



Help develop well-rounded youth, better prepared for success in the world.

General Volunteer Recruitment & Conversation Guide

About This Guide

As a Group Commissioner or Scouter opening a new Section, your leadership is key to expanding Scouting opportunities in your community. This guide is designed to support you in building a strong volunteer team from the ground up.

Scouting in Canada depends on volunteers. Without trained and screened Scouters, we can't open new Sections, reduce waitlists, or deliver the safe, adventurous programs that help youth grow into capable, confident leaders.

This guide provides practical tools and conversation strategies to help you:

- Recruit new volunteers at open houses, meetings, and community events
- Engage current families and community members
- Build a sustainable team to support long-term Section success

Whether you're speaking with a parent, a former Scout, or a community-minded adult, in this resource you will find conversation starters, benefits to highlight, common hesitations, and follow-up strategies.

Why Volunteers Are Essential to Growth

Volunteers are the foundation of every successful Scouting program. As a Scouter, your ability to recruit and retain new Scouters directly impacts:

- The number of youths you can serve
- The quality and safety of your program
- The sustainability of your Section

Scouters are more than just supervisors—they are mentors, role models, and facilitators of adventure. They:

- Lead games, activities, and outdoor experiences
- Support youth in developing leadership and life skills
- Plan and deliver weekly meetings, camps, and events
- Handle logistics like registration, fundraising, equipment, and badge tracking



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Volunteer Roles can include:

- Section Scouter (weekly program delivery)
- Activity Lead (e.g., hikes, badge work, theme nights)
- Admin Support (registration, communication, quartermaster)
- Occasional Helper (events, camps, etc.)

No experience is required. Scouts Canada provides training, resources, and a team-based approach to help every volunteer succeed.

Important: Volunteers do not need to be parents. Some of our most dedicated Scouters are students, retirees, alumni, and community members who simply believe in the power of youth development.

Engaging Parents at Open Houses (Waitlisted Families)

Goal: Help families understand that volunteering is the key to opening new spots for youth, including their own child—and that it's a rewarding and flexible way to be involved in their child's experience.

Conversation Starters:

- "Thanks for coming - interest in Scouting has been incredible this year!"
- "We have youth on waitlists, and the only thing stopping us from opening more spots is finding the right kind of volunteers who are open to learning and helping."
- "Have you ever thought about volunteering? That's how many of our Scouters got started—just like you."

Benefits to Highlight:

For the parent or guardian:

- Help open a space for their child and others
- Spend meaningful, active time together especially in nature
- Build friendships and community connections
- Learn leadership, planning, and outdoor skills
- Flexible roles—can be shared with a partner or friend

For their child:

- See their parent involved in something meaningful and learning and growing together
- Create shared memories through Scouting adventures
- Feel proud of their parent's contributions, support and involvement



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Common Concerns & Responses:

- “I don’t have any experience with Scouting.”
That’s totally okay—most of us started the same way. Scouts Canada provides great training, and you’ll always be part of a team. You won’t be doing this alone.
- “I’m already stretched thin with work and family.”
We understand. That’s why we offer flexible roles. Even helping once or twice a month or supporting behind the scenes can make a big impact.
- “I’m not sure I’d be good at it.”
You’d be surprised! Whether it’s organizing, storytelling, hiking, or just being a steady presence, there’s a role for everyone. We’ll help you find the right fit.
- “I’d rather just help occasionally at events.”
That’s a great start, and we appreciate all help. But to open new spots for youth, we need consistent volunteers. Even a small, regular commitment helps us grow.

Next Steps:

- Invite them to consider a Scouter role
- Collect their contact information and interests in volunteering
- Offer to send them new volunteer onboarding screening and training details
- Invite them to an info session or to audit/observe a meeting prior to registering
- Suggest sharing a role with a friend or family member

Simple Ask:

“Would you be open to volunteering with our Group? I’d love to get your contact info and walk you through the next steps.”

Activating Current Parents (Already in the Program)

Goal: Encourage parents already involved in the program to take on a small role that matches their interests—then guide them toward becoming a consistent Scouter.

Conversation Starters:

- “You’ve been such a great supporter—have you thought about volunteering more formally?”
- “We’ve got a few activities coming up. Would you be able to help with one?”
- “If you enjoy it, we’d love to have you join the Scouter team!”



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Benefits to Highlight:

For them:

- Try it out with one activity
- Spend quality time with their child
- Build friendships and community connections
- Learn new skills and grow confidence
- Flexible involvement—do what works for them
- Can volunteer with a friend or family member

For their child:

- See their parent leading and participating
- Create shared memories through Scouting

Easy Ways to Get Involved:

- Lead a game or badge activity
- Help plan a hike or camp
- Manage snacks, gear, or badge tracking
- Organize a theme night, fundraiser or weekend event
- Share a hobby or skill (e.g., cooking, knot-tying, photography)

Common Concerns & Responses:

- “I don’t think I can commit to something long-term.”
No problem—start with just one activity. If you enjoy it, we can talk about what might work for you going forward. There’s no pressure.
- “I’m not outdoorsy or super crafty.”
That’s totally fine. Scouting needs all kinds of skills—organizing, communicating, and helping with snacks or gear. You don’t need to be a wilderness expert to make a difference.
- “I’m already helping in other ways.”
And we really appreciate that! If you’re open to trying something new, even a small Scouter role can help us build a stronger team and offer more to the youth.
- “I’m nervous about leading a group.”
You won’t be doing it alone. We always work in teams, and new Scouters are paired with experienced ones. You’ll have support every step of the way.



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Next Steps:

- Invite them to help with a specific activity
- Let them know it's a first step
- Collect their contact info
- Pair them with an experienced Scouter
- Follow up after their involvement

Simple Ask:

"Would you be open to helping with our next hike or badge night? It's a great way to start—and if you enjoy it, we'd love to have you stay involved."

Strategies for Recruiting Volunteers

Recruiting Parents:

- Make personal and direct asks at meetings and events
- Host open houses or parent info nights
- Offer "try it once" opportunities
- Encourage family members to share tasks
- Recognize and thank volunteers regularly
- Share posts in school or community newsletters

Recruiting Non-Parents:

- Connect with college/university volunteer centres
- Reach out to alumni, Venturers, and Rovers
- Partner with outdoor or hobby clubs
- Approach businesses with volunteer programs
- Engage faith and cultural groups
- Tap into retiree and community networks
- Post in local Facebook groups and on bulletin boards

Pro Tip:

Always clarify: "You don't need to be a parent to volunteer with Scouts Canada—everyone is welcome."



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Quick Tips for Effective Recruitment

- Be warm, personal, and positive
- Share your own personal Scouting story—why you got involved and why you stayed
- Focus on the benefits and the adventure
- Start with small, skill-based asks
- Emphasize flexibility and teamwork
- Follow up quickly—interest fades quickly without it
- Celebrate every new volunteer—publicly and personally



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Printable Resource: Open House Volunteer Conversations Card

(Print double-sided)

Scouter's Guide: Talking to Prospective Parents & Volunteers

Thank you for helping introduce new volunteers to Scouting! Here's a quick guide for your conversations.

Key Messages:

- Make a difference in young lives through Scouting.
- No experience needed—just enthusiasm and a willingness to learn.
- Training & support provided to ensure confidence.
- Flexible roles available to fit any schedule.
- Meeting days & times will be decided on based on availability of all involved (Scouters, GC, families, and location).
- **A minimum of 4 volunteers are required to open each new section.**

Volunteer Screening Process:

1. Register on myScouts: Create an account and apply.
2. Interview: A conversation to ensure it's the right fit.
3. References: Provide 5 references (that aren't family) during registration.
4. Background Check: Required for safety. In person is the quickest.
5. Code of Conduct: Sign to commit to Scouts Canada's policies & procedures.
6. Training: Complete orientation and training.



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Common Questions & Responses:

What is Scouting?

A youth-led program teaching leadership, outdoor skills, and teamwork.

Who can volunteer?

Anyone 14+ with a desire to support youth.

What would I do as a volunteer?

- Lead activities
- Plan outdoor adventures
- Mentor and guide youth

How much time is required?

Flexible options—from a few hours to more regular involvement.

I don't have experience with kids—can I still volunteer?

Yes! We provide training and support.

How do I sign up?

An email will be sent after the Open House(s) with a link to Register on MyScouts

Tips for Engaging Parents & Volunteers:

- Share your story about why you volunteer.
- Highlight benefits for both youth and volunteers.
- Be approachable—keep the conversation relaxed and open.