



It starts with Scouts.

# Scouts Canada Volunteer Support Strategy Framework

Scouting in Canada promises youth, parents, and the community at large that “It Starts with Scouts”. Scouts aims to provide youth with opportunities to experience new things and to develop into capable and well-rounded individuals – Scouts is truly the start of something great! Delivering on the brand promise to more Canadian youth than ever before ultimately requires an unwavering commitment to volunteer support. To achieve our mission and our growth goals, we must stay true to our internal mantra “It starts with Scouters”.

## Why Volunteer Support is Key

Competent and confident leadership is the cornerstone of a high quality and successful youth program that will enable Scouts Canada to attract and retain more members, volunteer and youth alike.

- Consistent, high quality youth programming is required to attract and retain youth members
- Competent and confident section leadership is the key enabler of consistent, high quality program
- Engaged and effective section leadership teams improve Scouts Canada’s ability to attract and retain volunteers
- Competent and confident leadership is attained through effective volunteer support

Clear commitment to and understanding of the brand promise is key to building and retaining an engaged cadre of volunteers. Scouts Canada must maintain a singular focus on supporting all Scouters so that they ultimately possess the knowledge, sense of commitment, and enthusiasm they need to thrive.

## Vision for Volunteers

Scouts Canada’s volunteer support activities are undertaken with the aim of achieving its overall volunteer vision:

- Quality section programming is the primary objective of all volunteers: volunteers know what a quality program “looks like” and confidently deliver on the brand promise
- Section volunteers understand the Scouting Method, and they are mentors and coaches for youth
- Volunteers feel empowered, a sense of belonging, and a commitment to the Scouting Mission
- Volunteers believe that participation in Scouting has value for them as individuals and that they can contribute to Scouting from Day 1

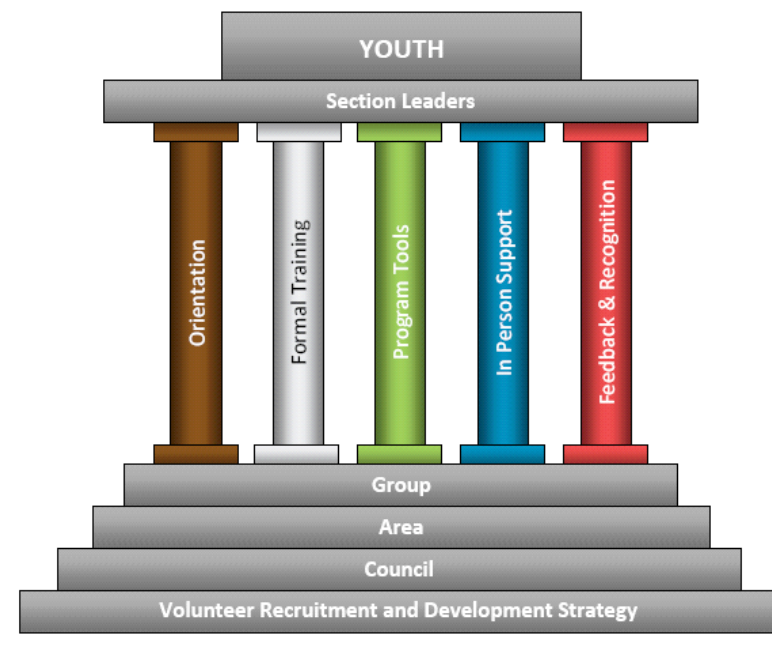


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- Volunteers are not in this alone: there are other volunteers willing and able to support them to achieve success
- Volunteers derive value from developmental experiences attended
- All volunteers receive the feedback necessary to help them grow

## Five Pillar Approach to Volunteer Support

Achieving the volunteer vision requires a holistic and sustained approach to volunteer engagement and support. Volunteer performance and engagement are underpinned by five key pillars: orientation, program tools, formal training, in person support, and feedback & recognition. The activity undertaken to deliver on these five pillars must be the primary focus of all Support Scouters and employees. Specific attention must be paid to successful initiation and support of new volunteers such that their first experiences as members are positive and fulfilling.



Each of the five pillars is comprised of key support activities and behaviours alongside associated standards and tools. These standards and tools are maintained as part of the Volunteer Support Toolkit ([www.scouts.ca/vstk](http://www.scouts.ca/vstk)).

The aim of each of the five pillars is summarized below.



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### Orientation

- Each new volunteer is appropriately screened and provided with an orientation to Scouting that is facilitated by the New Scouter Welcome Kit (NSWK). The aim of the orientation is to:
  1. Welcome the volunteer and set him/her up for success
  2. Provide a clear understanding of the brand promise and how it relates to program
  3. Clarify expectations, program goals and standards
  4. Outline the overall volunteer support strategy and approach
  5. Outline local support and opportunities for training

### Program Tools

- Each volunteer is aware of and has access to the key program resources that enable him/her to plan and execute high quality programs that are aligned with Scouts Canada's standards. Each volunteer believes that these tools add value and contribute to his/her effectiveness as a volunteer.
- Examples of these resources include:
  1. Program Leader Handbooks in both electronic and paper formats
  2. Section specific Jumpstarts (ie prepared programming)
  3. Program planning aids including the prepared programming calendar and Scouter Wiki
  4. Scouts Canada program standards and accompanying Quality Section Award

### Formal Training

- Each volunteer has access to relevant and high quality training opportunities that assist him/her in developing the knowledge, skills, and attitude required to function effectively as a Scouts Canada volunteer. Each volunteer understands the benefits of available training and derives value from training attended.
  - Scouts Canada directly manages content and delivery of training including Wood Badge I and Wood Badge II (program planning and delivery courses) and Outdoor skills courses.
  - It is equally important for Scouting volunteers to engage in other personal development activities that improve their capacity; these would include accreditation from other agencies (e.g. First Aid, Recreational Canoeing) as well as participation in specific skills workshops.

### In Person Support

- Each volunteer receives the personal, face-to-face support required for him/her to thrive. This support can take many forms and be provided by a variety of individuals including Section Scouters, Group Commissioners, Service Team members, and Council staff. The focus of in person support is to assist volunteers in planning for success and identifying skills and resources that would help to increase the capacity of their leadership team with the aim of enhancing overall program quality. Modelling the key elements of the brand promise is of paramount importance. In Person Support is further defined by:
  1. A desire to lead by example and support shared leadership
  2. Minimum servicing standards
  3. Tools to support effective volunteer support by Group and Area Commissioners



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### Feedback & Recognition

- Each volunteer receives relevant and timely feedback and recognition for his/her contributions to Scouting. Each and every volunteer feels appreciated and understands how his/her individual performance relates to the overall goals of the organization. Effective feedback and recognition is supported by the following:
  1. Ongoing feedback in the form of coaching and mentoring by Support Scouters and Commissioners
  2. Frequent informal recognition of contributions
  3. Formal Scouts Canada recognition programs: Milestone Recognition for years of service and Outstanding Service Recognition for quality of service
  4. Assessment of results against overall program and organizational objectives

### Desired Outcomes

Implementation of the Volunteer Support Strategy will be measured and tracked with the aim of achieving the following outcomes by 2014:

1. 75% of new volunteers are recruited and registered by August 31 in prior Scouting year
2. Orientation and NSWK provided to all new volunteers within 2 weeks of accepting volunteer role
3. 100% volunteers trained with Wood Badge I for their primary role
4. Training quality is measured at each Scouts Canada accredited course; 60% of participants strongly agree with core quality statements
5. 80% of sections achieve the Quality Section Award
6. Each Section, Group and Area receives three service visits annually
7. Each volunteer receives personal feedback 3 times annually
8. 20% of volunteers receive Scouts Canada recognition for outstanding service annually
9. Each Group Committee has a minimum of 3 non Section Scouters to support Group activities (e.g. registration, fundraising, financial & HR planning)

### From Strategy to Action

The primary role of all support Scouters and staff members is to facilitate the delivery of high quality programs. This requires focus on appointing the right people to the right roles, ensuring that volunteers receive clear and meaningful orientations, and seeing to it that experienced Scouters are in place and willing to provide regular coaching accompanied by meaningful recognition.

With a constant and steady commitment to our volunteers, the number of youth reached by Scouting will increase. The quality of their experiences will improve. Our ability to shape the leaders of tomorrow will grow.