

Commissioners Award of Excellence in Unit Service



The National Commissioners Support team was asked a simple question: “How can we really impact Commissioner Service, in a manner that would improve unit program and increase retention of youth?” The answer was simple – recognize the volunteers who are providing excellent Commissioner Service with a knot, and let those Commissioners lead by example.

The next step was to put together a team from across the regions with commissioners at different service levels:

Craig Bailey - UC from NER
David James - DC from Central Region
Dwight Jekel - ACC from Southern Region
Kevin Baker - CC from Western Region
Doug Ferguson - Area Commissioner from Southern Region

None of them knew one another, but each accepted the challenge to bring their perspective to the project, be open and honest in communication, and timely in their comments. They were true to the task and we had some lively discussions. This team worked beautifully together, working through differences of opinion to best serve Scouting. They are hoping to finally meet one another at the annual meeting in May where the knot will be introduced to the Commissioner Corps.

The result of their work is an insightful, intuitive award that defines excellent unit commissioner service. I can't tell you how proud I am of them and the work they have done. I'll let them describe the award for you.

Ellie Morrison,
National Commissioner Service
Recruitment and Retention Chair

The mission of every Unit Commissioner is to help units succeed. It is widely understood that the more engaged a commissioner is, the more successful the unit that is receiving commissioner service will be. In that light, the team decided to focus on (5) important areas of commissioner service;

1. The unit visit & logging the visits in UVTS 2.0
2. Mentoring/Coaching/Counseling
3. Continual education
4. Rechartering service
5. Effective unit strengthening

Beginning with the unit visit, it became clear that the concept of what a “visit is” needed to be defined. The team also believed this award should complement the recently developed [Journey to Excellence](#), or “JTE.” The JTE was very clear that a Unit should expect at least 6 visits from a commissioner per year. Previous publications have used terms like “monthly” and “frequently.” It was finally agreed that physical visits are crucial, but “meaningful communication”

was also key. Some very good communication between a unit leader and a commissioner is handled over the phone, over email, and as “commissioners of the 21st century,” even instant messaging and “texting.”

Commissioners need to be current in their understanding of the BSA programs, policies, and initiatives. No other volunteer position has as much continuing education opportunities as the Commissioner Corps. Training occurs at Commissioners College, Commissioners Conferences, and national locations such as the Philmont Training Center and the training center at Sea Base. A commissioner must participate in some manner in continuing education – above and beyond the monthly training topic that each District Commissioner should be providing.

If units did not recharter in a timely manner, there would be no Boy Scouts of America. Commissioners have been integral in the chartering and rechartering of units for over 100 years. Part of the “charter concept” is the very important relationship with the chartered partners. This award recognizes this relationship, and promotes a strengthening of the relationship by requiring commissioners to properly present the charter to the chartered organization.

When people work together on a common goal, relationships are strengthened. An often under-utilized tool is the “Unit Self Assessment Tool,” a two-page worksheet that a unit leader and a unit committee chair use to identify important areas of unit improvement. The tool can be found in the [Commissioner Fieldbook for Unit service](#). This award takes the concept a step further, and asks the commissioner to work with the unit and develop a **written plan** to improve one of the areas identified. How do you measure success? If the youth members of the unit are satisfied they are receiving the best program possible, they will stay and keep the unit growing strong, and the unit roster will reflect the improved membership retention.

During the process of setting the goals for unit service, the team realized **excellent unit service** was the key concept – not **who** provides the service. You will notice this award is targeted to **all registered Commissioners**. This will encourage administrative commissioners to try field service, or return to unit service in addition to their normal duties. This may even re-energize some administrative commissioners, by reminding them why we all do what we do. All commissioners, at any level, at any time, are encouraged to work on the **Commissioners Award of Excellence in Unit Service**. The only pre-requisite is to have completed Commissioner Basic Training, which can be accomplished while the other requirements are worked on.

The award will require signatures from both the Council Commissioner and the Council Scout Executive, this provides immediate feedback as to the effectiveness of the Commissioner Corps in the local council. As for insignia, the successful recipient will be able to purchase a square knot for uniform wear. The award will take up to 2 years to earn, and a commissioner may earn the award up to three times. Although there is a time component to the tasks, there is no “tenure” requirement. This means the time spent earning the award may actually be simultaneously applied to other commissioner awards, such as the Arrowhead Honor and Commissioners Key.

Requirements:

Any registered Commissioner who is providing direct unit service is eligible to earn the Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service, through unit service and a project that results in improved retention of members and on-time unit recharter, over the course of two consecutive years. If a Commissioner who is not registered as a Unit Commissioner wishes to earn this award, they must work with the District Commissioner where the Unit(s) is/are registered.

Date Started: _____

Unit type & Number: _____

Youth retention at last recharter: _____ (%)
(See *Journey to Excellence* form)

ADC/DC Signature: _____

Technical Skills:

The Commissioner shall consistently demonstrate the following:

1. The ability to use UVTS 2.0 to log unit visits
2. The ability to provide UVTS 2.0 visit reports to an ADC or DC

Signature of ADC/DC: _____

Participation:

Complete each item below:

1. Be a participant or staff member in **ONE** continuing education event for Commissioner Service.¹ For example: District, Council, Area, Regional or National College of Commissioner Science, Commissioner Conference, Philmont, Sea Base, or Summit training.
Date: _____
2. The Commissioner shall make at least (6) physical visits to each assigned unit per year. All visits must be logged with UVTS 2.0. Examples: unit meetings, unit activities, leader meetings, and summer camp visitations.
3. The Commissioner shall make at least (6) significant contacts (in addition to those made in item 2,) for each unit served, by telephone, two-way electronic communication, or in person. These contacts must be logged in UVTS 2.0.

Signature of ADC/DC:

Footnote 1: Participation or staffing in a continuing education event as noted above, prior to the start date of this award, shall not be applied. Participation or instructing during training sessions as part of regular staff meetings may not be applied.

Training and Experience:

Complete each item below:

1. Commissioner Basic Training:
Date: _____
2. Provide rechartering service, by holding membership inventories, training verification, and "*Journey to Excellence*"² progress review meetings. Perform charter presentations to the Chartered Organizations of the units you serve.

Unit Type & Number	Date of Recharter	Date Charter Presented
P999		
P999		
T999		
T999		
C999		
C999		

Footnote 2: Unit-Specific requirements and performance criteria are founded on BSA's *Journey to Excellence* guidelines. As changes are incorporated, the Council Commissioner must scope impacts and adjust expectations as required.

Performance:

Complete each item below:

A. Performance Goal: Through utilization of the Annual Unit Self-Assessment tool, identify a specific goal in a specific unit that would result in higher quality unit performance. The goal should target improvement in at least one of the Unit Self-Assessment target areas.

Signature of ADC/DC / Date _____

B. Action Plan: Provide a written plan to achieve the goal identified in Section A. Have the plan approved by the Unit Leader, with Unit Leader's signature.

Signature of ADC/DC / Date _____

C. Results

1. Unit Self-Assessment conducted twice a year for two years:
Dates: Year 1: _____ & _____
Year 2: _____ & _____
2. **Unit Retention:** On-time rechartering for two consecutive years:
Dates: _____
3. **Youth Retention:** Youth retention percentages must show improvement:
Year 1: _____% Year 2: _____%
(See *Journey to Excellence* form)

Signature of ADC/DC: _____

A Commissioner may earn this award up to three times, while registered as a Commissioner at any level. A square knot is available for uniform wear, with added devices awarded for the second and third achievements.



COMMITTEE ACTION

Upon completion, a Commissioner shall provide a copy of this form to the District Commissioner, who will then convey this document to the Council for verification and final approval.

Council Commissioner Date

Council Scout Executive Date

Commissioner Progress Record

FOR THE



Commissioner Award of Excellence in Unit Service

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____
Council: _____
District: _____

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA