

Commissioner Service



The well-worn phrase “We service what we sell” applies to Venturing. The continued success of Venturing across America will require council service to Venturing crews. This ongoing service comes from the unit-serving executive and the commissioner staff. It is recommended that Venturing crews be served by unit commissioners serving on the district commissioner staff under the direction of a district commissioner. A dedicated unit commissioner should contact Venturing crews at least monthly. It is recommended that each district recruit an assistant district commissioner- Venturing in an ad hoc capacity to educate and train unit commissioners. After this task is complete, this individual could be reassigned to other commissioner responsibilities.



Studies of successful crews indicate that one person makes the difference—a concerned unit commissioner. Although the BSA local council provides regular mailings, newsletters, conferences, training, and activities, regular person-to-person contact is the only effective way to provide the vital communications link necessary to the continuing success of a crew.

Assistant District Commissioner-Venturing Job Description

1. Assist the district commissioner by educating unit commissioners about Venturing.
2. Help Venturing crews with the annual rechartering process.
3. Ensure that each crew is visited monthly and unit health problems are identified.
4. Facilitate unit problem solving by utilizing available resources.

The Unit Commissioner's Duties

1. **Make monthly contact with each assigned crew.** The minimum is a “How are you doing? How can we help?” phone call or visit to the Advisor. The commissioner should visit crew meetings and crew committee meetings as often as possible. The unit commissioner need not be a “Venturing expert,” but should be willing to ask, care, and find answers. After each monthly visit, complete the Unit Commissioner Worksheet (Crew), No. 33660, and report to the district commissioner.
2. **Represent the council to the crew.** The commissioner is not a crew leader and should not be directly involved in crew operation. Crew adult leaders are recruited by the chartered organization and are accountable to the organization. The commissioner may help the organization recruit new and additional leaders when necessary.
3. **Help with the annual rechartering.** The commissioner guides the chartered organization and the crew leaders through the rechartering process.
4. **Encourage training for the Advisor and youth officers.** The commissioner coordinates the training of new crew adult leaders by encouraging or accompanying them to Adult Venturing Leader Basic Training. Also the commissioner should ensure that youth officers receive the crew officers’ briefing.

5. **Assist in the planning process.** Help the chartered organization develop a program capability inventory (a list of adults who can support crew program with skills, projects, tours, and other resources). Help the crew officers and Advisor plan the year's program in the crew officers' seminar. See *Venturing Fast Start*, No 25-878.
6. **Help each Venturing crew attain the National Quality Unit Award.** The required objectives include the Advisor completing basic training, two-deep leadership, elected and trained youth officers, and on-time charter renewal. The complete list of requirements can be found on the National Quality Unit Award application, No. 14-219.

Unit Commissioners—Keys to Success With Venturing Crews

Be Informed

Attend Adult Venturing Leader Basic Training. Review the basic Venturing literature, especially the *Venturing Leader Manual*, No. 34655A. Review with crew leaders the requirements for all Venturing awards as explained in the *Venturing Leader Manual*. Review the Venturing references in *Commissioner Helps for Packs, Troops, and Crews*, No. 33618C.

Support the Advisor

Serve as the Advisor's coach and counselor. Be aware of the Advisor's concerns and challenges. Build a strong, friendly relationship. Work with, not around, the Advisor. Encourage attendance at roundtables.

Seek Resources

Do more listening than talking. Determine the needs and desires of crew members. Is the crew using all available resources to help in program planning? (See *Venturing Fast Start*, No 25-878.)

Involve Others

Don't let the Advisor become a solo act. Suggest ways to involve the crew committee, parents, consultants, and members of the chartered organization with the crew. Urge that new adults continually be recruited to help. Look for ways to inform parents about the crew and Venturing.

Encourage Participation

The Advisor's main function is to train the crew officers. Help inform the Advisor about elections, training, and guidance of officers. Support the Advisor's planning of the crew officers' briefing and the crew officers' seminar (annual planning retreat).

Represent the Council

The commissioner is the main link between the BSA local council and the Venturing crew. The commissioner looks after the best interests of both. Help the Advisor understand the purpose, policies, structure, and financial needs of the BSA local council.

Give Recognition

Look for ways to recognize the Advisor, the crew, and the chartered organization—publicity, letters of congratulation, thank-you certificates, or whatever means are available. In particular, be sure the Advisor feels his or her leadership is important, successful, and appreciated.

Proper Planning

Ensure that the crew Advisor conducts a crew officers' briefing and crew officers' seminar (annual planning retreat). These are the most important meetings of the crew. A good crew officers' seminar will result in youth involvement and exciting quality program (see the *Venturing Leader Manual*, pages 28–30).



UNIT COMMISSIONER WORKSHEET (CREW)

VENTURING · BSA

FOR USE AFTER VISITING A MEETING OF CREW NO.

Under each heading (bottom half of this page and reverse), circle the number of the statement that most closely resembles the crew's situation.

- 1 = Nearly an ideal situation
- 2 = Typical unit, could be improved
- 3 = Weak situation, needs action

To profile these statements, place a dot in the Unit Profile next to the heading and under the number that corresponds to the number you circled under that statement below and on reverse. Form the profile by connecting the dots with a line.

For example, in the category titled "Adult leadership," a nearly ideal situation would be indicated by circling the "1" next to "Activity has at least two adults involved who train, guide, and coach youth with a minimum of directing or ordering"; and placing a dot in column 1 on the "Adult leadership" line of the Unit Profile.

Check the ways you intend to help by dating the appropriate boxes (bottom half of this page and reverse).

Keep this form with the unit roster.

UNIT PROFILE			
	1	2	3
Adult leadership			
Elected officers			
Planned program			
Adult assistance			
Membership			
Meeting operation			
Crew specialty			
Program capability inventory			

ADULT LEADERSHIP

1. Activity has at least two adults involved who train, guide, and coach youth with a minimum of directing or ordering.
2. Adults give a lot of direction with elected officers only moderately involved.
3. No adults are present, or adults dominate the meeting with little youth involvement.

Some Ways to Help

- Be sure Advisors get training—Introduction to Leadership session immediately following selection and Venturing Leader Basic Training as soon as possible.
- Counsel Advisors and crew committee members on the values of having elected officers run the crew.
- Review the job of the crew Advisor.
- Congratulate the Advisor as you see elected officers taking more initiative in running the crew.

ELECTED OFFICERS

1. Elected youth officers are involved in decision making and share with adult Advisors in planning program.
2. Youth officers have been elected but adults do much of the crew program planning.
3. No youth officers and/or adults run the show.

Some Ways to Help

- Convince the Advisor to have a monthly crew officers' meeting chaired by the crew president.
- Point out places in the *Venturing Leader Manual* that refer to elected youth officers.
- Help the Advisor plan an elected officers' seminar.
- Discuss the advantages of elected officers as a key method of Venturing.

PLANNED PROGRAM

1. Crew has a year's program outline based on both the program capability inventory (PCI) and Venturing interest survey, planned at the elected officers' seminar with activity details planned in advance.
2. Specific meetings and activities are planned on a month-by-month basis.
3. There is little or no advance planning.

Some Ways to Help

- Help the Advisor plan an annual elected officers' seminar.
- Help the Advisor use the Venturing interest survey and PCI, available in *Venturing Fast Start*.
- Review with Advisors the steps in good program planning.
- Congratulate officers on planning steps they have taken.

ADULT ASSISTANCE

1. The Advisor, associate Advisor, crew committee, and consultants are involved with the crew.
2. The crew has only an Advisor and associate Advisor.
3. The crew has only one adult leader.

Some Ways to Help

- Help develop specific assignments for adults.
- Suggest appropriate ways for adults to help youth leaders.
- Encourage the use of consultants to help with the Bronze, Gold, Silver, and Ranger award programs.
- Be sure coed crews have both men and women as Advisors or associate Advisors.
- Help recruit additional adults.

MEMBERSHIP

1. Systematic recruiting is evident, including a fall open house.
2. Recruiting seems hit or miss.
3. No new youth have joined recently.

Some Ways to Help

- Show Advisors how to conduct an open house.
- Suggest that the Advisor have elected officers devise a recruiting plan.
- Help Advisor chart age groupings to show potential vacancies.
- Encourage leaders to have crew members recruit their friends.
- Talk with your professional staff about the council hobby interest survey.

MEETING OPERATION

1. Crew meetings are run by elected officers, business items are handled quickly, and a major portion of meetings is devoted to a well-planned activity.
2. Business items take much time and the activity is weak.
3. Meetings lack planning and seem poorly run.

Some Ways to Help

- Visit monthly crew officers' meeting to review the steps in good program planning.
- Help the Advisor determine the interests of crew members and plan hands-on activities.
- Encourage crew officers to plan details so crew meetings have a minimum of business and a maximum of activities.
- Take the Advisor and crew president to visit a good meeting in another crew.

CREW SPECIALTY

1. Crew develops program around a specific hobby, sport, or other special interest related to the interests of youth and the resources of the chartered organization.
2. The crew is considering an appropriate specialty.
3. There is not interest in a crew specialty.

Some Ways to Help

- Choose a specialty in which the crew has expressed interest and brainstorm with elected officers and Advisors possible related activity ideas, projects, tours, field trips, and service projects.
- Provide the Advisor with program resources on a specialty in which the crew has expressed interest.
- Take the Advisor to a roundtable to see how other crews use crew specialties.
- Spotlight the crew's specialty in the community and link it to other aspects of community life.

PROGRAM CAPABILITY INVENTORY

1. The crew has a program capability inventory (PCI) and uses it for planning meetings and activities.
2. The crew has a PCI but seldom uses it.
3. The crew does not have a PCI.

Some Ways to Help

- Supply PCI forms and encourage the chartered organization to use them. See PCI in *Venturing Fast Start* or *Venturing Leader Manual*.
- Explain to crew officers how the PCI brings together adults and youth with similar interests.
- Show the Advisor and crew committee how to screen and organize the items on the completed PCI for use in program planning.
- Congratulate the Advisor when you see ideas from the PCI being put to use.

