

Recruiting year-round

Join Scouting nights are a big deal – and always will be. But the great thing about passive recruiting is you can easily work it into many of your unit’s regularly scheduled year-round events, with little extra effort from anyone.

The difference between passive and active recruiting is similar to the contrast between passive and active income.

Active income is your job – most of us have to go to work and do a good job every day to get paid. Passive income is a stream of money that comes in without active effort, though it might have required some time and effort up front to establish – like owning a rental property.

Likewise, active recruiting events are those Scout sign-up nights or other occasions that exist solely for the purpose of growing your unit.

Passive recruiting happens as you’re out in the community, doing the things Scouts do, representing the organization with pride. Yes, it took time and effort to plan those events, but once you’re out there, the recruiting happens naturally.

Do’s and Don’ts of Passive Recruiting

- **Do** participate in community events. Being visible in your community is not only good for your unit, but also for your Scouts. The BSA’s youth members are community leaders, and you can’t be a community leader if you aren’t an active part of your community. Leading flag ceremonies, picking up litter, hosting a recycling drive and handing out programs or bulletins at large gatherings are great ways to subtly remind your neighbors and friends that Scouting is alive and well.
- **Do** wear your Scout uniform or T-shirt, whichever is more appropriate. A “uniform” look – i.e., a group of kids and adults all dressed the same – is what will draw attention to whatever you’re doing. The uniform is what says, “We’re Scouts, and we’re here to help.”
- **Don’t** be pushy. Passive recruiting is great for the BSA, but it’s unlikely that any member of your community is attending these events with the intention of being recruited by your Scouts. The priority should be the work that you’re there to do. Be polite, say hello, be friendly ... but don’t pitch the program unless someone asks about it.
- **Do Be Prepared** in case someone does ask about joining. This might mean giving your Scouts a brief talk about how they should respond in case someone asks. Some units carry business cards with contact information and a URL for the unit’s website that they can give to anyone who’s interested. I know one Cub Scout leader who had a QR code on every Scout’s T-shirt that anyone could scan with their phones to get more information.
- **Do** remember that the most important thing is not that someone joins *your* unit, it’s that someone joins *any* BSA unit. The advantage of an active recruiting event is that families are there because they’re interested in your unit. But when you’re approached at random in public, it might be by someone from the other side of town who can’t meet at the location where you meet. In this situation, you can direct them to [BeAScout.org](https://www.beascout.org), the website that will help them find the unit closest to them.

#AdventureOn - 2023 Recruitment Campaign

Use the marketing tools in the BSA Brand Center. BSA makes various flyers available that may be printed for your recruitment events in addition to social media images and proposed verbiage to assist Scout Leaders.