

Fall 2026 School Night for Scouting



Membership Coordinator Guidebook for Successful Fall Recruitment

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Fall 2026 School Night Recruitment

Cub Scout Recruitment Plan

A Guide to Successful Fall Recruitment

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Key Takeaways from 2025

1. Keep Scout Night simple, welcoming, and brief

School Night Recruitment should be focused on helping families say “yes” to Scouting. The meeting should last **no more than one hour**, with a goal of **30 minutes whenever possible**.

Families should leave knowing what Cub Scouts is, how to join, when the next meeting is, and who to contact if they have questions.

2. Every family should sign in

Even if a family is not ready to join that night, we need a clear way to follow up.

3. Be prepared to collect applications and payment

Families who are ready to join should be able to complete their youth application and payment at School Night. If a family needs assistance or a payment plan, Pack leadership should help connect them with available options before they leave.

4. Use prepared, welcoming speakers

The people leading School Night create the first impression of Scouting for new families.

5. Hold a New Parent Orientation within 7-10 days

Save the deeper details about calendars, dues, uniforms, fundraising, and leadership for a separate meeting.

6. Recruit leaders thoughtfully

Do not pressure parents into leadership roles during School Night. Use parent talent surveys and follow up individually with strong prospects.

7. Recruit at the school whenever possible

Families are more likely to attend when the event is held somewhere familiar and convenient.

8. Promote Early!

Lunch Scout Talks are scheduled for the same day; please have volunteers scheduled to assist with wristbands. Put signs up TWO weeks prior. Pass out flyers at Meet the Teacher and Open House events.

9. Make Recruitment an all-hands effort

Pack leaders, parents, commissioners, troop volunteers, and district support all play a role.

10. Plan a Second-Chance opportunity

Some families will miss the first School Night, so every Pack should have another fun, welcoming way for them to join. Suggestions include – Hotdog cookout, Smores Night, reserving the inflatable Archery or BB range (certified instructors required)

School Night Recruitment Quick Checklist

Use this page before, during, and immediately after your School Night Recruitment

Planning & Promotion	School Night Recruitment	Follow-Up & Onboarding
• Confirm school location, room, date, and start time • Confirm at least 5 adult volunteers for each School Night Recruitment • Assign roles: greeter, sign-in table, youth activity, speaker, and registration helper • Prepare Pack and Den calendars, dues information, and next meeting dates • Bring School Night resource bags provided by NWTC. • Prepare a simple youth activity with proper adult supervision • Follow up with families who signed in at Meet the Teacher or Open House • Make sure signs, flyers, and welcome materials are visible and ready. • Remind volunteers: this may be a family's first impression of Scouting • Smile, breathe, and keep it simple	• Have every family sign in using the QR code or a paper backup card. • Give each family a Recruitment Packet. • Keep the meeting short, simple, welcoming, and upbeat. • Explain what Cub Scouting is, when the Pack meets, what it costs, and how to join. • Share the Parent Orientation date, next Pack/Den meeting, and Fishing Derby details. • Help families complete youth applications and payments. • Invite interested adults to complete the Family Talent Survey and adult application. • Give fishing poles and coupon handbooks to paid new Scouts. • Keep group questions brief; answer individual questions afterward.	• Review applications for missing information or signatures before families leave. • Submit applications, payments, and paper backup cards to the council office the next business day. • Send a welcome email within 24–48 hours. • Follow up with interested families who did not join. • Assign new Scouts to dens by grade. • Contact potential parent leaders individually. • Hold Parent Orientation within 7–10 days. • Invite interested families to the Second Chance Recruitment Night. • Welcome new families at the next Pack activity. • Thank the school, volunteers, and Pack leadership.

School Night Goal: Help families feel welcome, collect good contact information, register families who are ready, and make sure every family knows the next step.

School Night is the invitation. Follow-up is what helps families belong.

Cub Scout Recruitment Summary Plan — Fall 2026

This plan is required for use by all Cub Scout Packs in their recruitment efforts for Fall 2026. It is derived from best practices in Cub Scout recruitment from successful Packs both locally and across the nation. It is also the plan that will be supported by the Northwest Texas Council, its professional staff, and each district's Commissioner and membership team. GIVE EVERY BOY AND GIRL A CHANCE!

Contact your District Executive (DE), Unit Commissioner (UC), or district membership volunteers to receive all (FREE) recruitment resources and needed materials highlighted in gray below – some are available tonight so pick them up before you leave!

School Scheduling / School Night Recruitment Flyers

- Fall 2026 School Night Recruitment date has been pre-arranged with the schools assigned to your unit.
- A roster of adult leaders, parents, Troop parents/leaders, and any other volunteers for the School Night Recruitment at each school must be received by your DE no later than August 7th.
 - a. Each unit must have no less than 5 adults helping with EACH of the School Night Recruitments for your unit.
 - b. The Cubmaster and Den Leaders (or their assistants) are expected to attend the recruitment. Substitutions due to scheduling are understandable; however, the substitute should be properly trained to help answer questions.
 - c. Rookie parents or leaders are great assets to help answer questions about what Cub Scouts do or help with the activities with the kids during the meeting!
 - d. Your DE and/or UC are happy to help you in the volunteer recruitment process if you are new to the process or are having trouble finding volunteers. Please contact them as soon as you realize you are having issues – **do NOT wait to ask for help!**
 - e. Each unit should have at least FIVE adults committed to each School Night Recruitment. If a unit is unable to provide enough support, the district membership team will work with the unit to determine the best plan for that school.
- School Recruitment Night fliers are to be delivered to schools 7-10 days before the recruitment event, so parents have advance notice. Please do not deliver the flyers earlier than 10 days before the event.
- Set out signs for School Night at school for no less than 2 weeks before the event. Please check on these signs periodically, especially after storms, to ensure they are still visible.

Scout Talks / Recruitment Materials

- School Night Recruitment fliers, signs, parent packets, activities, School Night Recruitment Coordinator packet, and new Scout incentive items will be available on August 7th.
- Scout Talks are already scheduled to take place on the day of School Night to get youth excited. Please provide names of people from the unit helping with putting wristbands on kids at lunch or doing the Scout Talk for your unit.

School Night Recruitment

- Have every family sign in using the QR Code. If needed, provide an individual paper interest card as a backup.
- School Night Recruitment event is at the school—no more than 1 hour long. See **School Night Recruitment Presentation Script**.
- Sell volunteerism, but do not recruit leaders at the School Night Recruitment.
- Give each family a Recruitment Packet
- Collect completed youth applications, payments, adult applications, Family Talent Surveys and paper backup interest cards.

24-48 Hours after School Night

- Pack Leaders send a **welcome email template** to new parents within 24 hours after School Night Recruitment.
- For those who didn't make the decision to join the School Night Recruitment, consider sending the parent and the child a letter in the mail with information on other ways to join. Unit contact information and other information you feel is important.
- Pack leadership prospects and recruit new leaders & arrange dens by grade.

7-10 Days after School Night

- New Parent Orientation Meeting – seven to ten days after School Night Recruitment
- Confirm den leadership, review calendar, collect pack dues, & discuss popcorn sale plans.

2nd Chance School Night Recruitment

- Send **Second Chance Fliers** to scouts who missed the September School Night Recruitment due to sports or other conflicts. Invite them to your Fall Pack Meetings and/or 2nd Chance School Night Recruitment.
 - Schedule your Second Chance Recruitment Night by August 7th
 - This event should be a fun activity where your Pack participates in a “Normal Friend Activity” with no uniforms, just Pack shirts. Does your Pack have a trained Archery Instructor? Reserve the inflatable archery range! If not, ask us for ideas on other activities.
 - Personally invite everyone who didn't join the School Night Recruitment to come out for that event to help them see the fun Cub Scouts have!

Prepare for New Families

Packs with an excellent track record of membership development have one thing in common – they are prepared to receive youth into their program. To make certain your Pack is prepared, do the following:

1. Ensure you have strong, trained **leadership recruited**.
2. Prepare **Pack and Den Program Calendars** for the upcoming 2026-2027 program year.
3. Know your Pack's annual cost per Scout and be prepared to explain dues, fundraising opportunities, and available financial assistance. Families should understand what costs to expect and how fundraising can help offset them.
4. Involve all parents and create a welcoming environment where families can learn about Scouting. Hold a New Parent Orientation Meeting within 7–10 days after School Night Recruitment (see page 11).
5. Hold the **first Pack or Den meeting** within one week of the School Night Recruitment.

Role of Pack Leadership

The recruitment of Cub Scouts and leaders happens at the Pack level. While Northwest Texas Council Unit Serving Executives (DE), Unit Commissioners, Council staff and the district membership teams will support each Pack in their recruiting efforts, each Pack will be responsible for doing the following:

- Attend the Popcorn and Fall Recruitment Kickoff on July 30.
- Maintain constant communication with the School Night Recruitment Coordinator.
- Confirm the Pack's School Night participation and assigned schools by August 1.
- Confirm the Pack's volunteer roster with council staff no later than August 7.
- Train and enable the leaders and parents that are conducting the School Night Recruitment to ensure a well-organized and successful event.
- Submit completed applications, payments, and paper backup interest cards to the council office the next business day.
- After receiving the Youth Application and payment for their registration, distribute incentive items (coupon for book & fishing pole) to new Cub Scouts during School Night Recruitment.
- While the School Night Recruitment must be conducted at the school, the parent orientation meeting can be held at the regular Pack meeting location.
- Inform new leaders of training opportunities, including Safeguarding Youth Training. A face-to-face meeting is ideal. District Training Teams are available to help get leaders trained.

Role of the School Night Recruitment Coordinator

To help the Pack be successful in recruiting new members, each district is committed to recruiting district volunteers to assist the Pack leaders. School Night Recruitment Coordinators will help the Pack in the following ways:

- Contacting the Pack leaders prior to the School Night Recruitment to review the plan.
- Ensuring the Pack has all School Night Recruitment materials including New Family Welcome info and School Night Recruitment Coordinator Packets.
- Participating in the School Night Recruitment (or leading the School Night Recruitment, if needed).
- Assisting parents to complete youth and adult application forms.
- Collect completed applications, payments, and paper backup interest cards from Pack leaders and submit them to the council office.
- Picking up the incentive items for the Pack and delivering them to the Pack leader.

School Night Recruitment Agenda

Pre-Opening (30 Minutes before School Night Recruitment Start Time) Assigned to _____

- Assign adult leaders and any present returning Scouts in uniform at the doors to greet new families as they arrive.
- Set up a visible Welcome Table with the QR sign-in sign, paper backup interest cards, Recruitment Packets, Family Talent Surveys, and applications. Assign volunteers to greet and assist families.
- Set up the room! Each den should have a table for its new members. Consider having music playing or a simple activity available, so new families feel welcome.
- Coordinate who is going to be taking the new Cub Scouts off to do an activity while the Cubmaster spends time with the new parents.
- Remember, it's important to be positive and upbeat! This is their FIRST taste of Scouting!
- Assign a registration helper to review applications, collect payments, and assist families.

School Night Recruitment

Welcome (with the Scouts in the room) ☺ Assigned to _____

- Good evening, I'm your Cubmaster Mr./Ms./Mrs. _____
- We're excited to welcome you to Pack ____ tonight.
- Boys/Girls - what fun stuff did you hear about when our Cub Scout visitor came to your school?
- Talk about the Fishing Pole they will receive.
- Anyone find a flyer in a silly spot?

Table by Grade (Introduce the Den Concept) Assigned to _____

- Dens are organized by grade. Your Pack leadership will help families connect with the correct den for their child's grade level.
- Kindergarten – Lions (roar like a *lion*)
- 1st Grade - Tigers (have them growl like a *Tiger*)
- 2nd Grade - Wolves (howl like a *Wolf*)
- 3rd Grade - Bears (roar like a *Bear*)
- 4th Grade - Webelos (yell "Be Prepared")
- 5th Grade - Arrow of Light (shoot an arrow with a sound effect)

Teach Everyone Something: Assigned to _____

- Make the Cub Scout Sign
- Cub Scout Salute...Pledge of Allegiance
- Cub Scout Motto: Do your best!
- Congrats! You're halfway to your *Bobcat*!

Dismiss all youth to take part in the activity so Cubmaster can talk to New Parents

**Remember 2 deep leadership! **

Reintroduce Self Assigned to _____

- I am _____ and my position within Pack ____ is _____.

- We are all part of the Northwest Texas Council that covers 12 Counties in North Central Texas.
- Introduce other Pack Leadership
- Our Pack is Chartered by _____ and together we bring Scouting to our town.
- All adult volunteers are required by Scouting America to take Safeguarding Youth Training before serving and must renew it annually to remain current. Stress importance of safety and how all parents should take Safeguarding Youth Training.

Why the New Parents are here:

Assigned to _____

- School Night Recruitment is for the parents- Tell them why you chose to become a leader - what is your Scouting story?
- Boys and Girls join Scouting because it is fun - and that is great. But as parents, we want our kids to take part in activities that are more than just fun.
- Boys and Girls stay in Scouting because of their friends and their parents' involvement.
- Cub Scouts is a family activity, and all members of the Cub Scouts family are encouraged to participate.
- Invite every family to complete the Family Talent Survey.
- The Cost of Scouting:
 - \$85 annual National youth membership fee
 - \$25 annual Council fee
 - Pack Dues _____ (if your Pack requires dues)
 - \$15 Optional Scout Life magazine subscription
 - Books are required – free for new Scouts
 - Uniform (a Scout is thrifty; it does not have to be new)
- Popcorn Fundraiser
 - Pays for the program to ease financial burden on parents and to teach a valuable lesson to the Scouts.

Closing:

Assigned to _____

- Tell the parents when the New Parent Orientation will be and encourage them to read through the New Parent Orientation Packet.
- Review and collect completed youth applications and payments. Give each paid new Scout their fishing pole and book coupon.
- **Cub Scout Fishing Derby Day: September 19, 2026.**
- Collect and review adult applications. Please pay close attention to these items – disclosure form, social security number, questions 1 - 6 on the right side of the application, initials next to signature, Scouting position, email and Chartering Organization Representative and Committee Chair signatures.

Sample Parent Orientation Meeting Agenda

Pre-Meeting (20-30 minutes)

Assigned to _____

- A. Set up tables and chairs as needed.
- B. Make sure all materials and equipment are on hand:
 - Den rosters from School Night Recruitment
 - Extra Recruitment Packets and youth applications for families who missed School Night Recruitment.
 - Ceremony and games equipment
 - Pens

Parent Orientation (15 minutes)

Assigned to _____

- A. Opening
 - Lead the Pledge of Allegiance
 - Teach Something: Brief overview of Bobcat requirements
- B. Pack Programs & Fundraising
 - Discuss the Pack's plans for the future, mentioning some of the more exciting activities.
 - Impact of Popcorn sale as a fundraiser.
- C. Have the youth go to another room for games and activities.

Leadership (15 minutes)

Assigned to _____

- A. Discuss Pack leadership vacancies.
 - Don't ask for volunteers in this group setting yet (most people do not volunteer when asked this way). The Pack committee will need to determine who the best candidates are. Those candidates should be asked to volunteer individually, preferably before the Parent Orientation Meeting. Review Volunteer Recruitment Ideas on page 13.
- B. Discuss adult registration fees and uniforms.
 - Have an experienced leader explain training requirements and available resources, including Den Meeting in a Box.

Den Organization (20 minutes)

Assigned to _____

- A. At this point in the meeting, the Cubs may rejoin the group.
- B. Have families sit together by den and grade level, and participate in a song or game (Dice game with the Cub Scout handshake, sign and salute on it to remind them what they learned earlier)
- C. For Dens that already have a Den leader:
 - The Den leader discusses Den meeting dates, times, and locations
 - Den leader recruits parents to assist with Den meetings or serve on the Pack committee

D. For Dens that don't have a Den leader:

- Another Pack leader will need to guide the discussion. Discuss possible meeting dates, times, and locations.
- Talk with individual parents to help secure Den leadership

E. Adult Leader Registration

- Review the purpose of registration and answer any questions
- Review completed adult applications and collect any required registration fees.

F. Reminder Announcements

- Next Pack/Den meeting
- Where can they find the Pack calendar?
- Upcoming training courses
- Cub Scout Fishing Derby
- Popcorn Sale dates
- Council Popcorn Blitz
- Fall Cub N Pal dates and reminders

Closing Ceremony

Assigned to _____

After the meeting – enjoy fellowship and refreshments.

Volunteer Recruitment Ideas

Every Cub Scout Pack needs volunteers to make the program happen. Below are some ideas and hints to help you recruit adult volunteers into your Pack.

Recruit Volunteers Before School Night Recruitment

The most successful Packs review their leadership needs and recruit new leaders before the School Night Recruitment even happens! Consider this example: Last year's Tiger Den Leader who was going to be your Wolf Den Leader for the upcoming school year moved out of town this summer. Which would be the better option?:

- Wait until School Night Recruitment and hope that a parent with a second grade youth shows up with little or no Scouting experience volunteers to be a Den leader.
- or -
- Call last year's Den leader and ask if they could suggest which one of the parents in the Den would be a good Den leader, and then recruit that person to fill the vacancy before School Night Recruitment.

Why Do Adults Hesitate to Volunteer?

Reason

They don't know anything about Scouting.

Solution

Neither do most adults getting started in Cub Scouting, even if they grew up as a Scout. How much does a past Cub Scout adult really remember from when they were 8 years old? Let them know it is easy to learn and you will help them. Explain that training and ready-to-use resources are available. will make it much easier for them. Remind them that if they can have fun with it, that the kids will likely have fun with it.

They are too busy. Aren't we all?

Be realistic about time commitments, and find a job for them that will fit their schedule. If the adult can't commit to weekly meetings and being a Den leader, could they do a once a year job like organizing the pinewood derby? The key here is to have many different jobs available in the Pack.

They don't know what is expected.

Give them a position description from the Scouting America website.

Volunteer Recruitment Ideas (cont'd)

What Is the Best Method?

You are at the School Night Recruitment meeting. Your Pack needs new leaders.

Good Method – Give general information at your first meeting. Walk around and talk to the parents, find out what they do for a living, what are they interested in and determine if they would be a good fit for one of your vacant positions. Have each parent complete a **Family Talent Survey**.

- After the meeting, discuss your prospects with other leaders in your Pack.
- When you have decided which adults would be good leaders, meet with them in person to ask if they would volunteer (either before or during the Parent Orientation Meeting).

Not Good – Make an announcement saying that the last leader quit and you need someone to volunteer by raising their hand.

You find someone that you think will be a good leader, but they hesitate to say yes because they don't know if they have time.

Good Method – Give them a position description and truthfully explain the time commitment.

- Explain that by attending training and participating in planning meetings, they will gain knowledge faster and will be able to pick up ideas without a lot of effort.
- Discuss with the top prospect a co-leader option and who they might work with best from the other parent options involved in the den. Co-Den Leader options are almost always a great option to ensure that the program is always delivered for the kids.
- If they still are not sure if they have enough time – don't pressure them. Offer another job that is less time consuming.

Not Good – To get them to say yes, you tell them that they don't have to attend training or participate in planning meetings.

- You tell them it will only take one hour a week at the most.
- Be careful of what you ask for – you will probably get it.

You find someone that is willing to volunteer, but they don't want to register as a leader by completing an application form.

- Expect every leader to register with Scouting America. Expect them to complete training. Expect them to participate fully.
- All adult leaders must complete the required registration, background-check, and training process before serving. Anyone unwilling to complete these requirements cannot hold a leadership position.

Marketing Ideas

Adopt-A-School Service Project

School administrator relationships and school access are critical aspects of reaching families to invite them to join Scouting during the fall at School Night Recruitment. Consider conducting a service project for the school(s) using the National Adopt-A-School program, in order to help further develop the relationship and maintain school access. Contact council staff for service-project ideas and support.

School Newsletters

Write an article for your school's printed or electronic newsletter, spotlighting Scouting and all the activities and good things your Pack is doing to make an impact in your local community and at your school. Be sure to include pictures.

School Announcements and Marquee Billboards

Ask your school administrators for their support of the school's families through morning announcements and having the Cub Scout School Night date and time posted on the marquee billboard outside the school or putting signs up 2 weeks prior.

School Open House/ Meet the Teacher Night

Have a booth set up to show off Cub Scouting and explain what your Pack does. The open house should not replace your School Night Recruitment but should be used to encourage people to attend the School Night Recruitment.

Scout Buddy Cards

Encourage Scouts to personally invite friends using council-provided flyers, wristbands, or invitation cards.

Church Bulletins

Send announcements to area churches notifying them that your Pack will be recruiting members. Ask the church to publish your announcement in the church bulletin the Sunday before your recruiting meeting.

Email Invitations (Parent-to-Parent)

Ask the families in your Pack to send an email invitation to all of their friends who have Cub Scout age youth. People like to join organizations where they know other people. An email message helps them understand that their friends are involved too. Here is a sample:

My child is a Cub Scout in Pack ____, which meets at _____. Our School Night for new families is on ____ at _____.

Cub Scouting is really fun and our whole family enjoys it. It would be great if you were a part of it, too. Scouting is not only fun, but it also teaches the boys and girls great lessons about teamwork, leadership, and lifetime skills. I hope you will stop by and learn more about our Cub Scout Pack!

Social Networking

Ask Pack families to share the School Night information on Facebook, Instagram, neighborhood groups, and other local community pages. Include the Pack's contact information and the link to BeAScout.org.

Incentive Items

Each new Cub Scout who submits a complete youth application and payment will receive a fishing pole and a coupon for a Cub Scout handbook. New Scouts are invited to attend the Fishing Derby on September 19, 2026.

Cub Scout Fishing Derby

New Cub Scouts are invited to attend the Cub Scout Fishing Derby on Saturday, September 19, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at South Weeks Park Pond.

This event gives new Scouts their first big Cub Scouting experience of the year and a chance to use their new fishing pole. Returning Cub Scouts are also welcome to attend and may bring their own fishing pole or use one provided by the council. Scouts may work toward the Fishing Adventure for their rank.

Appendix

Please find below samples of messages to be used in conjunction with Fall School Night Recruitment efforts:

Email Invitations (Parent-to-Parent):

My child is a Cub Scout in Pack ____ that meets at _____. Our sign-up night for new families is on _____ at _____.

Cub Scouting is really fun and our whole family enjoys it. It would be great if you were a part of it, too. Scouting is not only fun, but it also teaches the youth great lessons about teamwork, leadership, and lifetime skills. I hope you will stop by and learn more about our Cub Scout Pack!

24-48 Hour Welcome Message for New Families:

WELCOME CUB SCOUT PARENTS! Thank you SO much for joining Pack XXXX this year. We look forward to working with your family and your youth to make their Cub Scouting years as fun and memorable as possible. What to look forward to:

- New Parent Orientation and Training is **Day, Date, x at time location**
- No job is too small, and many hands make light work! There are plenty of fun things for your family to do together. Don't think you can be a Den Leader? The Committee always has room for parents that are passionate about making the unit the best it can be!
- The unit popcorn sale begins on September 12, and we are always looking for people with vans, trucks, and trailers to help load up and organize the goods.
***Don't forget, popcorn sales help your youth fund their way through the Cub Scout program
- Please see the attached calendar and or web address below, which indicates the Pack Meeting Dates and other important events for your new Scout to look forward to!

Cubmaster: Name; Number; E-mail

Letter for Returning Families (currently registered Cub Scouts):

Welcome back! The leaders and parents of Pack **1234** have been working hard to make sure we have a fun year ahead; I hope you are as excited as we are. Please be sure to join us at our first pack meeting of the year at **DATE/TIME/LOCATION**. **Attached** is our annual calendar. As you can see, we have plenty of events that will keep you and your family having fun all year. I'd like to take a minute to welcome back our leaders this year and thank them for all the great work they have done and will do; please feel free to reach out to these people should you have any questions.

We're kicking off the year with our annual popcorn sale again. Please see **POPCORN CHAIR** to receive order forms and find out more information. There are a lot of fun prizes this year. Not only that, but every Scout will have the opportunity to earn funds toward camp by participating.

No job is too small, and many hands make light work! There are plenty of fun things for you and your family to do together. The committee always has room for parents that are passionate about providing the best experience for each Scout!