

The Service Unit Manager, is required to plan meetings throughout the year. These meetings include service unit meetings for troop leaders and for service unit team members. Each of these meetings are important to the functioning of the service unit and attendees should leave with a sense of accomplishment.

Although monthly service unit meetings are suggested, you are free to determine the frequency and timing of your unit's meetings. These meetings allow for the sharing of both council and service unit information. It is suggested that these meetings be at least one hour in length.

Much of the success of a service unit meeting depends on the facilitator. This is the person who sets the tone for the meeting and ensures that the purpose of the meeting is achieved. The Service Unit Manager does not need to be the facilitator.

A good facilitator should:

- Set a positive, productive tone
- Focus the discussion and keep it on the subject
- Encourage all members to express ideas
- Interrupt, with tact, those who dominate the discussion
- Be objective and not take sides or express judgment
- Keep enthusiasm high
- Use humor
- Summarize at the end of the discussion
- Pay attention to unanswered questions and arrange for follow-up

Meeting Components:

Participation

- The goal is to have all troops represented at a meeting. Representation does not need to come from the troop leader. The leader could send a parent or other troop volunteer to represent the troop
- Send a meeting reminder with the agenda **PRIOR** to the meeting so that the participants know the value of attending
- A personal call is a nice way to invite new leaders and make sure they know how important it is for them to come
- Provide a calendar of future meeting dates so volunteers can plan ahead

Purpose

- The purpose of a SU Meeting is to provide troop leaders with Council and service unit information

Agenda Items

- Council updates and events which are obtained from your Community Engagement Specialist, SUM Monthly Meetings and News, GSEP News, SPARK, and the GSEP website
- Council policies and procedures
- Service unit updates & events
- Product Program updates
- Service unit treasury update
- A take-away - this may be a brief training, a craft, song, or game that they can take back to their troop, or a new tool that will be helpful to leaders
- Time for collaboration or discussion

Location

- Choose a central location to meet. If you have a large service unit, you may decide to alternate meeting locations throughout the unit
- Clear signage to direct participants to the meeting room

Timing

- A consistent time, date, and location helps to increase participation
- Begin and end the meeting on time
- Provide a yearly calendar
- Stick to the agenda. Include approximate times on the agenda for each section. This shows your participants that you value their time
- Use a variety of methods or presenters to hold the participants' attention
- Be flexible but stay on topic
- Provide social time before or after the meeting
- Deal with "competing conversations" during the meeting by addressing them head on and plan to tackle that topic at the end of the agenda
- Attendance at meetings may increase/remains consistent when you keep meetings to an hour or slightly more. Some meetings may require more time than others, for example Product Program trainings. Notify your leaders in advance when that is expected

Tips & Tricks

- Start on time and be positive – Let the group know you are ready, and then START! Hold up your hand with the Girl Scout sign – it works
- Delegate responsibility for portions of the meeting

- Include something fun and a chance for people to socialize informally before or after the meeting. Perhaps offer refreshments
- Don't read announcements. Reference them, but have them written on the agenda with necessary information including contact information
- Never delay a meeting – If someone is not in attendance to present an agenda item, go on to the next item and return when they are present
- **Thank, compliment, and praise in public. Criticize and question in private. Repeat questions or motions for all to hear before acting on them**
- Have an older girl troop offer babysitting in another room as a service to participants or share something with the group that they have done
- Make the agenda visually exciting and functional. Use graphics or colored paper. Include some fun items on the sides that do not necessarily need to be discussed at the meeting. Leave some space for notes
- Reward participants for attending with candy, a small token of appreciation, leader bucks, etc. A little recognition shows your appreciation that they made this meeting a priority
- Use nametags – your volunteers will respond better to your leadership if you address them by name. Plus, they encourage socialization and make new leaders more comfortable
- Say Thank You! Remind leaders that what they are doing is important and how much you appreciate them making the extra effort to provide the best program experience for their girls
- Have participants sit with leaders of the same age levels

Remember, these are just suggestions – not a “to-do” list!