

Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

2024 Sign-Up Night Guide

Pack Tips for Successful Cub Scout Recruiting & Parent Orientation

Welcome to Fall Recruiting in the Golden Gate Area Council! Your mission is so especially important because everything you do...and the way you do it...has the potential to make a positive impact on the lives of the youth and families in our community. Thank you for your efforts to build tomorrow's leaders by growing Scouting today!

Every new Cub Scout who joins this fall 2024 is eligible to receive a free **Cub Scout Branded Kite!** Kites will be distributed by District Executives upon receipt of completed and paid applications for new youth. When new Cub Scouts and their families attend the pack's Parent Orientation meeting, the pack leaders can make a fun and exciting presentation of kites to all the newly registered Cub Scouts!

Keep reading to learn about our new pack incentive as well as the youth recognition patch for recruiting!



Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

Sign-Up Night Branding

- Sign-Up Night resources are available to help recruiters successfully invite youth and their families to join, involve them immediately in quality activity, and inspire them to keep Scouting a part of their lives. See <https://ggacbsa.org/recruitment-resources/> for the latest resources and ideas.

Key Elements to All Sign-Up Nights

- Sign-Up Nights that are prepared and scheduled for Day 1 of the new school year are the most successful. Be prepared and check school calendars in order to avoid their orientation meetings, “Meet the Teacher” nights, “Open Houses”, etc.
- Sign-Up Nights at each school should be kept to 30-45 minutes. A separate Parent Orientation Meeting should be held within one week following Sign-Up Night to help introduce new families to more information about the pack and its activities.
- Sign-Up Nights at each school should only be held on a Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evening, and never the day after a major holiday, such as Labor Day.
- Scout Talks in the school should not be conducted on a Friday, as youth may lose their excitement about Sign-Up Night and Scouting over the weekend.
- Pack leaders should welcome families and be sure they register on the Sign-Up Night Roster to accurately record every parent and youth that attends.
- **Pack leaders should obtain a completed youth application for every youth who attends Sign-Up Night to ensure all critical contact information is obtained. Online applications should be approved by unit leadership within 24 hours of the Sign-Up Night**
- All applications must be turned in to the District Executive within 24 hours of the Sign-Up Night or that week’s Turn-In Night.
- Every family should receive a welcoming phone call from the den leader, Cubmaster, or committee chair within a few days of registration. Phone calls will lead to more successful recruitment of parent involvement as opposed to emails that may end up in junk folders.



Sign-Up Nights held at each school are always more successful because parents & potential Scouts are already familiar with their school!

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2024 Fall Recruitment Timeline

Why have a Timeline? —To better capitalize on promotional efforts, create excitement, and ensure enough time to recruit youth through follow-up efforts, we will have a tight window for all first-round Sign-Up Nights. These must be scheduled on Tuesday, Wednesday, or Thursday evenings during September.

All Sign-Up Nights should occur at the local elementary school whenever possible.

July / August

- **Secure** date, time, and location for both first and second Sign-Up Nights
- **Secure** Scout Talks ahead of the first Sign-up Night—day before or the same day as Sign-Up Night
- **Promote** Sign-Up Night
 - Yard signs, posters, Peer-to-Peer cards, flyers, bulletin board announcements, social media, email blasts, personalized invitations to prospective parents, Information table at Open House and Meet-the-Teacher nights, etc.
- **Prepare** Sign-Up Night handouts – Welcome packets with Pack Information sheet, Parent Orientation flyer, youth & adult applications, etc. The most successful units use QR codes or short, easy URL links to distribute their sign-up night handouts.

August / September

- Conduct Scout Talks
- Conduct Sign-Up Night
- If you are not using online applications: submit completed youth applications and annual registration fees in exchange for kites
- Conduct Parent Orientation Meeting and present kites to newly registered Cub Scouts
- Submit completed adult applications, prorated fees, and training certificates

Late September / Early October

- Promote second Sign-Up Night which can be at the normal pack meeting location (not a pack outing)
 - Yard signs, posters, Peer-to-Peer cards, flyers, bulletin board announcements, social media, email blasts, personalized invitations to prospective parents, etc.

Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

Preparing New Families

Packs with an excellent history of membership development and retention have one thing in common—they are prepared to receive new youth into their program. To ensure your pack is prepared, follow these guidelines:

- Create a short, colorful pack information sheet to distribute to all new families at Sign-Up Night. Make sure to include your pack calendar! Use QR codes or short, easy URL links to distribute information instead of using handouts whenever possible.
- Involve existing parents in creating a welcoming environment, where new families can feel connected and learn more about Scouting. Nationally, the #1 reason given by families who dropped out of Scouting last year was that no one made them feel welcome...they never felt connected. Let's all commit to doing a better job of being helpful, friendly, courteous, and kind!
- Host a separate Parent Orientation Meeting within one week of Sign-Up Night (see a sample Parent Orientation Agenda below) to share more details about the pack's leadership, fall activities, fundraisers, etc.. This is also a great opportunity to make a fun presentation of the kite kits for the new Cub Scouts!

Role of Unit Leadership

The recruiting of Scouts and leaders happens at the pack level and in the communities where people live, work, and play. The Golden Gate Area Council will support each pack in their recruiting efforts and each pack will be responsible for the following:

- Designate a pack Sign-Up Night Coordinator – Person who takes the lead in organizing the Sign-Up Night.
- Commitment to conduct a Sign-Up Night at the local elementary school(s).
- Confirm Sign-Up Night dates with District Fall Recruitment Chair or District Executive **two weeks before the first day of the new school year.**
- Display the yard signs in high visibility areas from August through November.
- Turn in all new member applications and annual registration fees to the District Executive within 24 hours of Sign-Up Night or at that week's Turn-In Night.
- Distribute kites to newly registered Scouts during the Parent Orientation Meeting.
- Promote the registration and participation of families at district and council events offered during the fall, including Kite Day events.
- Inform new leaders of online and in-person training opportunities.
- Conduct a second recruiting event in late September / early October following the same steps as before. The second Sign-Up Night may be conducted at the usual pack meeting facility (not an outing).

Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

Marketing Your Sign-up Night

(Check out [Recruitment Resources](#) on our website)

Meet the Teacher Night / School Open House

This is a great time to have a booth set up to show off Scouting and explain what your unit does best. The open house should NOT replace your Sign-Up Night but should be used to encourage people to attend and enroll.

- Booth staffed by two or three excited volunteers, decorated with Pack pics, tent, camping gear
- 30 second sale driving people to the Sign-Up Night
- Collect 5 pieces of contact information on a sign in sheet (provided and downloadable from the website) and hand them a flyer (if allowable) – or enter that information as a manual lead in “Invitation Manager” of my.scouting.org
- Email **same night** to all who signed in welcoming them and inviting them to Sign-Up Night
- Follow up email and call the day before reminding and inviting them to the Sign-Up Night

Yard Signs

Display the yard signs in high traffic areas in your neighborhood and near the school(s) where you recruit members. Remember that yard signs are dry-erase and reusable using marker. Be sure to write large and legible enough to be seen from a distance.

Flyers / Posters

Put up flyers/posters anywhere—school, daycare centers, community centers, grocery stores, restaurants, bowling alley, etc. GGAC color flyers can be used with your sign-up night details.

School and Neighborhood Newsletters

Write an article for your school and neighborhood newsletters, spotlighting Scouting and all the activities and good things your unit is doing to make an impact in your local community and at your school...include pictures!

Church / Chartered Organization Bulletins

Work with Chartered Organization leadership (Chartered Organization Representative and Institutional Head) to be sure all play a role in recruiting success. Encourage the chartered organization to publish your announcement in the church bulletin or newsletter the week prior to your Sign-Up Night.

Peer-to-Peer Cards

Give these cards to your youth so they can distribute them to their friends with the date, time, and location of your Sign-Up Night. These cards will be available for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturing. Ask your DE!!!

Email Invitations (parent to parent)

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Ask the parents in your pack to send an email invitation to all their friends that have Scout-age youth. People like to join organizations where they know other people. An email message helps them understand their friends are involved, too.

Social Networking

Ask parents who are on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, NextDoor, etc. to update their status to talk about your pack's website and the Sign-up Night, or simply have them go to www.BeAScout.org for more details.

Paper Registration vs. Online Registration

Online Registration through the BSA Online Registration Portal has become a functional and viable alternative to paper registration for units in the field. More families who grew up with fast access to technology are coming into Scouting age; as they do, they lean more onto online resources than on traditional paper applications. Units who adjust with the demand are finding that online registration is quick and easy, but there are some important steps to follow:

CHECK OUT THE ONLINE REGISTRATION GUIDEBOOK FROM THE BSA, AVAILABLE AT:

<https://www.scouting.org/resources/online-registration/>

CLICK ON THE "ONLINE REGISTRATION UNIT GUIDEBOOK" under the "How To" Section of the Page

Tips for Successful use of Paper Applications

- Make sure each family fills out the Sign In sheet as they enter the Sign-Up night
- Make sure that each family gets an application packet as they walk in the room
- Ask them to start filling out the application before the presentation begins
- Check the application with them for accuracy & completion before they leave
- Collect fees with the application
- Contact all attendees who did NOT submit an application that evening inviting them to parent orientation and remind them to bring their application
- Get the paper applications to your District Executive ASAP so you can get your kites!!!!

Tips for Successful use of Online Applications

- Make sure your unit is set up to accept online applications on BEASCOUT.ORG
- Make sure each family fills out the Sign In sheet as they enter the Sign-Up night
- Have your Unit's QR code in posted multiple locations at the sign-up night (on the flyer if possible) so it is easy to locate. Prompt attendees to scan the code and go to the site to sign up
 - If you don't know where to get your QR code, please contact your District Executive
- Remember that the Online system only collects National BSA Registration Fees, not Pack dues

Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

- Contact all attendees who did NOT submit an application online that evening inviting them to parent orientation and remind them to complete their application online
- Provide a copy of the complete online registration roster for your unit to your District Executive who can then provide you kites for those youth



Invite Them Back! Regardless which method you use to sign Scouts up, make sure your Pack provides each family with an invite to the next meeting (parent orientation)!

Text to Join, the Join Landing Page & Utilizing Online Registration

Engaging with families in a completely digital way has become paramount for ensuring their access to Scouting. As such, the Golden Gate Area Council developed a completely digital strategy for families to connect to their local Scouting unit.

Text to Join

The Golden Gate Area Council partners with a secure text to join provider, resulting in a simple and easy way for families to join Scouting digitally.

On your flyers, posters and yard signs, place to following simple message:

Digital Flow to Join

Utilizing Text to Join services, interested families could text a simple number, land on a “join home page” that would direct them to their school. From there, the family could select to receive more information about their local pack, connect with the unit leadership or even click on a unit’s “join button” to directly join the unit through Be A Scout.

Setting Your Unit Up for Success

So how do you ensure that your Pack is ready for a success? First, visit www.my.scouting.org and make sure that your Pack information is correct under Organization Manager then Unit Pin. Update the information then select “Save” at the bottom of the screen. Please allow 24 hours for the changes to go into effect on beascout.org.

Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

Sample Sign-up Night Agenda – Presentation Method

(Recommended minimum staff: ten leaders from the pack, a nearby troop, or the district)

Be sure to keep the presentation itself to 30 minutes

All Sign-Up Nights are designed to be fast paced for today's busy parents. The presentation method has been used successfully for many years. Remember that the goal is to sign up new Scouts and adult leaders – the #1 reason that families don't join is because they were never asked. Packs are asked to avoid the use of PowerPoint presentations because they tend to include too much information, take too much time, and often cause interested families to leave without signing up because they simply can't stay so long. Instead, new Cub Scouts and parents should be invited back to a Parent Orientation a week later, which gives the pack an opportunity to share more information about their activities and leadership. Remember that your presentation is meant to focus on walking families through the registration process and collecting fees.

The key to making any Sign-Up Night successful is advanced planning and preparation, including recruiting enough enthusiastic volunteers to help. A model campsite with a tent, camp chairs, fishing poles, etc. should be to one side of the presenter, so everyone clearly sees some Scouting fun while they're there!

Before the meeting (20-30 minutes)

- Set up tables, chairs, and model campsite
- Welcome Packets — youth & adult applications, Pack Information sheet, Parent Orientation flyer, etc.
- Kite patches
- Pens & checkout materials



Welcome & introductions (5 minutes)

- Lead the Pledge of Allegiance
- Introduce pack leaders

What is Scouting (Basic Version—10 minutes)

- Youth development program that builds character & confidence
- Family-oriented; all members of the Scout's family encouraged to participate when/where possible
- Fun with a purpose—youth will have fun while learning leadership skills
- Briefly describe upcoming pack activities and a recent activity over the summer
- Briefly describe leadership structure of the pack
- Be sure to discuss what it means to be an "adult partner" for Kindergarten & 1st grade Cub Scouts

Families Came to Sign Up! Sign them up and get them out! Resist the urge to flood them with information. Sign Ups should be 30 minutes max, start to finish.

Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

Youth/Adult Registration (5 minutes)

- Discuss pack and BSA registration fees, insurance, and magazine subscription option
- Refer to Pack Information sheet – mention key upcoming dates
- Emphasize Parent Orientation meeting – date/time/location, kites handed out, FUN!
- Direct all to Turn-In tables to gather applications & fees, present new youth with a kite

After the Meeting

- Collect all applications/registration fees, present youth with kites, answer questions
- Visit with new leaders & parents, encourage Parent Orientation attendance



**Families Want to
Join Where They
Feel Welcome**

**5 Tips for Making
New Families Feel
Welcome**

1. Be Present

Make sure your Pack is at Meet the Teacher nights & has a Sign-Up Night.

2. Communicate

Email, Call, Facebook: The more you say hello & welcome, the better.

3. Have Fun

No one wants to be bored. Make your meetings fun & engaging, especially the first meetings they attend!

4. Plug Them In

Getting people involved early in simple tasks will onramp them to future volunteer opportunities.

5. Celebrate Them

Pull them up front, send a notice to the Facebook group, etc. to welcome all new Scouts/families. The more you celebrate them, the more they feel included and get involved.



Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

Sample Parent Orientation Meeting Agenda

On June 1st, 2024 the new Cub Scout program was introduced in order to make the program FUN, SIMPLE & EASY! Use the new requirements and adventures to promote the support that your pack gives its leaders.

Before the meeting (20-30 minutes)

- Set up table and chairs, as needed
- Roster from Sign-Up Night
- Youth and Adult registration applications (for new families)
- Review Parent Orientation Agenda
- Ceremony and games equipment
- Pens



Families Came to Participate! THIS is where you share all the great things your Pack will do this year...not at Sign-Up Night. Because families have already committed to participate by signing up, they will now find the time to say YES to participation in all the great activities, including volunteering!

Opening (5 minutes)

- Lead the Pledge of Allegiance
- Introduce pack leaders

Pack Program/Fundraising (10 minutes)

- Discuss the pack's plans, mentioning some of the more exciting activities
- Discuss the upcoming fall events and distribute event registration information
- Impact of Popcorn sale as a fundraiser for the Pack and each family

Dismiss the Cub Scouts to another room for games and activities with proper supervision

Unit Leadership Needs (15 minutes)

- Prepare list of unit leadership opportunities in advance...separate needs by jobs that need to be done every month (like Advancement) or things that get done seasonally (like organizing a campout)
- Using whiteboard, blackboard, or poster board—have a list of each pack event from the pack calendar and ask new families to write their names onto events they would like to help with
 - Example: Pinewood Derby, Blue & Gold, Christmas Party, etc.
- Ask for at least one adult from each family to participate in one of the roles until you have adequate leadership
- Discuss adult registration fees and uniforms
- Talk briefly about helping new leaders get started—training requirements, meeting resource guides, etc.
- Simple recognition for all parents who have just volunteered

Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

Den Organization (20 minutes)

- Have the Cub Scouts rejoin the group and sit by grade level
- For dens that already have a Den Leader:
 - The den leader discusses den meeting dates, times, and locations
 - Recruit parents to assist with den meetings
- For dens that do NOT have a Den Leader:
 - Another Pack leader will need to guide the discussion
 - Discuss the possible meeting dates, times, and locations
 - Talk with individual parents to secure den leadership

Reminder Announcements (10 minutes)

- Date, time, and location of the first Pack meeting
- Upcoming training courses
- Fall activity information
- Popcorn sale dates

After the meeting—enjoy fellowship and refreshments

Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

2024 Resources for Digital Recruiting Be Prepared, Marketing, Communication

The Golden Gate Area Council produced a three-prong approach to ensuring that Packs had the resources needed to reach new families and get them involved in Scouting.

Be Prepared

1. Geofencing
 - a. **What is it** – Geofencing is an online marketing tool which uses cell phone-based proximity to advertise directly to a particular market group. Generally done through apps like Facebook and Twitter, Geofencing places an invisible fence around a geographic location, and when someone in the market group enters that location, sends them a message through their social media platform. To see more about how geofencing works, check out this video: <https://youtu.be/-KKsUhpzbTc>
2. Be A Scout
 - a. **Update your contacts** – Be A Scout is a great tool, providing that your contact information is updated, and people can reach you. Take some time today to ensure that your www.beascout.org pin is updated, and your contact information is correct. Not sure how to do it? No Problem! Here are two resources to help you:
 - i. Unit Guidebook for Online Registration
 - ii. Be A Scout Webinar: <https://vimeo.com/437251195>
 - b. **Make sure online applications are active for youth / adult** – Making it easy to apply online is key for a successful digital recruiting campaign. Check out the Unit Guidebook for Online Registration to see how to utilize the online registration system
3. www.scouting.org/recruiting – This is a National website focused on giving you the skills needed to execute in a digital environment. There are amazing trainings that will help you navigate Scouting in the digital environment:
 - a. <https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-membership/>
 - b. Recruitment webinars Are Here:
<https://scoutingwire.org/marketing-and-membership-hub/>
4. BSA Brand Center - This national website is full of great new videos and tools that you can use on your Packs Facebook Page, website etc. Check out the 2024 Fall Recruiting Videos under the Cub Scouts tab for great videos to utilize on social media
 - a. <https://scouting.webdamdb.com/bp/#/>
 - i. Scout Talk video

Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

1. Think of this as digital peer-to-peer recruiting. Scout aged youth are encouraging other youth to join Scouting.
 2. Sending this video to schools to play either on their zoom classes or at campus video announcements, or post the video in a curriculum portal / email it to the parents
 3. Use these to build enthusiasm in front of the parents and youth
- ii. 5 Questions video
1. This takes the place of the traditional Sign-Up Night by quickly answering parent's questions.

Marketing

None of the resources above will work if you don't market your Pack through the community. Frontend, grassroots marketing will be your best friend here, so don't be afraid to put out those resources and get creative! Some of the best ways to do this are to:

1. Find out how each school prefers to notify parents on local activity offerings in the area. Please do not spend your time designing a physical flyer or social media flyer. Your District Executive can help you get a template over to you quickly! Peachjar credits from the GGAC can be used with enough "lead up time" and as long as your pack is following this Sign-Up Night guide.
2. Yard signs galore! Put them out all over your community! Not only will you be making it easy for families to join your Pack, everywhere in your area, people will see the same message, and be driven to the landing page where they find the right Pack for their school!
3. Posters: Don't be fooled: posters in community centers, coffee shops and just around town are still an extremely effective tool. Like the yard signs, utilize them to make it easy and efficient for families to find you!
4. Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, NextDoor): Blast your social media pages with your links to join. You can get great images for marketing on social media on the BSA Brand Center (see above)

THIS LIST IS NOT COMPLETE! GOT A GREAT MARKETING IDEA? Post it to the Council Facebook page to share with other Packs throughout the GGAC!

Communication

This whole exercise will be a waste of time if Packs don't follow up with the families that sign up online. Make it a point to have a Welcome Meeting as your first meeting back. Have parents go through the orientation while the new Scouts play in a household scavenger hunt!

1. Designate your most welcoming leader as the Be A Scout contact. This person can review and approve all applications that come in provided that the Key 3 has given them this designation in my.scouting.org (reference the Unit Guidebook to Online Registration above for a how to).

Golden Gate Area Council Scouting America

2. Follow Up, Follow Up, Follow Up.
 - a. A Phone call welcoming the new family to the Pack should happen within 2 or 3 days of them joining online. Even if it is just to say, “Hello & Welcome.” Don’t have your parents meeting date locked in yet? No Problem! Tell the newly joining families that you are welcoming all new families at a singular meeting in a few weeks. You just wanted to say welcome and get them in contact with someone at the Pack.
 - b. Send a follow-up form email that provides key Pack leader information and parent orientation meeting date
 - c. Call / invite them back a few days before the parent orientation meeting to remind them to be there!

Great deals are made or lost in the Follow Up, and Scouting is a great deal for all our families. Make them feel welcome by communicating often!

Digital Recruiting In A Nutshell

Be Prepared

- Make sure you know how to use Be A Scout & Online Registration
 - Watch the “How To” if you need help, or reach out to your DE
- Make sure your Be A Scout Pin is updated
- Submit your information for your Geofence
- Pickup your recruiting supplies from your DE
- Make sure your information is accurate on www.beascout.org

Marketing

1. Put **www.goldengatescouting.org** EVERYWHERE!
2. Grassroots marketing on social media
3. Use a Geofence
4. Yard Signs & Posters
5. Word of mouth
6. School Advertising

Communicate

1. Follow Up Quickly
 - a. Introduce the idea of volunteering during this call
2. Invite to a Parents Meeting
3. Have Fun!

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How Does It All Work??? Here's the new family process:

See Advertisement → www.goldengatescouting.org → Find school district & school →
Sign Up → Hear from Pack → Have A Blast!

Fall 2024 Recruiting Incentives

Free Pinewood Derby Cars for all Cub Scouts in the pack

- Pack has 10% youth membership growth over 12/31/2023
 - This is not a fluid number – it is according to my.scouting.org rosters ONLY
- Pack has 2 Sign-Up Nights scheduled, conducted, and completed
- Pack attends at least one offering of the “GGAC 2024 Fall Recruitment & Sign-Up Night Training” – either in-person or virtually.

Limited Edition Fall 2024 GGAC Cub Scout Recruiter Patch

- Recipients must be able to name their recruits found on the pack Roster in my.scouting.org ONLY
- Recipients can earn the patch for 3 friends recruited (Silver Border) & for 5 friends recruited (Gold Border) – found on the pack Roster in my.scouting.org ONLY
- New enrollments must have been added to the my.scouting roster after July 15, 2024 and up to December 31, 2024
- New enrollments can only be credited once toward one current Cub Scout

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Additional Lead-Generating Recruiting Ideas (How & Where to Promote your Sign-Up Nights)

Local Religious Communities

- Sunday Schools from Chartering Organizations
- Church Bulletins
- Charter Partner Sign-Ups

Elementary School Visibility

- School Supply Drive
- Wear Uniform to School on Meeting Days
- Contact PTOs
- School Informational Booklets
- School Newsletters
- School Open Houses
- Meet-the-Teacher Nights
- Post Card Mail-Outs (Lists from School Districts)

Community Advertisement

- Coffee News
- HOA/Subdivision Mail-Outs/Online
- Local Magazines
- Billboards
- Radio News Time

Local Business Storefronts (Youth-Oriented)

- Starbucks
- Kohl's
- Target
- Places Parents Shop for School Supplies
- Bowling/Main Street/etc.

Community Flyers

- Pizza Boxes
- Tax-Free Weekend

Local Parades

- Pass out Popcorn
- Bottled Water with Pack Information

Other Useful Ideas

- www.beascout.org
- Business Cards (Peer-to-Peer)
- Fall Recruitment Sponsor(s)
- Community Engagement Events
- Serve as Color Guard in the Community
- National Night Out
- Yard Signs
- Social Media/Facebook/Twitter
- Pool Parties
- Bike Rodeos
- Pet Rescue