioners are assigned according to the unit's program area (Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouting, and Exploring). Ideally, a unit commissioner will have experience working in their units' program areas.

Guidelines

A district should have at least one individual experienced in the specifics of each program in their district. For instance, program-specific commissioners can be former unit or den leaders.

Variations

A district may choose to divide their unit commissioners in several ways according to the number of units in each program. For instance, a district may combine their service of Older Youth Programs (Venturing crews, Sea Scouting ships, Exploring posts, and Exploring clubs). Additionally, a district commissioner may choose to assign an assistant district commissioner to each program area. In turn, each assistant district commissioner may choose to employ a different method.

ADVANTAGES

- Commissioners can connect unit leaders more easily by serving multiple units in the same program.
- Recruiting new commissioners is easier when they work with programs they are familiar with.
- It may be easier to find new commissioners when they know they will only work with units in programs they are comfortable serving.
- Works well with new units who need extra guidance implementing program.

DISADVANTAGES

- District commissioners must identify commissioners with relevant program background. This may require seeking and inviting a new unit commissioner.
- If no one is found, a unit commissioner should learn about their unit's program needs.
- Commissioners may miss resources beyond their program and feel unfamiliar engaging with other programs.
- Program-based assignments may scatter units, increasing travel and burnout risk.

The Unit Metrics Method

Some units require more support and attention than others. Districts using the unit metrics method can provide support depending on unit need. For example, they can give more attention to units who have fulfilled fewer unit metrics on Commissioner Tools. Districts with fewer commissioners may find this method helpful for increasing impact with limited resources.

This method may require the movement of commissioners between units across a unit's lifetime. For example, a unit improves, and, in response, the unit metric indicators change to 4-5 unit metrics fulfilled. Based on this, a new commissioner is assigned to the unit and the attention and support to the unit may change to impact the largest number of Scouts in the district.

Guidelines

Grouping units based on unit metric indicators may cause concern if units disagree with their metric indicators. For this reason, unit commissioners need strong communication and relationships with their units. Unit metrics are objective and based on data that is automatically pulled from Scouting America's database. There, you can find guides to help create productive discussion with units on these topics.

Variations

There are several ways to implement the unit metrics method. Districts may divide their units based on unit metrics: 0-2 metrics completed, 3 metrics completed, 4-5 metrics completed. The grouping of these units will depend on the number of units in each group. Districts should consider the needs of each unit based on the objective data found in unit metrics before using this method. Some units may struggle with recruitment, retention, program execution, advancement, or succession planning. Districts with many similar units may choose to sub-divide according to their needs. See [Supplementary Information](#).

ADVANTAGES

- This method allows flexible resource allocation and helps districts with limited resources.
- Sorting on unit metrics allows commissioners to specialize in the stage-specific challenges.
- This method frees leaders of successful units from unneeded meetings.
- A unit commissioner for successful units can take on more units or can assist other commissioners with struggling units.
- This method provides opportunities for leaders from active units to support other units in their district. This can foster volunteerism among the district's Scouters.

CONS

- This method requires that all commissioners understand unit metric indicators.
- Districts must communicate to units how and why a new commissioner is assigned. This ensures units understand the process and service changes they experience as they grow.
- Unit commissioners need to openly communicate with their units about their situation and be prepared to resolve unit leaders' concerns.
- Commissioners may need to travel larger distances in a metrics-based assignment system, which increases the likelihood of burnout.

Fluid Organizational Methods

The Joint Team Method

This method emphasizes teamwork. Unit commissioners work with all, many, or several units together with other commissioners. Visits occur at different times to support different needs. Thorough, open, and complete communication among all the commissioners is important to the successful support of the district's units in this method. This method is great at overcoming a lack of commissioners in a district by increasing overall commissioner involvement in each unit.

Guidelines

To apply a joint team method, commissioners need to be comfortable sharing relationships and responsibilities with their units. Unit commissioners must communicate openly as a team to ensure the needs of units are met. Thorough documentation and active participation by each unit commissioner is needed for this method.

ADVANTAGES

- Units have regular access to commissioners because they don't need to plan around the availability of a single unit commissioner. Instead, they can meet with any available unit commissioner in the district.
- There is less chance for conflict between units and unit commissioners because units can choose to meet and work with commissioners that best mesh with their needs, goals, and personalities.
- Commissioners are less likely to burn out because they can take breaks and work together.
- Works well with new units who need support more frequently.

DISADVANTAGES

- Unit commissioners will need to be consistent in recording unit communication in Commissioner Tools. Districts should also consider utilizing a shared calendar to manage unit meetings.
- Unit commissioners with flexible schedules may become overwhelmed with requests.
- Unit commissioners may have unequal visits to certain units, resulting in other units not receiving enough support. "The squeaky wheel gets the grease".
- Freeform scheduling for units may create longer drive times for unit commissioners, increasing the likelihood of burnout.

The Specialist Method

Different commissioners have different areas of expertise, experience, and knowledge. This method suggests that district commissioners understand the characteristics of their team's commissioners and organize them accordingly.

Guidelines

In order to implement the specialist method, a district commissioner must identify unique skills or knowledge in each of their unit commissioners. This can be done through a talent survey of each commissioner. It should be sufficiently detailed to identify unit commissioners' Scouting skills, soft skills, and hard skills they may have developed as a result of other hobbies or professions.

Variations

The skills of commissioners can be paired flexibly according to the needs of units. Some potential focus areas are: finance, retention, recruitment, membership, chartered organization relations, program planning, conflict resolution, languages, cultural background, gender, professional backgrounds, career, hobbies, etc.

ADVANTAGES

- Commissioners can address challenges in their specialized area quickly and they will also have fewer responsibilities to each unit. Specialization may reduce the likelihood of burnout.
- Units have access to the experts in their district on whatever challenges they face. This means that they have immediate access to the best resources and information available.
- Increases the relatability of commissioners to units and improves unit fit.
- Works well with new units who may have specific questions about Scouting. Enables them to get clear, detailed answers.

DISADVANTAGES

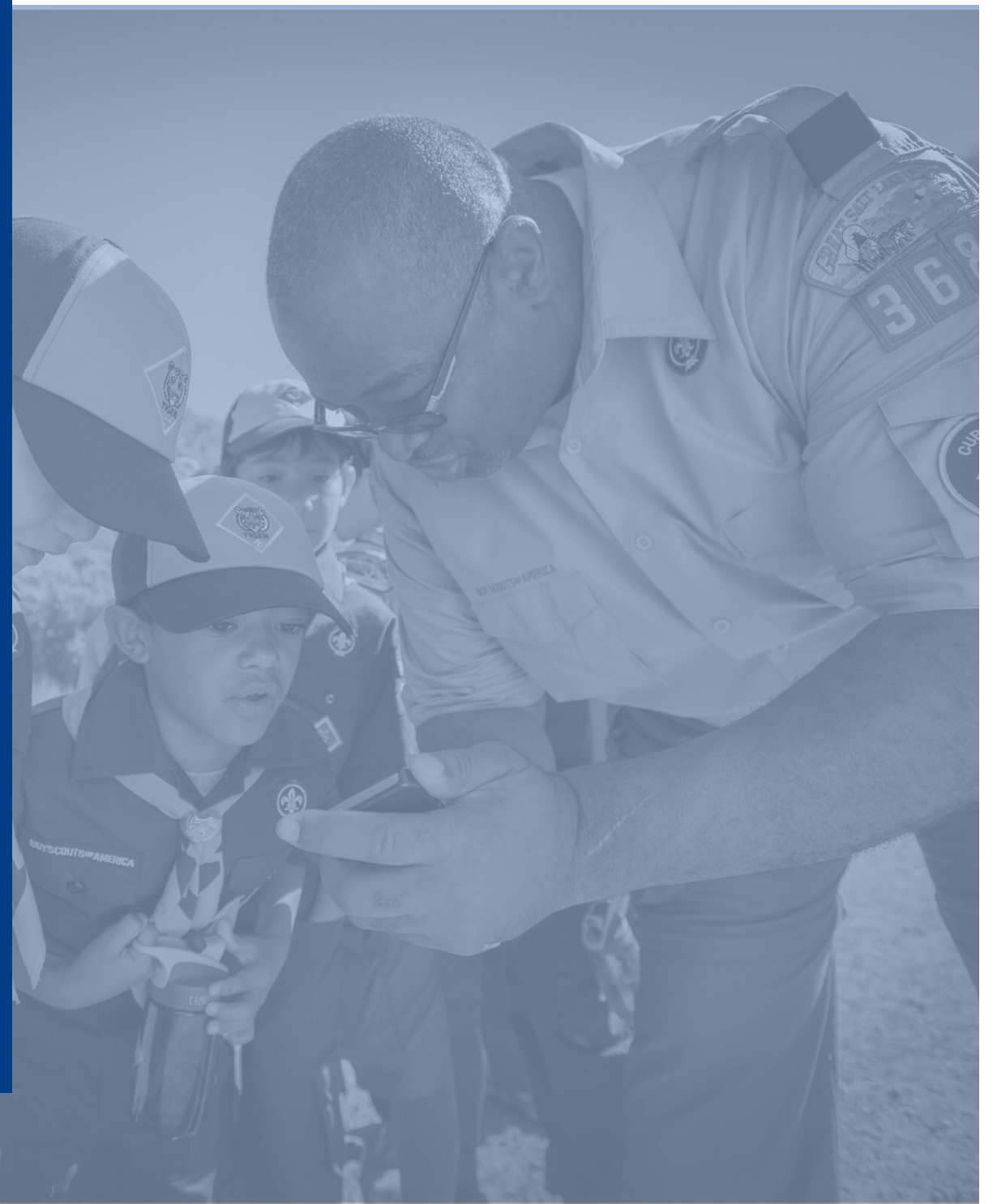
- The unit commissioner team is limited by the specialization available. If there is a lack of knowledge, skills, or experience in a district, unit commissioners should reach out to the district committee, other Scouters, council resources, or other districts.
- More freeform scheduling for units may create longer drive times, increasing the chance of burnout.
- Requires time and effort to identify the unique skills and backgrounds of a commissioner team.
- Unit commissioners will need to be consistent in recording unit communication in Commissioner Tools.
- Requires extra coordination. Districts should also consider utilizing a shared calendar to manage unit meetings.

Chapter Three

Commissioner Team Organizational Strategies

This chapter explores:

- The types of organizational strategies available to unit service teams
- The advantages and disadvantages of each organizational strategy



Units with Unmet Needs (UUN) Team

To support units requiring special attention, district or council commissioners form UUN teams ready to assist units facing specific and critical challenges. When forming an UUN team, commissioners should consider which experts the units would benefit from and whether a coordinator would be beneficial for the UUN team. UUN teams to work closely with the unit's commissioner to provide targeted support. Once their work has been completed, the unit commissioner follows up with support.

Guidelines

In order for an UUN team to function effectively, a district needs a few experienced unit commissioners skilled at problem solving and conflict resolution. Non-commissioners willing to work in this fashion can make up for limited commissioner resources. Additionally, the district commissioner or assigned assistant district commissioner may be involved when major decisions need to be made. Please refer to the curricula from the College of Commissioner Science for more information on resolving conflicts with units and unit leaders. See [Supplementary Information](#).

Variations

A variation on this strategy is having the UUN team be an individual assignment, making the selected individual a roving commissioner.

ADVANTAGES

- UUN teams can help prevent unit commissioner burnout by supporting unit commissioners with additional resources (including extra bodies).
- UUN teams can bring fresh viewpoints, ideas, and expertise to units who are struggling or in crisis.
- Unit commissioners can learn about new strategies used by the UUN team.

DISADVANTAGES

- UUN teams are not the typical point of connection for a unit. This may cause confusion and tension between units and commissioners during already stressful times.
- UUN teams may cause tensions with primary unit commissioners, if assigned. To avoid this, members of the UUN team should frequently communicate and coordinate with the unit commissioner.
- UUN teams may focus on units who reach out with problems. This can result in situations where 'the squeaky wheel gets the grease' and other, less vocal units may not receive the support they need.

Cross District Service

Sometimes neighboring districts are in a position to support one another. Sharing resources across district lines may be a solution to best support units.

Guidelines

Cross-district service requires coordination between the district commissioners of both districts. Without clear communication between district commissioners, cross-district service is impossible.

Variations

Cross-council unit service is also possible, but even greater communication, collaboration, and coordination will be needed. Resources can be shared across one or both councils or between certain neighboring districts.

ADVANTAGES

- Cross-district service increases flexibility because there are more unit commissioners working towards the same goal. This is especially useful in districts with a shortage of unit commissioners.
- Cross-district service enables pooling of knowledge and resources.
- Beneficial for large or remote geographic areas.

DISADVANTAGES

- Cross-district service requires strong collaboration and consistent communication between commissioners.
- Cross-district service risks confusion over which commissioners serve specific units.
- Unit commissioners must stay up to date on the events of the other district they work with.
- Council professionals may have logistical concerns about sharing resources across districts or councils.

New Unit Teams

New units benefit from additional support in early years. Districts can best support these units by creating a new unit team of commissioners with specific skills, knowledge, and experiences that are specific to new units and reduce the overall burden on each commissioner.

Guidelines

Set explicit rules regarding the founding, evolution, and dissolution of the new unit team. This ensures that the goal of the team is clear in terms of tasks and timeline. Additionally, commissioners serving on the team should not be the leaders of the new unit they are supporting and care should be taken to ensure a seamless transition of responsibilities over time as the new unit matures.

Variations

This new unit team can be re-fitted to work for units who are undergoing crises, although the UUN team is a better-suited strategy for units in crisis. The team can also work with a number of new units, or a separate team can be organized for each new unit.

ADVANTAGES

- New unit teams provide consistency, clarity, and reassurance for the establishment and stabilization of new units.
- Lessons learned from new units can be shared with other units facing similar challenges.
- Units receive immediate and direct expert support from commissioners while forming.
- No commissioner is solely responsible for serving the new unit. Team members can provide support for one another.

DISADVANTAGES

- New unit teams have the ability to make recommendations and provide support, but they may not be able to ensure the long-term success of a new unit.
- New unit teams can drain resources and manpower from other units without clear scope and timeline
- New unit leaders may not be open to the advice and support of the new unit team. This may make it difficult for new unit teams to serve the unit effectively. Please refer to the curricula from the College of Commissioner Science for more information on resolving conflicts with units and unit leaders. See [Supplementary Information](#).

Mentorship Commissioner Pairs

Mentorship commissioner pairs allow more experienced commissioners to serve as mentors for less experienced commissioners. In this strategy, a mentee commissioner shadows and participates with the mentor commissioner as they go about serving units.

Guidelines

This strategy requires that more experienced commissioners be willing to give some of their time to coach newer commissioners to best support units. Mentor commissioners must promote and encourage building trust and relationships between the mentee commissioner, unit leaders, and other Scouters. The entire unit service team should support and respect mentee commissioners, especially in meetings and when talking with unit leaders and other Scouters.

Variations

This method can be extended to work specifically for districts who wish to recruit more young adult commissioners or commissioners from outside of the Scouting community. Ideally, young adult commissioners will come from recently graduated youth from the Venturing, Sea Scouting, and Exploring programs. For either group, a more thorough selection process and support network is required to ensure they are prepared to serve, fully integrated as a unit commissioner, and treated as an equal on the team.

ADVANTAGES

- Less experienced commissioners have direct access to the knowledge and experience from older commissioners.
- More experienced commissioners benefit from the energy, passion, and fresh perspectives of new commissioners.
- Mentorship strengthens skills learned in training.
- Mentorship pairs improve the seeking, identifying, and retaining of commissioners by reducing the intimidation of the role.

DISADVANTAGES

- Mentors may take on more duties to help coach new commissioners. If workloads aren't managed, this can lead to burnout.
- Not all mentorship pairs will naturally work. Compatible commissioners should be paired.
- Less experienced commissioners need additional support and training to prepare them to serve effectively.
- Not all mentees need the same support. The performance and needs should be evaluated as mentees progress in providing service.

Unit Relatability

Unit commissioners are paired with units with whom they share a background. Backgrounds may be based on culture, language, gender, professional skills, hobbies, etc.

Guidelines

The unit commissioner team must know the individual needs of their units, including a strong understanding of their unit background. The assigned commissioner must be open to ideas and views that may conflict with their personal viewpoints, and listen carefully to unstated and stated needs and concerns. Please refer to the "Commissioner Recruiting Resources" in [Supplementary Information](#).

ADVANTAGES

- Increases commissioner relatability to units
- Helpful insight into the unique challenges and needs of a unit based on their background
- Commissioner experiences a higher degree of satisfaction in serving a unit that is a good fit.

DISADVANTAGES

- District commissioners need to identify unit commissioners who can meet the individual needs of each unit's background. This may require seeking and inviting a new unit commissioner, possibly from a non-traditional area, to fill this need.
- If a new commissioner cannot be found, a unit commissioner should learn about the unit's background to meet their needs.

Virtual Service

Commissioners can supplement in-person visits with emails, phone calls, and video calls. Several platforms, including Zoom, have free video calling services.

Guidelines

The district or council commissioner must know the technological access and capabilities of each commissioner and their units. Do they have access to a reliable internet connection? Can they easily navigate virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom? The assigned commissioner must have a basic knowledge of the technology and meeting platforms they will use, such as Zoom, Teams, or Google Meet.

Variations

Virtual meetings can be used to address concerns between in-person meetings as well.

ADVANTAGES

- Virtual meetings may help geographically large districts by enabling more frequent communication.
- Late-notice meetings are easier to schedule virtually than in-person.
- Commissioners can serve more units in less time with virtual meetings.
- Virtual meetings have screen-sharing which allows unit commissioners to walk through online processes or provide technical support to units.

DISADVANTAGES

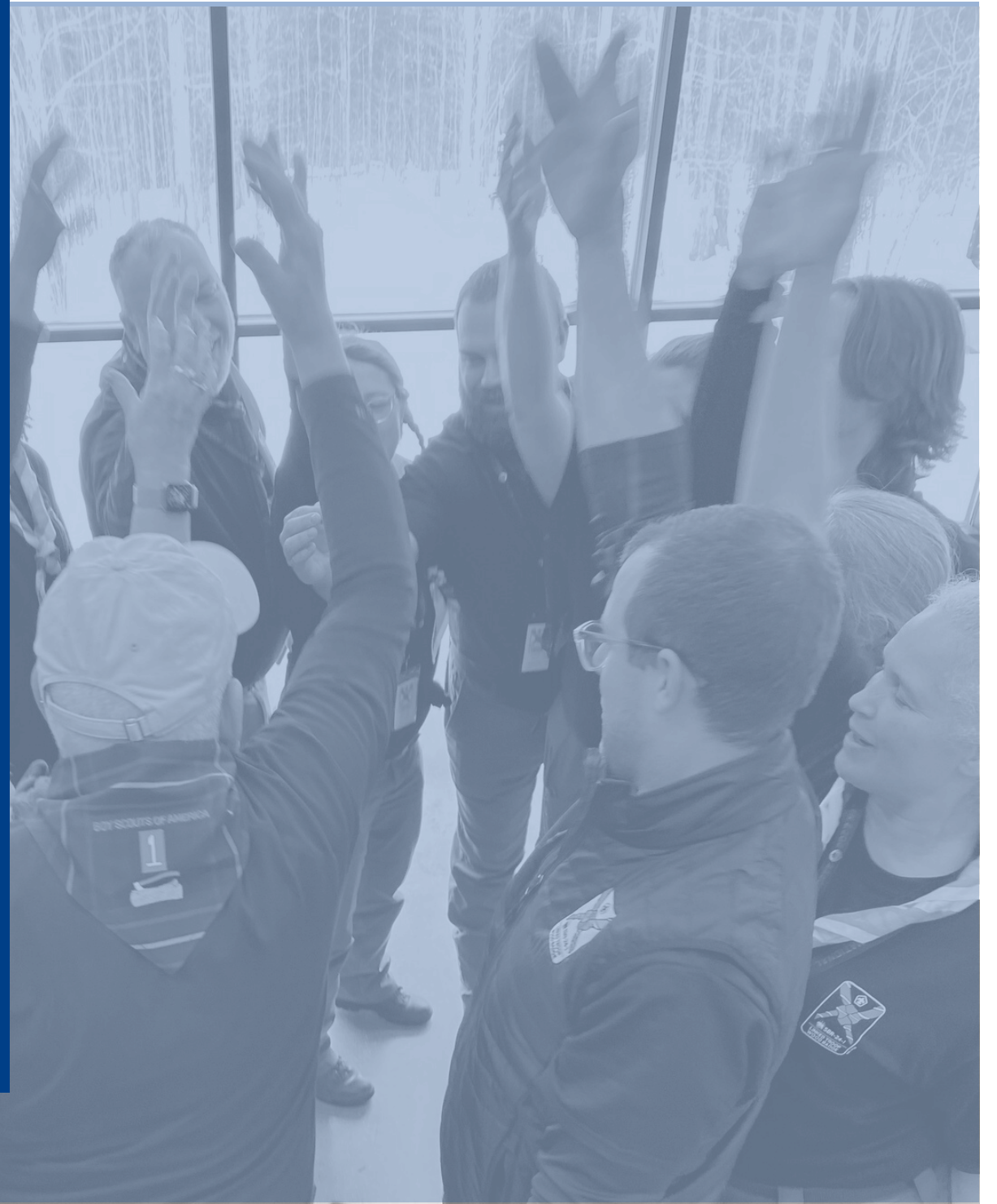
- Virtual meetings don't allow for the same level of emotional connection and relationships compared to in-person meetings.
- Virtual meetings can be boring and less effective. Units may tune out and miss important information if meetings are too long.

Supplementary Information

Additional Resources and Glossary.

The end matter explores:

- Additional resources that council, district, and unit commissioners may find useful
- The formal definitions of terms from this guide



Additional Resources

- [College of Commissioner Science Resources](#)
- [Commissioner Mission, Vision, Culture & Priorities](#)
- [Commissioner Recruiting Resources](#)
- [Understanding Your District](#)
- [Unit Connection Guides](#)
- [Unit Roadmap: Starting, Sustaining, and Growing Units](#)



College of Commissioner
Science Resources



Commissioner Mission,
Vision, Culture, & Priorities



Commissioner Recruiting
Resources



Understanding Your District



Unit Connection Guides



Unit Roadmap: Starting,
Sustaining, and Growing Units

Glossary

- **Fluid method** - An organizational method that allows multiple commissioners, as a team, to talk and work with multiple units at a time
- **New unit team** - A team formed by commissioners in a district designed to aid the district's newly formed units specifically.
- **Organizational method** - A structure or system selected by a district commissioner that determines how unit commissioners are divided and allocated to a district's units. A district should employ only one method at a time.
- **Organizational strategy** - A procedure or process that further assists districts in meeting unit needs. Multiple strategies can be employed in addition to the singular method.
- **Organizational structure** - The combination of organizational methods and strategies that a district decides to implement.
- **Units with unmet needs team (UUN Team)** - A team formed by commissioners of a district that focuses on addressing pressing and urgent issues that units may face.
- **Static method** - An organizational method that designates a single commissioner as the primary point of unit connection for all matters.
- **Unit metrics** - Metrics found in Commissioner Tools that shows potential unmet unit needs.

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- **Authors:** Amy Hermann & Griffin Roblyer
- **Content Editors:** Karen Bengtson, Forrest Bjerkaas, Cedric Blade, Pepe Estrada, Judy Graeber, Ken Gordon, Bertha Guzman, Ron Ling, Kevin Phillips, & Vernon Smith.