



THE SCOUTING ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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Recommended Council Alumni Relations Committee Structure and Responsibilities

We're reaching out to find Scouting alumni in communities across America and inviting them to get involved in Scouting again. With millions of alumni—from former Scouts to the family members and volunteers who guided them on their journey through the program—the Scouting Alumni Association has tremendous potential for local councils. All reconnected alumni are potential volunteers, donors, and ambassadors for Scouting in the communities you serve.

Four Steps

There are four basic steps to building a council alumni plan:

1. **Reach Out.** To get alumni to reconnect with Scouting, first you have to find them. As you probably know, that can be quite an effort, but there will be tools available soon to aid your efforts.
2. **Reconnect.** To get Scouting alumni to become involved in your council, you must offer them easy mechanisms and incentives for doing so. An incentive can be an item, such as some sort of token, but it doesn't have to be. For some alumni, the ability to learn the latest about Scouting in their communities will be enough to incent them to reconnect.
3. **Manage Lists.** From a purely logistical standpoint, you have to track alumni who reconnect. Data management will be a key for long-term success.
4. **Build and Maintain Relationships.** So, you've found alumni, gotten them to sign up with the Scouting Alumni Association, and have the system to keep the conversation going. Now what? The sky is the limit! From forming alumni relations advisory boards to crafting e-newsletters, there are an unlimited number of creative ways you can empower these valuable new members of your council family. This will be a critical component of your plan. If people reconnect but don't feel a part of something, they will drop off.

Committee Responsibilities

Your council alumni relations committee will be responsible for creating your alumni outreach and engagement plan and subsequently putting it into motion. See the attached organization chart.

Recommended Committee Structure

To build and enact your plan, you will need a committee equipped to address the various elements needed to go through the four steps. We recommend a committee chair, along with two subcommittee chairs—one for outreach and one for engagement.

- Alumni Relations Committee Chair—The responsibility of the full committee chair will be to keep track of the big picture surrounding alumni engagement and serve as a liaison with the council board.
- Subcommittee on Alumni Outreach—The outreach subcommittee will be responsible for finding Scouting alumni and incenting them to join the Scouting Alumni Association. The subcommittee chair should stay in close contact with the engagement subcommittee chair to ensure that engagement opportunities (often an incentive to sign up) are properly communicated.
 - External promotion—The outreach subcommittee is responsible for getting the word out that Scouts are looking for their alumni. It must develop a grassroots outreach strategy that could include things such as profiling alumni in digital and traditional media, hanging posters, handing out reconnection cards, talking to friends, placing links on websites or Facebook pages, and advertising.
 - Third-party partnerships—The subcommittee will want to engage organizations that are likely to have Scouting alumni in their ranks to join the council in your search for Scouting alumni. This could include approaching civic organizations, local companies, and professional organizations.
 - Data management—Retrieving data collected when alumni sign up and keeping lists current for future communications around possible engagement opportunities will be a critical component of your ongoing efforts.
- Subcommittee on Alumni Engagement
 - Alumni communications—Keep alumni informed and interested in council activities. This could include an e-newsletter, emails, direct mail, and social networking opportunities within the reengaged alumni network.
 - Volunteer recruitment—One of the greatest opportunities of this program is its ability to find new Scouting volunteers—merit badge counselors, council board members, or even people to cook food or man a hospitality table at an event.
 - Alumni association/advisory board—Several organizations successfully engage alumni to help drive their organizational goals. An association, advisory board, or both could work on behalf of the council as a separate fundraising body or programming aid.
 - Events—Alumni events can, of course, include fundraising dinners and reunions. There are also opportunities to create days of service, alumni adventures (or family adventures for alumni) at local camps, daytime activities such as a geocaching trek, or training courses on modern-day Scouting skills.
 - Program integration—Some alumni engagement can be separate from what your council does already, but it doesn't all have to be. The committee should think of ways to integrate alumni into things your council does already. Invite them to help collect items during Scouting for Food. Organize an alumni pinewood derby to run before or after the Cub Scout derby. (Imagine the cars!) Latino alumni could aid your council with the Hispanic initiative. There are a lot of ways alumni can help you creatively extend existing programs.

Next Steps

Assign strong leaders and begin outreach. Remember, this is a recommended structure. As you move forward, you'll probably find that some roles can be combined, others may not work in your area, or you might find new roles entirely!

The National Office of Alumni Relations is here to support your efforts. Call Bill Steele at 972-580-2436 or write Bill.Steele@scouting.org with any comments or questions. Please also share your successes with us! We would love to pass them on to councils across the country.

