



Trained Leadership in Units

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Introduction

Scouting America emphasizes the importance of trained leadership for creating a safe and enriching environment for its youth members. However, within my rural district, a significant percentage of unit leaders haven't completed or even begun their position-specific training, raising concerns about the program's effectiveness and safety. This research investigates the factors contributing to this low training completion rate. As of February 2024, data indicated that 45.16% of leaders lacked the required training. This disparity prompted a closer look at the training experiences and preferences of leaders in our district.

The research explores several potential causes for the low training completion rate. These include:

- A lack of awareness about position-specific training requirements.
- Limited internet access hindering online training completion.
- A preference for in-person training sessions over online modules.

To address these possibilities, a questionnaire was developed and distributed to unit leaders. This questionnaire aimed to gather data on leaders' experiences with position-specific training and understand their preferred training methods. Additionally, the research examines the importance leaders place on having trained leaders within their units and how this perception might influence training completion rates.

The overarching goal of this research is to identify strategies that increase access to and completion of position-specific training for leaders. This enhanced training is expected to equip leaders with the necessary skills and knowledge to better serve their units and ultimately lead to a safer, more positive program for the youth members. It is further anticipated that increased training completion will improve leader retention and unit membership. This research will inform the collaborative efforts of the district commissioner and training chair to develop effective strategies for increasing the percentage of trained leaders and ultimately, benefiting the youth in our Scouting district.

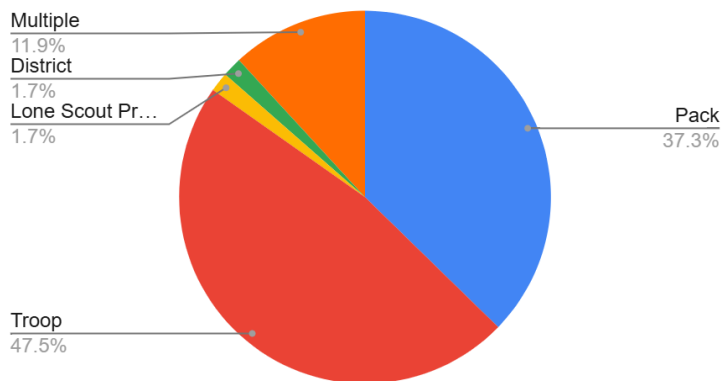
Leadership Training Questionnaire

These are the questions that were asked in the Frontier District Leadership.

1. What type of unit are you registered with?
2. Were you aware that there is training available for your leadership position?
3. Are you fully trained for your unit position?
4. If you are not, why have you not completed the basic training?
5. If you are not leader-specific trained, do you know what you have to have to be trained for your position?
6. Would you rather have in-person classroom training, or do it on the computer at your pace?
7. If you are trained in your leadership position, have you had any advanced training, like Wood Badge, IOLS, BALOO, etc.
8. Do you know where to go to get your basic leader specific training on the internet if you would prefer online training?
9. Do you think being a "trained" leader for the youth that you serve is important?

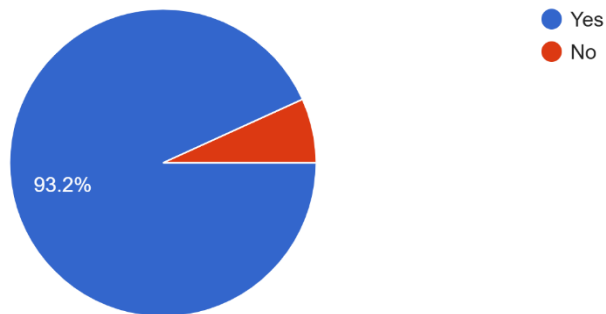
To gather data for this thesis exploring the value of adult training within Scouting America's Frontier District, a questionnaire was disseminated through a multi-pronged approach. The survey was distributed multiple times via email to the entire district, promoted at the Frontier District Roundtable, and shared on the district's Facebook page. Furthermore, a link to the questionnaire was directly emailed to Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, and District Members with the request that they forward it to their unit leaders. Despite these efforts to maximize participation, a total of 59 responses were received from the district's leadership. The findings from these responses are detailed below.

What type of Unit are you registered with?



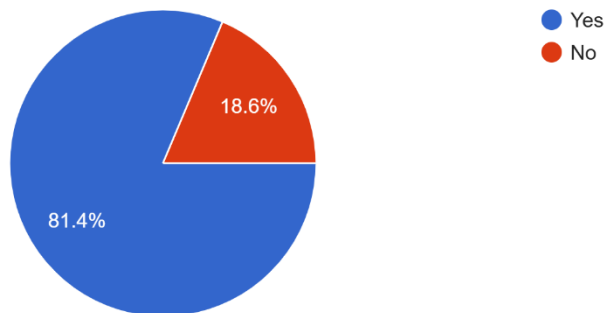
1. Were you aware that there is training available for your leadership position?

59 responses



2. Are you fully trained for your unit position?

59 responses



3. If you are not, why have you not completed the basic training?

N/A

I have

Trained

Time. Need to finish online crew training

It's an in-class course, and I don't have time to attend university of scouting

The website isn't easy to manage so it's not available quickly on my phone in my free time

I don't know when I can go and do it.

I was unable to complete training for 4 years. IOLS training is only offered during fall and spring. The typical dates often conflict with either troop activities or personal family activities.

Not sure if am.

Acquired new position

Why is this mandatory to answer?

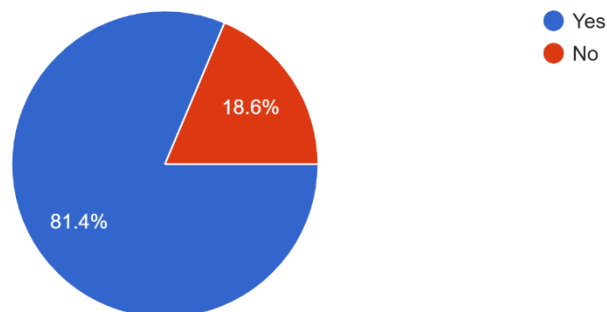
Don't think it exists, formally.

I am fully trained. However it took 3 years for me to get IOLS training completed. This training needs to be offered to new leaders as a part of the summer camp program.

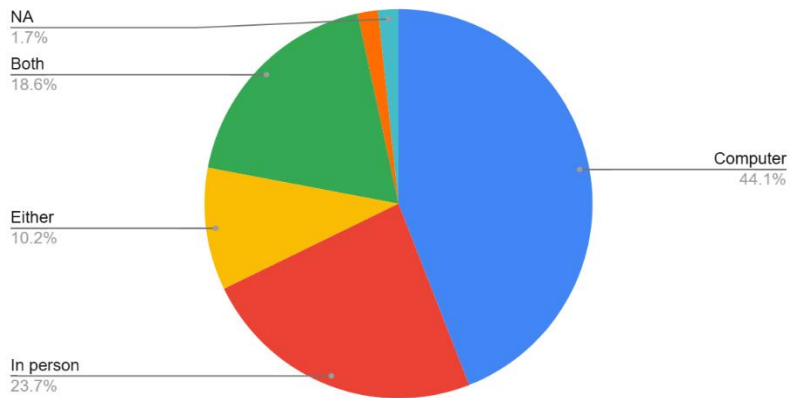
I don't know what training is available or what I need.

4. If you are not leader-specific trained, do you know what you have to have to be trained for your position?

59 responses

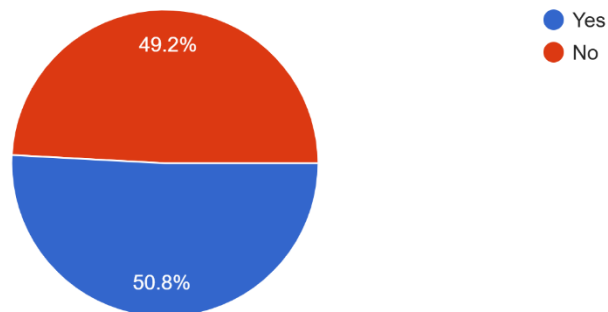


5. Would you rather have in-person classroom training, or do it on the computer at your pace?



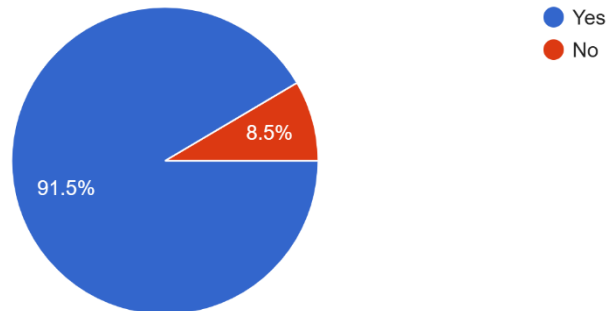
6. If you are trained in your leadership position, have you had any advanced training, like Wood Badge, IOLS, BALOO, etc.

59 responses



7. Do you know where to go to get your basic leader specific training on the internet if you would prefer to online training?

59 responses



8. Do you think being a "trained" leader for the youth that you serve is important?

Yes

It's absolutely important!

Somewhat. I think there are certain trainings that are beneficial.

Maybe

Extremely

Being "trained" is very important. I don't think we focus enough on what it means to be a youth led unit. In addition to YPT some sort of training with regard to what it means for a unit to be youth led ought to be required in order to attend troop activities as an adult.

It makes our troop better, to be trained

It is imperative to maintain a positive leadership capability.

Being trained is very important and should be a requirement. However, I've been to a couple of trainings where information provided was conflicting with the Guide to Advancement.

No

With the answers to some of these questions, I would like for the District Training Chair and commissioner's team to formally address the leadership of the units.

1. Who knows what the BALOO (Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation), IOLS (Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills), and Wood Badge are?
2. For Cubmasters, or Den Leaders, do you know that you are required to have Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation Training to take a pack or a den camping?
3. For Scoutmaster, do you know that you are required to have Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills Training to be a “Trained Leader”?

This section of the questionnaire aimed to assess adult leaders' awareness of mandatory training requirements within Scouting America. The questions sought to identify potential knowledge gaps regarding the necessity of specific trainings, particularly those related to outdoor leadership skills, as highlighted in question 6. This focus stemmed from a concern that leaders might be unaware of the requirements for Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation and Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills. Significantly, the responses revealed a notable deficiency in advanced training among the participants, with 49.2% indicating a lack thereof. This finding underscores a potential need for increased emphasis on the importance and availability of advanced training opportunities within the Frontier District.

Leadership Training

For the Leaders to be considered trained for their leadership positions, they need the following training.

For Cub Scout Position-Specific Training

Leaders who complete either the online or facilitated training are considered trained for their position.

Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO)

This one-and-a-half-day course is designed as an introduction to the Cub Scout outdoor program for leaders interested in adding a camping component to their Pack activities.

BALOO training consists of an online pre-requisite component in addition to an overnight hand on practical.

BSA's Cub Scout level camping policies will be taught along with the discovery of the necessary tools to help units carry out a successful camping experience.

Completion of this course is mandatory for a **MINIMUM OF ONE** adult on a Pack overnigher.

For Scouts BSA Position-Specific Training

Scoutmasters and assistant Scoutmasters who complete the online or facilitated training and *Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills* are considered “trained” for those positions.

All other positions who complete the online or facilitated training are considered “trained” for their positions.

Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS)

Working as patrols, this hands-on course provides adult leaders the practical outdoor skills they need to lead Scouts in the out-of-doors. Upon completion, leaders should feel comfortable teaching Scouts the basic skills required to obtain the First-Class rank. Along with Scoutmaster Specifics this course is required of all direct contact leaders registered in Scouts BSA Troops in order to be considered “trained”.

For Venturing Position-Specific Training

Leaders who complete the online or facilitated training are considered “trained” for those positions.

Crew Committee Challenge

The Crew Committee Challenge is designed for crew committee members and becomes the course (along with the Venturing version of Youth Protection training) crew committee members need to be considered “trained.” in lieu of the online training. The instructor guide below is for trainers to conduct the course for crew committee members. (Resources for Program Trainers & Training Committees, the National Scouting America Website, 2025)

For Sea Scouts Basic Leader Training

Leaders who complete the online or facilitated training are considered “trained” for those positions.

Joining

Youth Protection Training

The BSA requires Youth Protection training for all registered volunteers. It is not optional training but a joining requirement. To take the training online, leaders must go to my.scouting.org and establish a my.Scouting account.

Basic

All leaders are encouraged to complete leader position-specific training before they meet with youth to prepare them for the opportunities and responsibilities relating to their leadership positions. Leader position-specific training is also an opportunity for new leaders to get answers to questions they might have about their roles and responsibilities.

Sea Scout Adult Leader Basic Training

Sea Scout Adult Leader Basic Training is the first step in training for all Sea Scout leaders focusing on the skills and attributes necessary to be an effective advisor in the Ship’s deliverance of service to youth in your specific geographic location. It is intended primarily to enhance individual knowledge of and connectivity with the strategic plan, program and resources while emphasizing personal skills necessary for the development of youth in the Sea Scout program.

Advanced

Leaders desiring a deeper understanding of the program or seeking additional leadership development will find advanced training highly rewarding. Successful completion of basic training is usually a prerequisite for advanced training. These training courses should supplement the knowledge and skills learned in the other levels and in general are intended for leaders who are supporting not only units but also potentially the district, council, area, regional, and national levels of Scouting America.

Seabadge

Seabadge is intense leadership and management training focused on the “how-to” aspects of managing a successful youth-led Sea Scout program. While Seabadge was developed as an advanced leadership training program for experienced Sea Scout adult leaders the course is open to all adult Scout leaders. The driving theme for the training is to “Focus on Youth”, which makes the course especially valuable for any Scout leader dealing with older youth. Seabadge does not cover topics like boating, knots, or other program-related materials found in the Sea Scout Manual.

Supplemental

Supplemental training includes a variety of courses offered on a district, council, area, regional, or national basis. Courses are designed to give additional information on targeted areas of the program through additional knowledge of Scouting in general, additional skills and roles knowledge, and/or beginning or advanced leadership skills. Some of the information presented in basic training is treated in greater depth in supplemental training courses. Some courses are held on a regular basis to cultivate our culture of continuous learning.

Introduction to On-the-Water Leader Skills Training

This program gives adult leaders an introduction to resources and on-the-water skills they need to assist Sea Scouts in achieving Ordinary rank. The material and training presented in Introduction to On-the-Water Leader Skills (IOWLS) closely

follows the Sea Scout Manual, the Guide to Safe Scouting, and the ANSI (Approved American National Standard) standards for on-water vessel activities and are meant to serve as an adult training outline. In addition, participants will be given access to lesson plans and support materials that will enable them or their youth to teach Apprentice and Ordinary advancement requirements.

Advanced On-the-Water Leader Skills Training

This program models how adult leaders can step back from the helm, set performance expectations for the youth in their unit, and safely conduct an effective Sea Scout program underway. It is the mission of this course to model the methods and objectives of delivering the Sea Scout program while underway (long cruise), and to teach adult leaders how to support youth as they advance in rank, prepare for SEAL, and conduct quartermaster cruises.

Power Squadron Courses

The US Power Squadron is one of Sea Scouting's strongest partners. Sea Scout Leaders are encouraged to take USPS Courses to improve their on the water skill set. Below is a list of available courses. Contact your local Squadron for dates and more information. (Sea Scout Leader Training & Education, the National Sea Scout Website, 2025)

Wood Badge

Wood Badge is an advanced, national leadership course open only to Scouting volunteers and professionals.

Scouters from Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouts, and Explorers, and district and council Scouters all are welcome and belong here.

What do we see on course?

We do many things on course, like:

- Listening
- Managing conflict
- Leading change
- Stages of team development
- Coaching & mentoring
- Leadership for different stages
- Servant leadership
- Project planning
- And more!

These come to you in presentations, games, discussions, activities, and other methods.

Why do you want to go?

You want to participate in a Wood Badge course because of things you will learn and do. Here are some of the benefits:

- Stronger units. You will make your Scouting unit — and your sons' and daughters' units — stronger.
- What and why of Scouting. You will have a deeper understanding of what Scouting is and why we do it.
- Experience. You will learn and experience things that will stay with you in Scouting and the rest of your life.
- Fun. You will have fun and you will meet interesting people.
- Other groups. You will make your other groups, like work, church, even family, stronger.

Here's another summary of why to go. This was originally aimed particularly at Scouters in the Cub Scout program, but it applies equally to all of us.

This course will help you better understand how all the Scouting programs tie together. It will provide you with many useful leadership tools to help enable our youth to have the best possible Scouting experience. There is no better time to attend a Wood Badge course and make a difference in your unit than when you are a Cub Scout Leader.

Purpose of Wood Badge

The purpose of Wood Badge is to develop skilled leaders who can strengthen Scouting units in achieving the mission of the Scouting America.

When we accomplish the mission of Scouting, we do it in the units. Therefore, the short form of the purpose is, the purpose of Wood Badge is to strengthen units.

Although the course is different today, what Baden-Powell said in 1919 still applies:

One of the purposes of Wood Badge training is to get Scouters to think about the practice of Scouting, to meet together, to exchange experiences, and to live together in the spirit of the Scout "Oath". (Wood Badge, the National Scouting America Website, 2025)

New Connections Guide for Adult Training

The new connections Guide for adult training is a new unit metric designed to strengthen unit leaders, ultimately enhancing the quality of leadership provided to youth members. By encouraging and tracking leader training, this metric promotes a higher standard of program delivery that benefits both Scouts and their families.

Four-Step Connection Process:

This metric involves a four-step process to facilitate connections and support adult leader training. These steps ensure that leaders receive the necessary resources and encouragement to develop their skills and provide a richer Scouting experience for youth participants.

Step 1: COMMISSIONERS REVIEW UNIT KEY METRICS

Objective Unit Data for the Adult Training.

- Have the unit leader (Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, Skipper, and Venturing Advisor) and the committee chair both completed their position-specific training.

The initial phase of this metric involves utilizing available tools, such as the commissioner's tool or the training manager, to generate a position-specific training report for each unit. This report provides a clear overview of the training status of key unit leaders, specifically the unit leader and committee chair, indicating whether they have completed the required training for their respective roles. This assessment serves as the foundation for subsequent steps in the connection process, enabling the commissioner's team to tailor their support and guidance based on individual needs.

Step 2: UNIT CONVERSATIONS

Celebrate Success for Achievement or Improvement:

- Effective recognition is essential to effective unit service
- Just say it. A Straightforward, face-to-face “well done” is a simple but effective way to celebrate achievement.

A key component of this metric involves proactive communication between the commissioner's team and unit leadership (unit leader and committee chair). This interaction serves several purposes:

- **Training Completion:** If leaders haven't completed required training, the team collaborates with them to establish a timeframe for fulfilling those requirements.
- **Training Verification:** In cases where training records are incomplete or outdated, the team assists leaders in updating their records, potentially by liaising with the district training chair. This ensures accurate reflection of training status within the system.
- **Understanding Barriers:** By engaging in open dialogue, the team can identify any obstacles preventing leaders from completing training and provide appropriate support.

Step 3: HELPING THE UNIT SET GOALS

The unit can decide its own goals, whether they want detailed, simple or no goals at all. A Commissioner should be available to support them throughout this process.

- Increase the unit's position-specific training rate within 90 days.
- Promote and distribute information regarding training awards.
- Work with the district training chair and district executive to identify training opportunities.
- Seek out and communicate the next available Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO) and/or Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS) training event.

To further encourage training completion, the commissioner's team will:

- **Goal Setting:** Collaborate with unit leaders and committee chairs to establish realistic goals and timelines for completing necessary training. This provides a structured approach and fosters a sense of accountability.
- **Incentive Highlighting:** Promote awareness of the adult training awards program, emphasizing the recognition and sense of accomplishment associated with achieving training milestones.
- **Targeted Support:** Provide direct assistance in locating and registering for essential training courses, such as Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation (BALOO) and Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS), ensuring leaders have the resources they need to fulfill their roles effectively.

By actively promoting training opportunities and providing individualized support, this metric aims to cultivate a culture of leadership development within Scouting units. This, in turn, contributes to a more robust and engaging program for youth participants.

Step 4: COMMISSIONERS PROVIDING UNIT SUPPORT

- Follow up with the unit regularly to check in on the status of their goals and provide them with upcoming training opportunities with the district, council, or nation.
- Connect unit leaders with the district training chair or a volunteer who can advocate for the training at a variety of levels with Scouting America.
- Meet with the district or council Training Chair or District Executive (DE) to discuss the adult training opportunities. (Connection Guide Adult Training, 7/13/2024)

To ensure continued progress towards training goals, the commissioner's team provides ongoing support through:

- **Individualized Monitoring:** Regularly reviewing the training progress of unit leaders and committee chairs, offering encouragement and addressing any emerging challenges. This personalized approach reinforces accountability and facilitates timely completion of training requirements.

- **Information Dissemination:** Utilizing district roundtables and other communication channels to announce upcoming training opportunities at the district, council, and national levels. This proactive approach ensures that leaders are well-informed and have access to relevant training resources.
- **Progress Tracking:** Systematically documenting the training achievements of unit leaders and committee chairs within the designated tracking system. This allows for efficient monitoring of progress and facilitates data-driven decision-making at the unit and district levels.

By providing consistent support, disseminating timely information, and diligently tracking progress, the commissioner's team plays a crucial role in fostering a culture of training and development within Scouting units. This contributes to a stronger leadership foundation, ultimately enhancing the quality of the program delivered to youth members.

Conclusion

This thesis has presented a new unit metric designed to strengthen connections between unit leaders and the commissioner's team, ultimately enhancing the quality of leadership provided to youth members. By promoting and supporting leader training through a multi-faceted approach, this metric addresses key challenges identified through survey data and emphasizes a collaborative, resource-driven process.

The findings of this research underscore the importance of:

- **Data-Driven Training:** Utilizing survey data to tailor training delivery methods to the preferences of unit leaders, including classroom-based instruction, webinars, and online Q&A sessions.
- **Proactive Communication:** Leveraging district roundtables, social media platforms, and commissioner visits to effectively disseminate information about training opportunities and resources.
- **Ongoing Support:** Providing individualized guidance and mentorship to unit leaders, assisting them in navigating training requirements and achieving "Trained Leader" status.

By implementing this metric, Scouting units can cultivate a culture of leadership development that prioritizes the safety and well-being of youth members. Trained leaders are better equipped to provide engaging, enriching programs that foster personal growth, character development, and a lifelong love of learning.

This metric serves as a call to action for district leaders to prioritize leader training and invest in the resources necessary to support it. By empowering leaders with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed, we ensure that Scouting continues to provide a positive and impactful experience for generations to come.

Appendix

The data concerning untrained individuals was collected from the my.scouting.org training manager for the Frontier District in February 2024. The 2025 metrics for the "Trained" requirements have been included.

Units	Not-Trained		Are these People Trained	
	Feb-24	Jan-25	Unit Leader	Committee Chair
Pack				
102	25.00%	40.00%	YES	YES
104	44.44%	44.44%	YES	YES
211	12.50%	36.36%	YES	YES
239	42.86%	57.14%	YES	YES
268	63.64%	75.00%	NO	NO
273	6.67%	33.33%	YES	YES
322	33.33%	60.00%	NO	YES
351	19.51%	67.65%	NO	YES
352	8.33%	31.25%	NO	YES
369	42.86%	44.44%	YES	NO
466	100.00%	100.00%	NO	NO
933	71.43%	75.00%	NO	NO
3410	14.29%	33.33%	YES	NO
Troop				
46	40.00%	50.00%	YES	YES
103	69.23%	77.78%	NO	YES
114	28.57%	50.00%	NO	YES
154	100.00%	100.00%	NO	NO
171	40.00%	60.00%	NO	YES
173	28.57%	42.86%	NO	NO
239	80.00%	75.00%	NO	NO
265	28.57%	70.00%	NO	YES
268	50.00%	70.00%	NO	YES
273	6.67%	33.33%	YES	YES

322	66.67%	66.67%	NO	NO
352	57.14%	71.43%	NO	YES
462	50.00%	50.00%	NO	NO
1123	83.33%	83.33%	NO	NO
1268	60.00%	60.00%	YES	YES
1855	25.00%	33.33%	NO	NO
3510	63.64%	75.00%	NO	YES
Crew				
273		83.33%	NO	NO
District	37.84%	60.00%		
TOTAL AVERAGE	45.16%	59.69%		

Resources

Resources for Program Trainers & Training Committees, the National Scouting America Website,

<https://www.scouting.org/training/resources-for-program-trainers-training-committees/>

Sea Scout Leader Training & Education, the National Sea Scout Website, <https://seascout.org/adult-training/>

Wood Badge, the National Scouting America Website,

https://www.scouting.org/training/resources-for-program-trainers-training-committees/woodbadge/?_ga=2.25589437.1496008220.1735867672-551366838.1730769621&_gac=1.15619428.1732499347.cj0kcqiauou6bhdharisaifgrn7csbv2vcjmbptexcw0jx2pnknxoylwm2l892s1m3hzro2huhvsutcaauvjealw_wcb

Build the Unit, the National Scouting America Website,

<https://www.scouting.org/commissioners/starting-sustaining-and-growing-units/build-the-unit/>

CONNECTION GUIDE ADULT TRAINING