



Membership Recruitment Playbook For Exploring

EXPLORING MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT OVERVIEW:

Exploring is a career education, worksite-based program of Learning for Life, an affiliate of the Boy Scouts of America. Participants in the program are called Explorers. The program serves youth in 6th-8th grades (Exploring clubs), and young men and women who are 14 through 20 years old (Exploring posts). Exploring units (clubs or posts), are sponsored by local businesses, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations, and usually focus on a single career field, but can also introduce youth to a variety of career fields within a single unit.

The Open House is the programs annual exposure to prospective members. Prospective members are invited to come out again and join exploring. This recruitment event is meant to be exciting, with hands-on activities and sufficient information so that those in attendance know how the Post runs and how-to sign-up. All Exploring Post should hold an annual Open House between August and September.

Full Details on Exploring can be found in the Exploring Guidebook

<http://www.exploring.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Exploring-Guidebook-800-100-Sept15.pdf>

THE OPEN HOUSE

Objective: to aid Post Advisors and Committee members in developing quality Post program and growing their youth membership. The Open House is the big kickoff for the Post. It is the easiest way to recruit lots of new participants at one time. This is when most prospective Explorers will decide whether they want to join the Post.

First Steps

1. Confirm completion of Explorer leader training and Youth Protection training by all adults who will be registered in your program.
2. Set the date. This was most likely completed during the All-In-One Program Planning meeting.
3. Confirm whether your organization plans to set a participation fee in addition to the annual registration fee. This fee may help subsidize the cost of meeting activities, uniforms or shirts, equipment, etc.

Promote Your Open House

Promoting your open house may seem to be a daunting task, but if you carry out the following suggestions you are guaranteed to have high attendance no matter the type of community or the type of program you are starting. Remember to include all committee members in the process.

1. Deliver personal letters of invitation to students from the head of the organization, printed on the organization's letterhead.
2. Have the committee make a personal phone call to each student to follow up on the letter. If you don't have phone numbers, deliver a reminder note (short and sweet is best).
3. Be sure the person answering the phone number listed in the invitation letter and other promotional materials has the open house information and can explain the basics of the Exploring program.
4. Hang Exploring posters with open house information on front doors of the school, front office of the school, counselor's office, and library.
5. Hang Exploring posters in the front lobby of the participating organization.
6. Post open house information on your council website or calendar.
7. Post open house information on the school website or calendar.
8. Post open house information on the participating organization's website or calendar.
9. Include information on the school's marquee.
10. Include information on the participating organization's marquee.
11. Include information in all area schools' daily announcements during the week leading up to the open house.
12. Have the committee set up a booth during a school or community career fair. (This step can be done any time of the year as an additional recruitment effort.)
13. Have all the participating organization's staff members email everyone in their own contact lists, inviting them to attend. As the professional, you should create this email, and simply ask them to copy and paste it into a new email to their contacts.
14. Find out what methods the participating organization uses to communicate with the local community and utilize those same methods.
15. Promote the open house on your council's Facebook page.
16. Promote the open house on the participating organization's Facebook page.

Personal Invitation Letters

The local Exploring office can provide the names and addresses of young adults who are interested career fields based on career interest survey results. If schools are not willing to provide student directory information (name, address, etc.), print the letters and ask counselors to deliver them to students themselves. Remember to offer to put labels on envelopes for him or her. Letters of invitation should be sent to two distinct groups: prospective Explorers and former or current Explorers, if applicable.

Effective letters of invitation:

- Are printed on the participating organization's letterhead.
- Are signed by the executive officer.
- Are personalized ("Dear Tom," not "Dear Prospective Explorer").
- Do not appear to be a mass mailing or junk mail.
- Encourage young adults to bring their friends.
- Include an attachment with directions and parking information.
- Highlight the activities planned for the meeting.
- Request a response.
- Inform attendees of the minimal participation fee, which may cover accident and sickness insurance coverage (see chapter five for more information on this coverage).
- Mention that the Explorer's presence is valuable in relating with other young adults with their same career interest.

Here are some messages most likely to attract the attention of teens:

- Financial success in career field
- College endorsement of career field
- Increased opportunity to obtain a job in an exclusive field
- Hands-on learning approach
- Fun and entertaining

Conduct the Open House

Rehearse, rehearse, and rehearse! Refer to the sample open house agenda in the appendix. Conduct a walkthrough of the plan developed by the post or club committee and Advisors/Sponsors. Look for minor details that, if overlooked, might cause a problem in the program. Walk through the meeting facility at least one day in advance. Also consider having on hand extension cords for equipment, snacks and refreshments, enough seating (if applicable), and pens for signing participation forms. Make sure that audiovisual equipment is in working order (if needed), enough copies of the post's program calendar are on hand, the room temperature is comfortable, and that you have safety equipment in youth sizes, directional signs, door greeters, a cash box, and a person designated to collect money. Ensure the head of the participating organization is present to personally express the company's interest in Exploring. Help prepare the executive officer beforehand with the aims of Exploring and Exploring terminology so he or she appears prepared and knowledgeable. Avoid references to Scouting, Boy Scouts, and Explorer Scouts. Exploring is the worksite-based career exploration program of Learning for Life, an affiliate of the Boy Scouts of America.

Conduct the meeting as planned. All members of the program committee and all Advisors/Sponsors should be present for name and face recognition, to answer questions from parents or young adults, and to handle any unforeseen circumstances (restock refreshments, etc.).

Paperwork & Money

- Have enough quantities of the Exploring Youth and Adult applications. The bottom copy of these applications serves as receipts.
- Have all prospective Explorers who wish to join, or who are even thinking of joining, fill in their information on a sign-in sheet even if they do not complete an application.
- Be sure to obtain ALL information, as it is vital to proper registration.
- The Post Committee Chairperson should ask parents who are present to volunteer to serve on the Post Committee.
- Collect enough funds from each new Explorer and adult. Local registration fees should be collected separate from Post dues.
- Ensure ALL prospective Explorers have a copy of the Post Program Calendar before they leave.
- Submit the completed forms and required fees to your Service Team volunteer, District Executive or Council office within 48 hours.

Follow-up letters

The head of the participating organization should send a letter to each new Explorer or renewing Explorer the day following the Open House thanking him or her for participating and share the organization head's excitement about the Exploring Post's program.

The participating organization should consider a phone follow-up or follow-up letter with each prospective Explorer who was unable to attend – those young adults are probably still interested but may have had a scheduling conflict on the 1st nighter date. Depending on the number of follow-up calls, this may be done by the participating organization or divided up amongst the Post Committee members.

STEP 9: Evaluation

What did we intend to do? What actually happened? What worked well that we should keep doing? What should we do differently next time to make a better impact? These questions should be asked of each of the adult leaders and Post Committee members shortly after the Open House while everything is still fresh in everyone's minds. The results of the critique should be maintained for the Post Officers for planning the next Open House.

HELPFUL RECRUITING TIPS

- The best recruiters in any Post are the Explorers themselves. Ask each explorer to list three to five prospective participants on cards. Then have the exploring youth leaders sort the cards and eliminate duplication. The names are reviewed at a post meeting, and those who know the people best are assigned to invite them to a meeting. Don't assign more than three prospects to a post participant. Set a target date for the contacts to be completed, with regular reports on progress.
- Contact the school nearest you and set up a recruiting display at a lunch period a day or two during the week and recruit in person with an advisor and/or a couple of Explorers.
- Many posts place meeting notices or posters in schools or young adult centers. Radio and newspaper publicity could feature your post and invite those interested to attend an open house.
- Ensure prospective participants welcome. See to it that post participants circulate among the prospects and encourage them to join.
- Get names, addresses, and phone numbers. Call them right after the meeting and invite them to the next meeting.
- Turnover in participation is normal. Watch your attendance, contact participants who miss two or three meetings, and continually encourage post participants to look for and invite prospects.

KEY FACTORS FOR A SUCCESSFUL POST

A. Use Post resources. Inventory information about adults related to the chartered organization and parents who are willing to provide program help the Post. This program help may involve their career knowledge, hobbies, special skills, contacts, facilities, and ideas.

B. Get parents involved. Encourage parents to become involved in Exploring activities whenever possible:

- 1) Serve on the Post committee;
- 2) Provide transportation, equipment, chaperoning, counseling, and planning to support activities;
- 3) Assist in career, service, leadership, character, life skills, and social activities.

C. Seek youth input. Have each Post member complete the Explorer Activity Interest Survey. Conduct the survey on a regular basis to check on the interests of new members.

D. Guide youth leadership. Youth officers are elected and trained to lead, plan, and make decisions regarding the implementation of Post programs and activities. They should serve long enough to have successful experiences. The Post president should appoint a committee to draft the Post bylaws (see the Resources section of www.learningforlife.org/exploring).

E. Hold regular Post meetings. A minimum of two Explorer Post meetings should be held each month. Fewer than twice a month and Explorers tend to forget about the Post. Discuss important business first. Reserve the remaining time for a planned activity. These activities could be learning new skills (i.e. CPR, rappelling, first aid, a career seminar, computer programming, etc.) or preparing for a high-adventure trip or activity. The Post president conducts Post meetings. A detailed, written agenda should be developed for each meeting. The program vice president and activity chairman make regular phone calls to program presenters or consultants. The president should ensure that all Post meetings start on time. All meetings should have an opening and a closing. Guests should be introduced and made to feel welcome.

F. Train and develop youth officers. The Post officers' seminar. The seminar is a training and planning session for newly elected officers. It is led by the Advisor, youth president, and the associate Advisors. A success fill seminar provides a clear road map for the coming months and enables the officers to begin assuming leadership of the Post.

G. Give recognition for achievement. Young adults expect to be rewarded for their accomplishments. There are several recognition programs and scholarship opportunities available to Explorers, including Career Achievement Awards, Learning for Life Leadership Award, Young American Award, and Congressional Awards to name a few. The Exploring Office has more information, or you can find it on the website at www.learningforlife.org/exploring.

H. Maintain a well-rounded program. Use the Five Areas of Emphasis as a guide to plan programs that will help maintain interest and meet the goals and objectives of the Exploring Program. Find more program information on the website at www.learningforlife.org/exploring. Contact your Council office for more information about Adult Explorer Leader Training and the Exploring Advanced Leadership Development Workshop.