



Executive Summary: Accelerated Scouter Onboarding

Project Name	Accelerated Scouter Onboarding
Project Date	July 15 th , 2024 – December 4 th , 2024
Writer of Summary	Name: Mariko Zamani <i>This report is written at the direction of Eric Schmitt, Director, Scouting Experience, with information and feedback from the Pilot/Initiative Champion. It is the place of the writer of this report to document and share lessons learned, including feedback and reflection on how our organization supports volunteers to be leading in solution-oriented and innovative thinking.</i>
Overview	Accelerated Scouter Onboarding Phases 1 & 2 Phase 1 of the Accelerated Scouter Onboarding pilot was launched in January 2024 with Saskatchewan Council in effort to address the amounting challenges with losing brand new Scouters to the lengthy Scouter onboarding process, as well as the challenges with ever-growing youth wait lists. After demonstrated consistent success during Phase 1 of the pilot, Phase 2 was launched in May of 2024 with New Brunswick and Greater Toronto Councils who adapted the original pilot to suit each individual Council. Accelerated Scouter Onboarding Phase 3 Wanting to test this successful initiative on a wider scale, Phase 3 was initiated in mid-July of 2024, with a Project Team formed including Champions from Phases 1 & 2 of the pilot and inviting 6 additional Councils experiencing similar challenges to join. The 9 invited Councils included in the Project Team were: Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Greater Toronto, Central Escarpment, Battlefields, Shining Waters, Northern Ontario, White Pine (who dropped out 2 weeks prior to launch due to pre-marketed New Scouter Council onboarding incentive program efforts and conflict of interest) and Fraser Valley Council (who dropped out 3 weeks after launch due to the requirement of RIS as a non-negotiable screening element). This Project team of 14 met weekly and triweekly from July-December to review and scrutinize Phases 1 & 2 of the pilot to align with Safe Scouting requirements, and make adjustments to ensure future success with launching in different Councils across Canada. 2 Virtual Sessions to engage all key Staff and Volunteers about the pilot and solicit feedback were made available, and 3 sessions with Functional Teams (GSC, Programs, Western Region) were provided. Major adjustments made were: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respect in Sport was included as a part of the required completed training prior to new Onboarding Scouters being permitted on the floor (along with the original PRC/VSS, Code of Conduct, Interview and References).• New Onboarding Scouters did not increase Section capacity by 4 with “pending” Onboarding Scouters. Capacity increase occurred once the Onboarding Scouter was in full Active status in MyScouts.• Youth “free trial” meeting allowance was increased to up to 5 free meetings prior to registering to accommodate the Accelerated Scouter onboarding process.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identification in the form of lanyards and “Earning My Woggle” buttons were provided to new Onboarding Scouters once all “non-negotiables” were completed, and they were on the floor to identify them as an “Onboarding Scouter” to the Youth and Scouting families.A lanyard sized Onboarding Scouter Progress card was created as a visual map to show the training progress of each Onboarding Scouter.Each participating Council was granted up to \$500 to use to support their pilot. This amount was used towards pre-paid RIS codes, Thank You gifts, mail out costs for distanced Groups, and marketing materials such as postcards and QR codes.Welcome and engagement e-mails were re-worded and a wrap up survey was created and distributed to all participating Groups for feedback.
Successes	<p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Phase 3 of the pilot was successfully completed in 7 Councils (New Brunswick, Greater Toronto, Central Escarpment, Battlefields, Northern Ontario, Shining Waters & Saskatchewan).The Project Team attended 6 successful weekly planning meetings leading up to the launch, and 3 (triweekly) check in meetings once the pilot launched. They had a final pilot wrap up review meeting on Dec 4th, 2024 (after the pilot ended on Nov 30th, 2024)Earliest onboarded Scouters to active status in 2-6 days (where there was no PRC/VSS wait time barrier).New Scouters were more invested and better engaged with the onboarding process with the increase in direct support by Council, our hired INT/REF support person and frequent check ins due to the reporting timelines within the project. GCs were also ignited with the support.Increased momentum and engagement – onboarding Scouters were regularly and proactively completing their SF while waiting on their PRC/VSS to be approved so that they can receive CAP to active status as soon as it came in. In most casesThe visual identification lanyards and “Earning My Woggle” buttons worked well.Councils were excited to try a new approach to onboarding Scouters.With the accelerated onboarding of new Scouters to active status, a significant number of youths were able to register from wait lists.Discovering that Scouting Fundamentals are not a major barrier to the onboarding process. <p>Metrics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">228 Onboarding Scouters during the pilot (between Sept 1st, 2024 – Nov 30th, 2024)The pilot ended with 56 Onboarding Scouters on the floor and still working towards their Scouting Fundamentals with an average of 22 days to complete their non-negotiables and participate on the floor.The pilot ended with 87 Active Onboarding Scouters with an average of 37 days to get to Active status from the point of registration. The earliest onboarded Scouters moved to active status within 2-6 days (where there was no PRC/VSS wait-time barrier).354 youth from participating pilot Groups have come off the wait list and registered during the course of the pilot.



Challenges & Blockers	<p>General Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">PRC/VSS wait times, Respect in Sport, Registration Approvals (PRC/VSS & CAP approvals), insufficient Reference submissions, Groups delaying Interviews, and difficulties with Recruiting new Volunteers to participate were the biggest overall blockers to the pilot. <p>PRC/VSS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">PRC/VSS wait time was by far the primary barrier to new Onboarding Scouters being able to participate on the floor as achieve Active status quickly (as most were completing their SF while waiting for their PRC/VSS to come back approved to be able to be on the floor more quickly). At one point we had about 55 Onboarding Scouters who had completed everything (including SF) but were sitting on only a PRC/VSS delay (there has been a consistent back up and 6-week delay in Greater Toronto region).When approved PRC/VSSs were being submitted to Registration, there was sometimes a 2-week delay in having them be added into MyScouts. With manual prompting, the team was able to update the status of approved PRC/VSSs quickly. This step caused additional delays. <p>Respect in Sport:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The addition of Respect in Sport to the non-negotiable screening elements proved to cause delays in Scouters completing their preliminary requirements. This was the second biggest delay to Scouters onboarding quickly during the pilot. This addition (to the original pilot) was also the reason for an entire Council (FVC) dropping out of the pilot as there was pushback to being asked to complete RIS within 2 weeks.Some pilot Groups were experiencing glitches with completing their RIS but it not showing up as completed in MyScouts. Delays were cause with having to go back and forth with Help Centre to get this reflected correctly in MyScouts profiles.During the completion of the non-negotiable screening elements, there was a noticeable change in pace/delay in completing RIS due to the time commitment. While the pre-purchased codes helped in Councils who opted to spend their \$500 budget this way, average RIS completion times took triple and quadruple the time it took for Onboarding Scouters to complete the other required screening elements. <p>Interviews:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">While the added support of a hired staff member to help with specifically Interviews and Manual Reference Checks was appreciated and utilized in some Councils, it was noted by several participating Councils that Group Commissioners were actively rejecting the offer of (Council and hired staff) support to move the Interviews along, and showed a strong preference to keep the Interviews in-house and save them for the very end once all other screening and training (including Scouting Fundamentals) were completed. GCs were not willing to waste time on a new Scouter Interview until they could confirm that they were completely invested in becoming an Active Scouter. <p>References:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Throughout the pilot there were many instances of Scouters completing everything then not being granted Council Approval due to insufficient Reference requirements. This particularly impacted Onboarding Scouters who are new Canadians, are new to their



	<p>community, or had a change in family/relationship status causing them to find new communities to make connections with. One example of an Onboarding Scouter's message was captured:</p> <p><i>“Unfortunately, I’m not in touch with anyone from that time in my life...I moved twice since my time in service and haven’t been in contact with anyone for 5+ years (aside from family obviously). I wrote previously to another member of your staff who reached out and removed my application until I can meet the requirements.”</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• References were input with typos and mistakes which wasted both money and time, requiring a manual Reference Check follow up and inputting into MyScouts for approval. <p>New Onboarding Scouter Recruitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The recruitment of brand-new Scouters to onboard during the pilot proved to be a much greater challenge than anticipated by the Project Team who were very active with placing concerted efforts towards recruitment drives just prior to the launch of the pilot. This was a great disappointment for 4 of the 7 participating pilot Councils (Central Escarpment, Battlefields, Northern Ontario and Shining Waters) who had projected much higher numbers of participants in the pilot for their regions. <p>Pilot Duration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Councils and Group Commissioners alike noted that the 3-month run time of the pilot was too short a span of time as new Scouters were registering late into the launch (some during the final week of the pilot). Most Councils have opted to continue on with the pilot until the end of Dec 2024 to accelerate as many new onboarding Scouters registered during the pilot period to Active status. <p>Champion Holidays/Away Dates and External Council Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• One Council reported challenges/conflicts happening within the Council (external to the pilot) that impeded and affected the pilot progress greatly. There were notable delays in communication with Scouters and drop offs when pilot Champions were away on vacation and not providing Groups with direct support. In some cases, Champions returning from holidays saw little to no progress in Onboarding Scouters while they were away and unable to provide direct support.
Lessons Learned & Recommendations	<p>General Overview</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lessons learned have been predominantly about organization, tracking, preparedness from a process standpoint, and avoidable bumps in processes to reconsider. Recommendations of which steps can be adjusted to remove common barriers to the onboarding process. Additional overall lessons learned have been the discovery that this pilot was less about getting Scouters onboarded in an accelerated way, and more about how we are engaging Scouters in the first 3 weeks and through their onboarding progress.• PRC/VSS wait times, Respect in Sport, Registration Approvals (PRC/VSS & CAP approvals), insufficient Reference submissions, Groups delaying Interviews, and difficulties with Recruiting new Volunteers to participate were the biggest overall blockers to the pilot.• There is a general consensus that while the team was doing their best to accelerate onboarding through this project, they felt they were working around a system that is flawed and needing to be fixed and made more efficient for users. A new system that is more up to date



(technically, updating real time, utilizing AI, works on mobile devices, etc.) is imperative to organizational success, evolution and relevance.

- Lesson Learned: An overall resistance to surveys was noted by Scouters and Council representatives as a means for collecting data and feedback. This was also evident in comments discovered while combing through the Volunteer Satisfaction Survey. We may need to find alternative/creative new methods for gathering feedback after future pilots to maximize our learnings and findings directly from the source (in this case, the participants).
- Recommendations include: Scrutinizing the Council Approval process (CAP) to determine if it is a necessary step or a hindrance to acceleration of the Scouter onboarding process.

PRC/VSS

- The biggest lesson learned (during the pilot and from the post-pilot participant survey) was that delays in PRC/VSS returns and approvals were by far our biggest impediment to accelerated Scouter onboarding.
- Recommendations include:
 - Splitting the requirements of PRC and VSS to to eliminate being the thing that holds a new Scouter back.
 - Looking into ways to standardize the PRC/VSS process for our organization. BC uses the Ministry of Justice for a quicker and easier online process that is at no cost to the Volunteer/Group.
 - A process for Registration that moves urgent/time sensitive PRC/VSS submissions into a separate queue which is looked at and actioned by the team 1-2 times daily.

Respect in Sport:

- Lessons Learned: The addition of Respect in Sport to the non-negotiable screening elements proved to cause delays in Scouters completing their preliminary requirements even with the bonus of prepaid RIS codes. This was the second biggest delay to Scouters onboarding quickly during the pilot.
- Glitches with the system (showing up as not completed in MyScouts) caused additional avoidable delays.
- Recommendations include: A consideration of replacing Respect in Sport with an alternate training that is both more relevant (lesser focus on sexual abuse and having it as a section instead) and less costly to Groups and new Scouters. Also, one that offers a condensed refresher course for those needing to renew as opposed to the requirement to repeat the full course.

Interviews:

- Lessons Learned: The added support of a hired staff member to help with specifically Interviews and Manual Reference Checks was noted to be very helpful to the pilot Councils. It was noted that Group Commissioners strongly preferred to keep the Scouter Interviews in-house and save them as the final piece once all other screening and training (including Scouting Fundamentals) were completed. Interviews held were inconsistent, and in many cases lacking confidence by the interviewers.



- Recommendations include:
 - Standardizing the interview process to a National level (as the Girl Guides of Canada do)
 - Improving interview training (“Volunteer Screening: It’s Our Duty” is reported to be insufficient and leave Scouters lacking confidence in the interview process)
 - Updating the existing Interview Guide to scale it down to 30-45 mins and remove uncomfortable or outdated questions. Replacing the online presence of the existing guide with a new guide in a high traffic resource spot so that the outdated guide is no longer findable online.
 - Hiring a dedicated staff person per region to support Councils with requests for Interviews.

References:

- Lessons Learned: Scouters were not being granted Council Approval delaying their ability to Scout due to insufficient Reference requirements. This particularly impacted Onboarding Scouters who are new Canadians, are new to their community, or had a change in family/relationship status causing them to find new communities to make connections with. One example of an Onboarding Scouter’s message was captured:

“Unfortunately, I’m not in touch with anyone from that time in my life...I moved twice since my time in service and haven’t been in contact with anyone for 5+ years (aside from family obviously). I wrote previously to another member of your staff who reached out and removed my application until I can meet the requirements.”
- References were input with typos and mistakes which wasted both money and time, requiring a manual Reference Check follow up and time to input corrected references into MyScouts for approval.
- Recommendations include:
 - Removing the strict requirement for the applicant to provide “at least two references who have known the applicant for the past 5 years”.
 - Removing the strict requirement for the applicant to provide references that “may not be related by blood, adoption, or marital status (includes married, common law, separated or divorced) due to inherit bias.”
 - Hiring a dedicated staff person per region to support Councils with requests for Interviews and Manual Reference checks and corrections.
 - A consideration of using a more cost-efficient alternative to BackCheck. Finding a system that doesn’t allow for applicants to move forward with submitting their references if there are typos in e-mail addresses (don’t exist) or if the added references don’t meet the requirements. AI could be utilized. This would remove the step of the Registration team manually confirming if the passing references are sufficient to make the process more efficient.

Recruitment of New Onboarding Scouters:

- Lesson Learned: The pilot can only be successful if there are new Scouters to onboard.



Support as an Important Requirement:

- Lesson Learned (from both during the pilot and post-pilot participant survey): It is imperative to the pilot that there is a combination of strong external (Council) support and local Group Scouter support in order for new Scouters to remain engaged and be onboarded efficiently. Groups that had both strong local and Council support had the greatest success in onboarding their new Scouters most quickly (where PRC/VSS delays were not a factor). Providing support through a very broken-down onboarding process where the screening/training elements/steps are supported and achieved one piece at a time proved to work the best.
- Results from the post-pilot participant survey indicated that 60% of new Onboarding Scouters were better supported and more engaged than usual with the onboarding process during the pilot.
- Comments from the post-pilot participant survey indicated that being mentored on the floor sooner was a major motivator for the new Onboarding Scouters and increased their engagement in both completing their screening/training and their in-person participation significantly.

Pilot Duration

- Lessons Learned: A 3-month run time of the pilot is too short to have Scouters recruited, registered and moved to Active status without the pilot continuing on to allow for full onboarding completion for all Onboarding Scouters. Upwards of 6-week delays in PRC/VSS approvals greatly impacted the acceleration process as this held Scouters back from participating on the floor quickly.
- Recommendations include: A strong requirement of consistent dedicated support and hand holding at all levels, from staff management to Council Teams to Group Commissioners to the Onboarding Scouters. This alone (despite the major PRC/VSS delays, time required for RIS and delays in MyScouts approvals) kept new Onboarding Scouters engaged and not quitting the process. Very few Onboarding Scouters left during the onboarding process once registered (average of 6%)

Youth Wait Lists

- Lessons Learned: 61% of Groups who responded to the post-pilot participant survey reported that they didn't have a youth wait list (or any youth wait list concerns/urgencies prior to or during the pilot). However, it was reported by 72% of survey participants that the increase in new Scouters through the pilot has significantly helped them to manage their Section's capacity stressors, and in a couple of cases, re-open entire closed or closing Sections. Here are two meaningful Scouter quotes from the survey:
 - *"We did not have a wait list. However, more Scouters have allowed us to ensure that we can meet ratio each week. We have Scouters that can only make a certain number of meetings due to work. Having more Scouters means us not having to cancel meetings. So, it allows us to maintain the current numbers we have."*
 - *"Beaver Section was at risk of closing – we have now opened it back up for 2025 registrations – 5 so far registered, I'm sure more to come."*



	<p>How the Pilot Helps Participating Scouters Feel That Scouter Onboarding and Lack of Volunteers is No Longer Scouts Canada's most Urgent Concern to Focus On:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lessons Learned: A question was asked in relation to the most recent Volunteer Satisfaction Survey (Summer 2024) results where 25% of participants indicated that this was the biggest issue/concern in Scouting. Upon completion of this pilot, only 14% of participants indicated that Scouter Onboarding and Lack of Volunteers was the most pressing issue/concern in Scouting. It was indicated that the most pressing perceived issues are a lack of Scouter Recognition, a lack of In-Person Networking/Training opportunities, and the Jan-De Registration Year. <p>Champion Holidays/Away Dates and External Council Conflict</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Lesson Learned: Dedicated support and a healthy Council foundation is vital to the success of Group growth.Recommendations include: Providing specialized support for Councils who are experiencing interpersonal conflicts that detract from a healthy and cohesive support team and progressive Council growth and development mindset. A full, functioning and competent team is required to ensure pieces can be picked up easily when key Council support members are away, on leave or needing to deal with conflict.
<p>Budget (This will be used on the dashboard to understand "Budget".)</p>	<p>The Accelerated Scouter Onboarding Pilot Project was able to successfully stay within budget due to everything being planned out in detail for 2-months leading up to the pilot launch and no major financial surprises/required pivots surfacing throughout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Project was granted a total budget of \$10,000 in June upon approval of the Project Charter. Expenditures included:<ul style="list-style-type: none">A term-staff hired from Sept 9th-Nov 30th, 2024, to support all pilot Councils with the specialized tasks of helping with Group Interviews and Manual Reference Checks = \$3,504.00Participant Visual ID Lanyards & Tags with "Earning my Woggle" Buttons + Tax & Shipping (500 ct) = \$661.81A budget of \$500 (at total of \$4k budgeted) was granted to each (8 at the time including FVC) participating pilot Council to support their specific Council needs to make their pilot a success (money spent was used on RIS Prepaid Codes, Promo Materials such a Post Cards & QR Codes, the Cost of Physical Mailouts for Distanced Groups of Visual ID tags and buttons and promo materials, and GC Thank You Gifts depending on the Council = \$2,549.50.None of the \$2K Pilot Contingency Reserve Fund was used. <p>The Total Amount Spent was: \$6,715.31 <i>(A total of \$3,284.69 under budget)</i></p>
<p>Future Plans (This will be used on the dashboard to understand "Budget".)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Based on the post-pilot participant survey results, 84% of participants indicated that the Accelerated Scouter Onboarding (getting Scouters to be mentored on the floor in real time sooner while working on their Scouting Fundamentals) is an initiative that they would want to, and feel would be sustainable to continue doing due to the provided support and early team building, the dedicated



	<p>support/engagement to new Scouters being a critical piece to them feeling their time commitment to Scouting is worthwhile, and minimizing the intimidation factor associated with new Scouters needing to complete all screening/training prior to stepping foot on the floor and getting to participate with their registered child.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Regarding Scouter participants' resistance to Surveys as a means for collecting data and feedback, we may need to find alternative/creative new methods for gathering feedback upon the completion of future pilots to be able to maximize our learnings and findings directly from the source (in this case, the participants). Opportunities for virtual feedback calls/sessions may be explored.• Question raised: "Who will be taking this initiative on now that the pilot has ended?" Response: "Keep going with what is working and what is making our volunteers lives easier. We will need to put more thought around how we proceed from here."• Recommendations from Executive Summary (including results from Pilot Review and Participant Survey results) are considered, and those that are feasible and manageable to make adjustments to are put into action.