

2024 Fall Recruitment Playbook



MID-AMERICA COUNCIL, BSA
SERVING NEBRASKA, IOWA & SOUTH DAKOTA

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More Information can be found at our Membership Landing Page:

<https://mac-bsa.org/unitrecruitment/>

Year Round Recruitment

While we focus heavily on recruiting in the Fall and again in the Spring, recruitment is truly year round. **We must be ready to accept new families when THEY are ready to join.**

Simple Ideas for Year Round Recruitment

August

Fall Recruitment
Family Fun Night at the Scout Office

September

Fall Recruitment
Second Chance sign ups

October

Second Chance sign ups
Trunk or Treats

November

Encourage "Bring a Friend" by promoting
MAC Bucks

December

Holiday Parties

January

With the colder weather, it's a great time
to do a Lock In and invite friends

February

Are you chartered by a Church? Can you
participate in Scout Sunday and invite
families to come check out the unit

March

Unit March Madness - which den or patrol
can bring the most friends to a meeting?

April

Parent Teach Conferences
Community Service Month Project

May

Fishing Derby

June

Fun Day at the Park!

July

Summer Parents
Raingutter Regatta

If a **Cub** joins later in the program year, give them the option of completing any missed rank requirements at home, but don't sweat it! Just make sure the new scouts has FUN and award them something special at your Blue and Gold

If a **Scouts BSA** youth joins later, just connect them to the most recent patrol. Explain to the parents that the Scout BSA program moves at the Scouts pace. Be willing to work with that Scout during downtime at meetings or at campouts to help catch them up!



MAC BUCKS REFERRAL PROGRAM

Refer a friend to join Scouting and receive \$20 in MAC BUCKS! MAC Bucks are redeemable for use at any MAC Scout Shop or for camping or activity fees for events offered through the Mid-America Council.

Referrals can enter Scout's name via online application when asked "How Did You Hear About Us?" or if filling out a paper application simply just write the Scout's name who referred you anywhere on the application.

Referral must be registered and paid in order to receive MAC Bucks. MAC Bucks is a credit that has been placed into a personal account for you at our Mid-America Council offices. If using for purchase at either Scout Shop, just tell staff at checkout. If using online, please call Member Services at 402-431-9272. MAC Bucks will be held in your account for 1 year from the date of notification. If not used, it will be forfeited.

**QUESTIONS?
CALL 402-431-9272**

Be Prepared...to Recruit!

....Wait, we've heard that before! As we know, those who fail to plan, plan to fail! Here are some steps to take as you are preparing to recruit!

- Participate in an annual planning meeting with your District Executive
 - Prepare your Budget & Calendar for review
- Finalize the details of your Sign Up Night & Second Rounder by June 30th
- Identify a goal for the number of new scouts you hope to recruit this fall
- Coordinate with local Troops to have Den Chiefs in place
- Prepare your New Member Coordinator to welcome new families
- Check your Unit Pin on "JoinMACScouts.org" - if you need to make any updates, please email MAC@scouting.org
- Prepare your communication pieces - Calendar, Contact Information, Schedule, etc - for new families

What to communicate to new families?

Communication is KEY! When preparing to communicate to new families, think about the information you wanted to know when you first joined.

Calendar of Events

what's upcoming,
when are meetings, etc

Contacts

Who are their points of
contact? Cubmaster/
Committee Chair, Den
Leader, etc

Cost of Program

What does it cost to
join? What are the
additional costs?

What Can I Expect?

A lot of our new
families have never
been a Scout, what are
the basics that you
should explain?

Fall Recruitment

Fall Recruitment is the time we welcome more new families than any other time of year. Families are signing up for their yearly activities and we can invite them into our program from the beginning.

We have **five** main parts of fall recruitment - Open House, Scout Talk & Flyers, Join Nights, Second Chance Sign Up Nights, and the Parent Meeting.

Open House

Open House, sometimes called Back to School or Meet the Teacher, is a great opportunity for units to have a booth with information for potential families. These events are typically pretty fast paced so you may not have a lot of time with each family. You'll want to hit the high level items, including handing them a flyer for your sign up and having them write their information on the Interest Form.

Some Other Helpful Tips for Open House:

- Talk with your principal about securing an ideal location for the Scout Table
- Use a table cloth to make your booth look sharp
- Make it interesting! Have a Tri-Fold with adventures, Pinewood Derby Cars, Patches, Candy, etc!
- Distribute Flyers with Sign Up Night information
- Hand out giveaways to those who stop by your booth (Stickers, bracelets, etc)



TIP: Put your Interest Forms on a couple different clip boards and have plenty of pens, so that multiple families can put their information down at the same time.

Scout Talk & Flyers

Paper Flyers & Scout Talks or Youth Rallies have been shown again and again to be a GREAT way to recruit youth! A Scout Talk/Youth Rally is where a District Executive or Unit Leader goes into the School and promotes Scouting by talking to the youth for 3-5 minutes. This is typically done at the same time as handing out the Paper Flyer so parents can see the same information.



TIP: Work very closely with your District Executive on this. Often times, Schools have specific rules/background checks that need to be followed. Your DE will know how to navigate these.



Don't Forget to Promote!

Open House, Scout Talks, and Flyers are GREAT! But do not forget all of the other ways you can promote your recruitment nights:

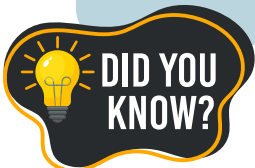
- Yard Signs in your Neighborhood
- BIG Yard Sign outside of the School
- Posters on local Bulletin Boards
- Have Scouts wear their Uniform to School
 - Both on Scout Talk day & Sign Up Night
- Promote on Social Media (Geofencing!)
- Post on Nextdoor App
- Digital Flyers
- School Marquee announcements
- Peer to Peer Invites (Youth and Adult!)

This list isn't exhaustive. What creative ideas can you come up with?!

Join Night

It's here! The night we've prepared for! The biggest things to remember with Join Nights are to make new families feel welcome into the program and that we communicate the necessary information to them.

- **Use signage and greeters so families know where to go.** Don't let them get lost or frustrated!
- **Utilize an Open House (come and go) format for sign ups.** Many parents will want to get in and out of your sign up quickly. Using the rotational model with the display boards available through Council are great to help with this.
- **Make it easy for parents to fill out an application right then and there!** If using the online system, ask them to do it from their phones right then so you make sure it goes through correctly. If you're using paper applications, make sure to have plenty (and pens, too!). If they leave without filling out an application, their chances of returning are pretty low. Use an interest form to collect information, too!
- **Have a fun activity for youth!** Make it easy and quick, and something that youth can pull away from without missing out. Use your Troops to help!
- **Recruit Families, not just Scouts!** Set the culture right then that parents are part of the Scouting team.
- **Wear Class B's instead of Class A's** - this helps the whole environment feel welcoming. Any currently registered youth in attendance can wear Class A



All NEW families receive a Welcome Packet from MAC when they sign up! This includes their Scout Handbook! See the "Resources" section for more information

Second Chance Sign Up

Second Rounders are some of the easiest recruitments to plan! Ideally, you will have new families come to an already scheduled meeting - like that month's pack meeting! The big key is to **make sure you are prepared to welcome new families**. Have your supplies ready (Calendar, Point of Contact, Applications, etc).

Second Rounders are a GREAT opportunity for Peer to Peer recruitment and earning MAC Bucks!

Parent Meeting

Parent Meetings are how you start getting parent engagement. This is your chance to welcome not only the Scout, but their family to our program. A few important points to remember about Parent Meetings:

- **Hold this meeting within 2 weeks of sign up.** Don't let parents fumble their way through until a meeting later in the fall. Get them involved from the start!
- **Youth should be in another area with a fun activity!** Let the parents have full attention on what you're presenting. This is a great way to include your local troop!
- **Explain the basics of Scouting.** These new families do not know our lingo! Keep it basic but let them know how we work!
- **Share specifics about your unit.** Make sure they understand meeting schedule, unit dues, popcorn plans, etc.
- **BE ORGANIZED.** An organized parent meeting shows how well you will run your program.

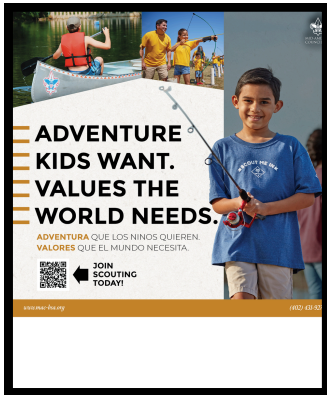
The Parent meeting is the first step into parent involvement. Making them feel welcome and part of the unit right off the bat will make them want to be more involved. You can also use some tools during this meeting like the 100 point form! Letting your parents know from the beginning that being involved is the expectation will help everyone moving forward.



TIP: Be Intentional! Turn parents into helpers, then helpers into leaders!

Ordering Membership Supplies

Once you've completed all of your planning, it's time to order your supplies. We provide several different marketing materials for you to use to promote your unit! Here are some examples of what we have!



Flyers



Parade Flyers



Posters



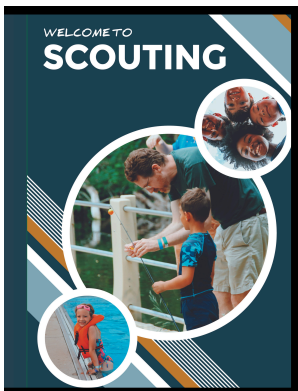
Banners



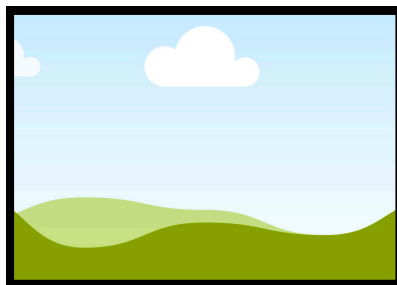
Bag Yard Signs



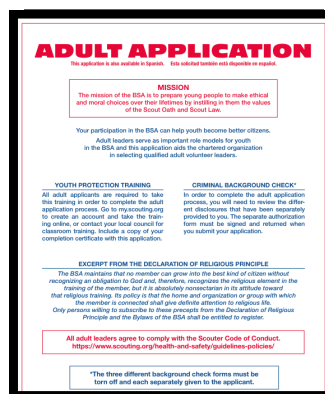
Oversized Yard Signs



Pocket Folders (Includes Youth App, Payment Form, & Parent Guide)



5 Station Boards



Adult Applications

Activity Options (Choose one)

- Raingutter Regatta
- Water Rockets
- Rubberband Guns

All of these materials are FREE for units! In the resource section, you'll find a document explaining what you'd order each item for.

Visit: www.tinyurl.com/MACMembershipSupplies to order any or all of these items.

Fall Recruitment Timeline

To make Fall Recruitment the most effective, there is a timeline to follow. The actual dates of these events are up to the unit to decide but the timing of these is highly important!

4-6 Months
Before

Prepare for Fall Recruitment. This should be happening as early as March and April! You want all of your plans to be finalized as you are going into the summer months.

AT LEAST 2
weeks before
Open House

Order Supplies! After your plan is finalized and you are prepared, order your Membership Supplies from Council. **Remember**, it can take up to two weeks to get supplies. Make sure to order at least two weeks before your Open Houses!

August or
September

Attend Open House! As Open House approaches, confirm with your school you are still good to have a table or booth. Prepare your supplies, show up early, and be excited!

2-7 Days
after Open
House

Scout Talk & Flyers. A few days after Open Houses, you will want to get it for a Scout Talk & Flyers. Remember to work with your District Executive on this.

1-5 Days
Later

Join Night. It is time to actually welcome new families to our program! During both Open House and the Scout Talk, you invited Scouts to come and sign up! Make sure you are prepared to welcome them!

A Week or
Two after
Join Night

Second Chance. You probably had families who couldn't make your first round of recruitment. Planning another option early on to invite them to is a great way to make them feel welcomed.

A Week or
Two after
Join Night

Parent Meeting. Do not skip the parent meeting, or wait too long to have one! Parents who feel involved and welcomed, will want to help and may become leadership!

Programming & Retention

Just as important as recruiting new families is keeping them engaged! When you plan a GREAT Program you'll have GREAT Retention. Use our Program Planning worksheets in April-July timeframe to plan your calendar, budget, and program year!

Plan FUN & exciting programs that appeal to youth AND parents!

- Keep activities hands on and engaging. Get them outside in the fresh air.
- Capture these moments and share on social media. Tag the Council!
- Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, and Den Leaders should focus on program. It should be great right out of the gate - first impressions are everything!
- New Member Coordinators and Committee Chairs should focus on connecting with leaders, welcoming new families, and answering questions.
- Do new and exciting programming, not just the same thing year after year.
- What are the big events people know about Scouting? All Packs should have a Pinewood Derby, Troops should have Camp Outs!
- Get families outside for service projects.
- Ask new families what they hope to get out of scouting and what they are expecting with programming!

If your families are having a fun, exciting, positive Scouting experience they will continue in the program. They will also become recruiters by spreading word about the fun they are having in your unit!

Communication is key, whether we are talking about programming, retention, or parent involvement. People want to participate in programs they feel they are a part of and feel communicated with!

Common Objections

Here are some common objections you may hear from potential families (or even some of our current ones!) and how to overcome them.

“It’s too expensive!”

Compared to many of the youth sports programs that have limited seasons, Scouting is year-round and is comparatively less expensive, especially considering the lifelong lessons that are learned. Furthermore, Scouting gives the youth a method of paying for their own program through our annual product sales.

“We just don’t have the time”

Scouting is structured so that your commitment decreases every year as your child gains self-confidence and increasing independence. But rest assured, the time you spend now one-on-one with your child will be some of the best times you will have.

“We are in sports already”

Scouting and sports are not mutually exclusive. In fact, some of our most successful scouts have had successful sports experiences as well, and it teaches them time management skills they might otherwise not receive.

“Scouting is just camping. We don’t really like camping”

While we do a lot of our activities outdoors, you will see a gradual change in your child to get out of the house and away from the screens for a healthy experience. Plus, it’s a safe space for youth to explore the outdoors!

“The unit meets on the wrong night.”

If our meeting night is not good for you and your family, let us know, and we will help you find a nearby pack that meets on a different night.

“My child has too much schoolwork”

Just like with sports, Scouting makes a child want to be a part of the program, and they subsequently develop excellent time management skills as a result so they can take full advantage of the program while still excelling at school.

Tools & Resources

While these are the basics of Fall Recruitment, Mid-America Council has many other tools and resources to help your unit be successful!

- **Membership Supply Link:** Do not forget to order your supplies once you've finalized your plan! www.tinyurl.com/MACMembershipSupplies
- **Membership Supply Checklist:** This document explains what each item is for and lets you plan your order before you visit the link.
- **Geofencing:** Your District Executive will be able to create an event on Facebook and Geofence it to promote it out to families in your community. Please connect with your DE directly.
- **MAC Bucks Referral:** As mentioned earlier, the MAC Bucks program is a great resource to help your current Scouts recruit new families!
- **MAC Fees:** Follow this document to make sure you understand what it costs a new family in Mid-America Council. Make sure you've used your Calendar and Budget to help figure out Unit Dues as well.
- **Welcome Packet:** All new Scouts will receive a Welcome Packet that includes their Scout Handbook at NO Cost! See this Handbook Flyer for more information!
- **MAC Membership Landing Page:** MAC has a great landing page for all things Membership: <https://mac-bsa.org/unitrecruitment/> . Make sure to visit and get even more additional resources!

Check List

We've talked a lot about what to do to have a great fall recruitment. Here is a great summary to follow as you welcome new families this fall!

- Participate in an annual planning meeting with your District Executive
 - Prepare your Budget & Calendar for review
- Finalize the details of your Sign Up Night & Second Rounder by June 30th
- Identify a goal for the number of new scouts you hope to recruit this fall
- Coordinate with local Troops to have Den Chiefs in place
- Prepare your New Member Coordinator to welcome new families
- Check your Unit Pin on "JoinMACScouts.org" - if you need to make any updates, please email MAC@scouting.org
- Prepare your communication pieces - Calendar, Contact Information, Schedule, etc - for new families
- Check your Sign Up Night Pin - make sure to update if needed!
- Attend Fall Recruitment Training
- Connect with your DE to Geofence your Sign Up Event
- Order Membership Supplies
- Prepare and attend Open House
- Prepare and host a Sign Up Night
- Prepare and host a Second Rounder
- Encourage families to earn MAC Bucks with the referral program
- Prepare and host a Parent Meeting

- and most importantly - **be excited, have fun, and welcome new families into our great program!**