HOW TO CREATE OR REORGANIZE A SUCCESSFUL COUNCIL JEWISH COMMITTEE ON SCOUTING

A Guide for Scout Executives
SCOUTING FOR JEWISH YOUTH CAN HELP YOUR COUNCIL

The Jewish community has historically been a strong partner with Scouting. In years past there were over 100,000 Jewish Scouts. A local Jewish Committee on Scouting can be the catalyst to form new units and bring more Scouts and volunteers into your council. The committee can be an integral part of the council’s chartered organization membership structure if you form it properly. A small investment of time and effort in the beginning can yield large membership and FOS dividends for the council in the future. The Scout Executive or his or her designee appoints the Jewish Committee chairman and, with the proper support from a professional staff advisor, the chairman and the committee will do the rest. Read the booklets, *A Guide for Youth Serving Executives* and *A Guide for Your New or Reorganized Local Council Jewish Committee on Scouting*, which can be found on the website of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting at [www.jewishscouting.org](http://www.jewishscouting.org) on the “Start and Grow a Unit” page under “Adult Resources” and other publications located there for further information on Scouting for Jewish Youth and on the Jewish community.

THE ROLE OF THE JEWISH COMMITTEE ON SCOUTING

The National Jewish Committee on Scouting is a committee of the Boy Scouts of America. The NJCOS is a member of the National Religious Relationships Support Group and is responsible for advising the BSA on Jewish matters, developing programming with Jewish content for Jewish units and Jewish Scouts, administering the Jewish Religious Emblems program and assisting local councils in forming new, sustainable units.

The local council Jewish Committee on Scouting is a council level committee with three jobs: Job #1 is to form new, sustainable units at Jewish organizations; job #2 is to assist units in remaining healthy and; job #3 is to assist all Jewish Scouts. If your council has a religious relationships committee, that is where the local council Jewish Committee should be located. If the council does not have it, the local council Jewish Committee should be in the council membership committee.

FIND THE RIGHT PEOPLE

The local council Jewish Committee on Scouting needs to have the right people to succeed. The right people need Scouting experience, contacts in the Jewish community a cooperative approach to Scouting. Selection of the chairman of the committee ultimately rests with the Scout Executive.
The chairman needs to be someone who

- understands and “lives” the mission of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting
- is active in local Jewish life and in tune with the Scouting movement.
- has leadership skills and works well with others.
- is well-rounded and able to work well with the entire spectrum of Jewish life.
- will be able to recruit other committee members for specific committee assignments.
- can communicate with and relate to the local council and local Jewish organizations.
- is an enthusiastic supporter of the goals of the committee.
- has been a leader or volunteer in Scouting on a level higher than a unit leader.

The other members of the committee need to be committed, goal setting individuals who are willing to devote time and effort to promoting Scouting for Jewish Youth.

Where do you go to find a committee chairman and new committee members?

- Are there Jewish volunteers who are active in the council already?
- Do your Youth Serving Executives know of Jewish volunteers in the council?
- Do your key volunteers know people who are active in the Jewish community?
- Is there a synagogue or temple in your community? Does it have a men’s club?
- Form a focus group – get about 5 young Jewish adults together and work with them to obtain suggestions for leaders.
- See if you can put a piece in the local synagogue or temple bulletin or local Jewish newspaper which indicates you want to form a local Jewish committee and are looking for interested people – give your contact information.
- Is there a family member of a Jewish Eagle Scout or religious emblem recipient?

REVITALIZE AN EXISTING COMMITTEE

Every local Jewish Committee on Scouting needs to be committed to the goals of Scouting for Jewish Youth. The Regional Chairman or designated representative will provide each existing local Jewish committee with information about the new
committee structure and program. The Regional Chairman will discuss the new structure and the new program with the local committee chairman to obtain cooperation in achieving the new program. The Regional Chairman will also consult with the Scout Executive to see if there are others in the community who may be good candidates for leadership roles on the committee. The Regional Chairman will encourage the Scout Executive or designee and the committee chairman to bring appropriate new volunteers on board to assist in building up the committee. If building up the committee results in a turnover of volunteer members, the past volunteers need recognition and thanks for their service. In some cases, existing committee members may not be receptive to or sufficiently committed to carrying out the jobs of the committee. In that case, it becomes necessary to find new committee members to carry them out. One approach to avoid hurt feelings when restructuring an existing committee is to recruit a potential new chairman to become the new unit vice chairman of the committee. After a year on the job, that person can succeed the existing committee chairman.

**USE OUR NEW PAMPHLET**

The NJCOS has developed a new recruiting pamphlet, *Scouting for Jewish Youth*. Copies are available from the National Office. The pamphlet can be a valuable tool for you in creating new units at Jewish institutions.

**USE THE RIGHT STRUCTURE**

No committee can function successfully without the right structure. The local Jewish Committee on Scouting is no exception. This is what the committee needs to succeed:
Note: Smaller committees may not be able to fill all of these positions but all committees need to work on all functions to succeed.

**Job Descriptions:**

Chairperson – The chairman of the committee is appointed by the council Scout Executive. The chairman is the leader of the committee and is responsible for leading it in carrying out its functions. The chairman, with the assistance of the rest of the committee, will form relationships with the council membership committee and the council’s designated representatives to obtain their assistance in forming new, sustainable units and in teaching them how to make use of the programs of the Boy Scouts of America.

A. New Unit Vice-Chairman – The new unit vice-chairman will head the new unit team. The new unit team has four components.

1. The Sales Team: The sales team will seek out new prospective chartered organizations to sell Scouting to.
a. Survey the local Jewish institutions to pick the best candidates for units – 1. Jewish Day Schools; 2. Federations; 3. Large Reform and Conservative Congregations and Chabad Houses; 4. Jewish Community Centers; 5. Jewish War Veterans posts

b. Prioritize – Institutions that can form packs are the first priority. Institutions with teen groups are the second priority.

c. Make the sales call. Follow the Unit Performance Guide how to on how to do it.

d. Follow up and close the sale.

e. Maintain good relationships with all Jewish institutions whether they have a Jewish unit or not.

f. The team will see to it that each Youth Serving Executive and the council’s membership committee receive A Guide for Youth Serving Executives Serving the Jewish Community publication.

2. The Unit Organization Team: The unit organization team is the bridge from the agreement of the new chartered organization to form a new unit to the beginning of the unit’s operations.

a. Help the interested adults form a unit committee and select a committee chairman, treasurer and quartermaster.

b. Help the unit committee select the unit leaders – Cubmaster, Den Leaders, assistants.

c. The team will see to it that each new chartered organization receives The Chartered Organization’s Welcome to Scouting for Jewish Youth publication.

3. The Adult Training Team. The adult training team is not intended to be a team of trainers. That job belongs to the District and Council Training Committees. This team is to make sure that all new and existing volunteers obtain appropriate Scout training.

a. All volunteers need to take Youth Protection Training within 48 hours of volunteering.

b. All volunteers need to take position specific training promptly.

c. All volunteers need to become familiar with the programs of the NJCOS on the website.

4. The Jewish Commissioner Team: The committee will recruit Jewish adults to be commissioners. The commissioners will be members of the Jewish committee and the District Commissioner staff.

a. In some councils there may be a Council Jewish Commissioner to serve under the Council Commissioner and supervise the council’s Jewish commissioners.

b. The committee will assist in finding a new unit commissioner for each new unit. The new unit commissioner will be assigned to a new unit for at least one year
and will meet regularly with the Chartered Organization Representative, committee chairman and unit leader and assist in programming.

c. The committee will insure that each new parent receives the *Parents: Welcome to Scouting for Jewish Youth!* Publication.

B. Religious Emblems vice-chairman – The religious emblems vice-chairman will head the religious emblems team.
   1. The religious emblems team will locate and train religious emblems counselors and maintain a list of qualified counselors.
   2. The religious emblems team will cooperate with the council’s religious emblem coordinator to promote the religious emblems program to Jewish units and to the council.
   3. The religious emblems team will promote Shofar awards for adults.
   4. The religious emblems team will make Jewish units and volunteers aware of the Nachshon Fellowship and the Shalom Award and encourage them to earn these international awards.
   5. The religious emblems team will provide for the religious needs of Jewish Scouts by arranging for rabbis and lay leaders to act as chaplains at camps where appropriate, providing prayer books and religious articles where needed and promoting Jewish religious services at camp.

C. The Activities vice-chairman – The activities vice-chairman will head the activities team. The team will promote and produce the activities of the local Jewish committee. Typical activities include service projects for chartered organizations, Scout Shabbat, a council kinus, a Ten Commandments Hike, religious services at events or chartered organizations, flag ceremonies for chartered organizations and others, promotion of the international unit-to-unit programs of the NJCOS and promotion of the Messengers of Peace program.

**Mission Statement:**

The mission of the National Jewish Committee on Scouting (NJCOS) is to prepare young Jews to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of Judaism as expressed in the Scout Oath and Scout Law.