



Jumpstart to GROWTH

Launching a New Scouting Group

With more than 100,000 Scouts, youth and adults, boys and girls, across the nation, Canada's largest youth organization is looking to bring Scouting alive in every community. And this can happen with just a little bit of effort and drive.

Scouts Canada's programs greatly enrich the lives of youth and volunteer members while greatly enhancing the fabric of their community. This step-by-step guide to launching a New Scout Group is designed to make it easy to bring these programs alive in any neighbourhood. It will help identify the steps to take in developing a New Group Launch Plan, which will increase the chances of a successful journey into community development. Scouts Canada supports such efforts with countless, easy-to-use resources and experts.

Once the journey begins, it won't take long to see youth learning, having fun and taking part in their community as responsible citizens.

IT STARTS WITH SCOUTS, but it also starts with You – The "Scouting Advocate"

A Scouting Advocate is the local face for Scouts Canada and will work closely with Scouts Canada professionals in opening the New Scouting Group. The Advocate is an individual who is passionate about forming a new Scout Group and can lead others with a can-do attitude. The Advocate must be prepared to represent the "[Mission, Principles and Method](#)" of Scouts Canada in such a way that will enhance Scouts Canada's success in the community.

Ideally an Advocate is anyone who has a positive community profile, can yield influence and move people to action. They may demonstrate these attributes in their professional or community service life. Often they already have an affinity for Scouting and chances are the Scouting Advocate is someone like you!

When a potential Scouting Advocate has been identified, a Scouts Canada professional will meet with them to discuss their role and the process by which a New Scout Group will be established. Making contact with a Scouts Canada professional is as simple as sending an e-mail to: helpcentre@scouts.ca.

The Advocate will be screened and registered so that they can represent Scouts Canada locally. The Advocate will want to review the "[New Scouter Welcome Kit](#)" and the "[Jumpstart to Growth](#)" resources. These easy-to-use resources represent Scouts Canada in a professional and polished manner.

The Scouting Advocate and the Scouts Canada professional will begin by establishing a "[Group Launch Plan](#)". In order to be successful it is important that Scouts Canada support the Advocate at every step.

THE GROUP LAUNCH PLAN

The steps in developing a Group Launch Plan include:

1. Develop a Community Profile
2. Establish a Group Sponsor
3. Find a facility/meeting location
4. Recruit an "Advocate Team" and volunteers
5. Plan a successful program
6. Market and advertise to recruit youth
7. Launch the New Scouting Group

All these elements are sequenced in such a way as to create momentum and to ensure the launch date comes off without difficulty. A planned approach, using this process and using all the resources available will ensure both rewarding and fulfilling experience for all.

1. Develop a Community Profile

A good Community Profile will provide the following information: emerging neighbourhoods (schools, houses), available Scouting-aged youth, population stability, teen population and other youth programs available. Creating this profile will help: 1) provide the data to support the need to establish a Scout Group 2) ensure that the New Group Plan focuses on the target market.

The basic demographic required is the number of youth in the various age brackets available. There are few different ways to establish this:

- Ask the School Board office for their current and projected enrolment figures. Striking up a conversation with a keen contact at the office may provide some useful information.
- A municipal planning office will also provide a great deal of information with regard to future housing developments.
- Statistics Canada has some great information available online, but it does take some time to navigate through the various sources of data. A good reference point is the most recent edition of the province and city data, published by Statistics Canada's Directory of Statistics. This research will give you the most recent census data on the target area.
- Other youth serving organizations are usually open to share information. It is always a good idea to ask for their perspective on the community need.

Understanding the socio-economic make-up of the target area will be important inasmuch as membership fee structure, required fundraising and potential volunteer recruitment. If required, a Scouts Canada professional will be able to assist in the collection and interpretation of this data.

Getting feedback from local families is a very important step in rooting a Scout Group in a targeted area. Using an online tool like *Survey Monkey* is a quick way to find out if the climate is right. The ["Using Survey Monkey to confirm Community Need"](#) document provides step-by-step basic instructions on setting up and using this on-line resource. Note that the tool will need to be fed with up to 100 e-mail addresses of local families and getting them will require some relationship building. It is highly unlikely that another organization will share their list, but they may be willing to broadcast the Scouts Canada survey link to their association member families. Using this form of information gathering ensures it is not being filtered by third parties, while also creating a buzz about the potential arrival of Scouting in the area.

Almost every community is able to support a Scout Group, but each has their own challenges. Knowing and addressing those challenges before rooting gets underway will help ensure success.

2. Establish a Group Sponsor

A great deal of synergy is created when Scouts Canada joins resources with an established local association who have like-minded goals for providing youth with a great program. This "Sponsor" will provide a stable base to build on by providing initial support and a list of potential leaders, committee people and resource people to recruit from. The Sponsor might also provide meeting facilities for the New Scouting Group.

A Scout Group is formed when a local community organization enters into a partnership with Scouts Canada. These community Groups include, but are not limited to, religious institutions, service, fraternal, and civic clubs (e.g. Canadian Legion, Knights of Columbus, Elks, etc.), professional associations, businesses, military bases, public and private schools and home and school associations. These types of associations are a great place to start to find a Group Sponsor.

In many cases, people in the community already have a good idea of a potential Sponsor. If not, the first step is to locate a willing organization. This may take some time as such a decision will require board level deliberation. Each organization is different, but it is likely the following will need to be done:

1. Establish contact with the lead official from the organization. This may be the religious leader, president, or chair of the organization. The ["Sample Letter to Potential Sponsor"](#) can be used to help open the door. In addition, ["New Group Sponsor Brochure"](#) makes for a great leave behind information piece.
2. Have an initial meeting with the organization's lead official to further explain how Scouts Canada and their organization can join together to help serve the needs of youth in the community. The ["Scouting and Sponsors PowerPoint"](#) can be used for this presentation. This is where the Community Profile will help to provide insight as to the community need.
3. Next, set up a presentation with the association's board. There is a more detailed [PowerPoint](#) that picks up the critical elements of the booklet entitled ["In Partnership for Youth"](#).
4. Set up a follow-up meeting to confirm sponsorship by filling out and signing the Group Charter.

The Group Charter – The Agreement

The sponsoring organization completes and submits the application for a Group/Section Charter, which is then granted by the local Scouts Canada Council. By signing this document, the Sponsor and the New Scouting Group agree to be governed by the policies and procedures of Scouts Canada and are obligated to carry out its duties and fulfill its responsibilities. The Charter is renewed annually through a review process that includes the sponsor/partner representative, the Group Committee and representatives of the next senior council.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See the ["Jumpstart to Growth"](#) on creating and maintaining a great relationship with a Sponsor.

3. Find a Facility/ Meeting Location

To run a Scouts Canada program, your Group will need a meeting location to hold activities. Typically, Groups use school gymnasiums, church halls or community centers for their weekly meetings. For a Beaver Scout colony, you will only need a half gym to conduct the weekly meetings. Cub Scouts and Scouts need more space for their operations because their program tends to be more active. A full gymnasium would be ideal for these two Sections. You will also need storage space for equipment and supplies.

4. Recruit "Advocate Team" Members and Volunteers (Group Commissioners, Committee and Leaders)

The implementation of the Scouting program and the administrative support for this program are almost exclusively the responsibility of the volunteers, so it's essential to start this important task as soon as possible. A valuable tool to use when recruiting volunteers is the ["New Scouter Welcome Kit"](#).

Group Committee

Normally, a Scout Group has a Group Committee that is comprised of at least three people: Chairperson, Treasurer and Secretary, plus the head leader of each Section (the Group may also decide to fill such positions as Vice-Chair and Quartermaster). The Sponsor will help Scouts Canada recruit people to these key positions. In many cases, they will know of individuals within their own organization who would be willing to get involved. It's important that the Sponsor take an active role in this process as they are recruiting from their community for their community.

Once the potential Group Committee members are located, the next step is to follow the screening process. Every new adult member of Scouts Canada must be interviewed and have his or her references verified. They must also provide a clean police records check. The Area Service Team or Field Staff will assist in this process.

Once the Group committee is in place, they will be instrumental in starting the Group. Initially the new Group committee will:

- Decide which Sections to open in consultation with the Sponsor.
- Help recruit Section leadership.
- Decide, along with the new leaders and Sponsor, when the Sections will meet.
- Help the new leaders get their program materials, uniforms, etc.
- Determine the membership fee.

Leaders

The majority of leaders within Scouts Canada are parents of youth members. So reaching out to parents who have expressed interest in getting their children involved is a good place to start. Another effective way to locate interested leaders is through information nights held by the Sponsor and Group Committee. Field Staff and/or the Area Service Team can also do presentations in local schools to promote the Group.

Once the leaders are located, the next step is to follow the screening process for each one as outlined above. Once the leaders are approved, the Group Committee will work with the Area Council to offer training to the new members. A general orientation should be held as soon as possible, with the leaders being encouraged to take subsequent training in the near future.

At these sessions provide program materials such as pamphlets, posters, catalogues and Jumpstart to Group program resources where applicable. These will explain the program and provide a better idea of the commitment that the volunteer is taking on.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

See the ["Jumpstart for Growth"](#) on Recruiting Volunteers.

5. Plan a Successful Program

If the leadership team is in place, the next step is to plan the program. The Area Service Team should be very involved at this point. They will help the leaders prepare the first few months of programming. Use program support materials such as ["Jumpstart to Growth"](#) and the ["Prepared Programming"](#) (it is also available at the Scout Shop) to help build the program.

It's recommended that a start-up meeting be held with the leaders, Group Committee, Sponsor representative and Area Service Team to prepare for the program. The focus of the meeting should be to:

- Plan at least the first three months of the Group's operation. List all supplies required for the meetings.
- Create a calendar of planned meetings. Note the dates of special events like Scout-Guide Week, holiday celebrations, camps, etc.
- Prepare a Group budget. Include revenue items (e.g. registration fees, fundraising proceeds and donations) and expenses (e.g. council registration payments, uniforms, supplies, etc.).
- Decide what type of fundraising your Group will take part in. Make note of special Scouts Canada fundraising programs such as Scout Popcorn. Include dates for these programs in your calendar.
- Open a Group bank account. The account should be under "Scouts Canada" along with your Group name and number. Three people from the Group committee must have signing authority on behalf of the Group (usually the chair, the treasurer and one other).

Obviously, the Group won't accomplish everything in one meeting, but it is important to start these processes. Dividing up the tasks is important. These responsibilities should not fall to just one or two people. Teamwork is essential.

It is also a good idea to plan on visiting other Groups in your area, if possible, to see how they operate. This can be very helpful in the planning and execution of a Group's program.

6. Market & Advertise to Recruit Youth

Once all the other pieces are in place it is time to recruit youth members!

Understanding where youth “hang out” is likely the best place to start in determining what recruitment methods you should utilize. This could include schools, malls, community centres, libraries, cultural/religious institutions, parks, clubs, etc.

Another consideration is that the younger the youth, the more involved the parents are in deciding the activities for their child(ren). Understanding where the parents can be accessed is extremely important in helping to determine what recruitment methods should be used. In addition to the above, areas to consider attracting parents include: work, special events at schools, festivals and the internet.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

There are a number of Jumpstart to Growth programs with ideas and examples on how to recruit youth including [“Jumpstart to Growth – Retaining and Recruiting Youth”](#), [“Jumpstart to Growth – How to Host an Open House”](#) and [“Jumpstart to Growth – How to Run a Bring-A-Friend Event”](#).

7. Launch the New Scouting Group

You made it! You have found your Sponsor, formed a Group Committee, recruited leaders and planned your program. Now it’s time to welcome your youth members.

The most common way is to hold a “Fun Night” or “Registration Night.” This date has been advertised through the various promoting venues your Group has used. Be prepared to handle a large number of youth and parents, all with lots of questions.

Your leaders should be prepared to do some activities with the youth while the Group Committee members speak with parents. Make it fun, energetic and engaging. Have information sheets prepared to hand out to the parents with the details of the Group (i.e. dates and times of meetings, costs, uniform info, etc.). Bring application forms for the youth and be prepared to accept money from the parents.

The Scouting program will attract youth. However, the program will not work without the support and commitment of parents. One of the first steps in stimulating a new Group is to meet with and excite the parents. Many of the leaders and Group committee people will come from the ranks of parents and their excitement may mark the success or failure of the Group. In any case, the parents should receive an introduction to Scouting so that they understand the program and can assist their children with their activities.

Remember, every member of the Group must be registered, including youth, leaders and Group committee members. Your Council office will help facilitate this. For more information see the [“Jumpstart to Growth – How to Run a Registration Event”](#).

Conclusion

There is always an opportunity to open a New Scouting Group and Section in your community. Taking advantage of these resource tools and information can help anyone open a New Scouting Group as well as provide the support needed to make the endeavour successful for the betterment of the community.

To contact your local council office call:
1-888-SCOUTS-NOW.