Recruitment and Advertising

Why OSG | Starting a Group | Group Organization | Registrations & Background Checks | Apps & Software | Finances | Recruitment | Volunteers

Recruitment is one of the most time consuming parts of leading a group. Even established groups will have attrition, so it is important to think of this as an ongoing process.

Recruiting Leaders

Generally if you are thinking of starting a scout group, you may have a few families in mind who are interested in scouting together. These core families are a great pool to recruit your initial leadership team from.

For an established group, most of your leadership pool will come from the families of the scouts interested in your program. It can be difficult to get volunteers. One strategy if you are struggling with finding enough leaders is to guarantee a spot in your group for the children of leaders.

Ideally, each section should have at least two unrelated leaders. If a section has only one leader, you will need to meet in tandem with another section and remain within sight and sound of another leader at all times to meet two-deep leadership requirements. As your group grows, you may find you need additional leaders to accommodate more scouts. Ideally, you ratio should be at least 4:1 for Otters and 6:1 for Timberwolves. Pathfinders are more independent but you still need two Troop Leaders to oversee youth patrols.

Background Checks

All Rover Scouts (adult leaders) and volunteers working with youth within OSG are subject to a criminal history check through the national office upon registration, and every two years thereafter. Registering adults through the portal on the OSG website will initiate the records check and prompt an email to be sent to them to complete it. You may not substitute another records check for that of the national organization.

Should a leader fail a background check, the GSM will be contacted by the national secretary and coached through the specific situation, then advised how to proceed.

A Note on Leaders from Other Organizations

Leaders who have been involved with other organizations can be a wonderful resource–they often have a wealth of skills and knowledge that they can pass on, and a genuine commitment to scouting. That said, there are a couple of pitfalls to watch out for.

Those who are coming to OSG from other scouting groups may be very excited about new opportunities, but they may also be a little sad about “losing” time that they have invested in other programs. Regardless of where they are coming from, it's important to ensure that they are invested in the program we offer, not seeking to make it more like the program they are coming from.

Leaders coming from a military background may be drawn to some of the methods of scouting (such as the uniform or patrol method), but may struggle with our all-volunteer nature. It's important to give grace and to remember that scouting is at its heart a game that cannot be taken too seriously.

Recruiting Scout Families

There are several ways to get the word out about your group:

Social Media

Focus on the social media platforms that are most likely to reach parents of school-aged kids (or near school-aged kids). This can be a shifting landscape. Consistency of posting is key for engagement.

- **Facebook** is a good place to have a presence. You should set up a public page for your group. Generally groups have selected “community organization” as the group type. At some point, you may also opt to have a private Facebook group for your members.
- **Instagram** can be linked to your Facebook page and you can update both together since they are both owned by Meta.
- **YouTube** is useful if you will be posting any video content.
- **X (formerly Twitter)** is becoming less common these days, as it has lost much of its user base, but you still may opt to get the appropriate handle there.
- **Discord** is popular among younger users and may provide a good platform for interacting with your members. Keep in mind that you must maintain two deep leadership practices in electronic communications.

Word of Mouth

Word of mouth is often the easiest way for families to find out about your group. That said, if everyone joining your group joins because they already know someone in your group, it may limit your diversity. Doing outreach to communities that may not otherwise find out about your group is a good way to counteract this.

Public Events and Tabling

Parades, back to school nights, and community events can be great advertising opportunities for OSG groups. Plan ahead and know that you will need to recruit volunteers to be there and answer questions. You can also have handouts: brochures, business cards, flyers, etc.

Advertising in Local Newsletters

Sending information to local schools or taking out a small ad in a neighborhood newsletter may be another way to get the word out about your group.

Open House/Field Day Events

When you are recruiting, having an event that people can attend to check you out is a great way to introduce people to what OSG is all about. If there are multiple groups in your area, consider working together to pool resources and plan a larger event than you could put on individually.

Local Media

If you are setting up a group in an area that has not had an OSG presence before, there may be some media attention around the organization. There has been a tendency among reporters to categorize OSG as an “alternative to BSA”. Rather than focus on what we don't do (exclude anyone), try to put the focus on what we DO do: offer scouting opportunities for everybody!

That said, media coverage can be an excellent way to get the word out about your group. If you decide to engage media inquiries, make sure the focus is on outdoor skills and service to community and refrain from commenting about other organizations. Remember that a scout is a friend to all and a sibling to every other scout!

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