

Because of COVID-19, parents simply aren't involving their children in as many in-person group activities as they otherwise would have. Many of those activities, like youth sports, for instance, are largely impossible to conduct safely in some communities. Scouting, on the other hand, can conduct much of its programming through virtual means. With many other in-person youth activities unavailable, parents will be looking for activity options for their children, which makes now a good time to introduce people to Scouting and encourage them to attend virtual Scout meetings and do Scouting activities with their family.

Through online application tools, a Scout unit can hold a virtual rally, invite people to join digitally, and complete their registration totally online.

In preparing to hold a virtual rally or meeting, the first place to start is [this Digital Safety Moment](#) that provides useful tips on how to conduct safe virtual Scouting meetings.

Setting up your BeAScout pin and Online Registration Tools

Also, prior to holding a virtual rally, everyone should make sure to set up BeAScout pins and online registration tools. If you know of units that have not already set up their BeAScout pin or online registration tool, they can use the [Unit Guidebook to Online Registration](#) that will walk them through the process can be found with other key resources here: <https://www.scouting.org/resources/online-registration/>.

A reminder that everyone should be sure to allow online payment features so that parents can use credit or debit cards to pay their registration fees to make this a seamless and touchless process from start to finish.

Virtual meeting rally recruitment plan

Step1: Organization Meeting – Use a business-oriented conference platform that includes good safety and privacy features, including password protection. Hold a virtual meeting with your parents or older youth. If you have a large pack, troop, or crew, hold the meeting with your unit leaders and have them hold the same meeting with parents from their den, or parents/youth in patrols.

The goal of this meeting is to get leaders and parents to think about who they know that has a child of Scouting age who is not in Scouting and to start a recruitment prospect list. Have your parents either:

- Provide the name and email addresses to a rally coordinator in your unit so that they can collect all of the names and email addresses and send the invitation to the virtual meeting.

or

- Provide the parents in your unit with an email invitation for the virtual rally that includes the QR code or URL to the unit's online application and ask them to forward it to the parents in their contact lists. (The downside of this method is reduced ability to know who is receiving access to the virtual meeting and an inability to easily follow up with these families later.)

Step 2: – Plan the Rally and Agenda – While you are collecting email addresses, start planning your virtual rally. Since many platforms are now limiting how long a meeting can last, and because you also want to be respectful of a parent's time, you must have a detailed agenda about what is going to be covered and who is covering it during the virtual meeting. When planning the virtual rally decide:

- Who is going to be the main speaker and who is going to control the virtual meeting – have a production team for the best results.

- Have a person who knows how the virtual meeting platform works serve as the meeting coordinator. They should be the person who logs in as the host, controls the screen sharing, and mutes all except the main speakers.
- Have other people be the main presenters. You might want to have more than one so that prospective parents can see the unit has a team of leaders who work together – it's not just a one-person show.
- Have a person who monitors chat questions and acts as the moderator during the Q&A session. This person can also reply back in the chat feature during the presentation.
- Items you may want to include in the rally agenda:
 - Introduction of Unit leadership – who you are and why you are involved in Scouting (5 to 7 minutes)
 - Let the parents know that you will be taking Q&A through the chat and will be answering at the end of the presentation.
 - What you have planned for your unit over the next few months. (15 minutes)
 - Virtual meeting times
 - Virtual rank requirements workshops (remember these parents are not in Scouting, so provide a brief explanation of the skills or activities that the youth will be doing and what they will learn from the activity)
 - Virtual campouts – council/national or just your unit
 - A few ideas about activities that might happen outdoors after the shelter-in-place is lifted, but social distancing is still a practice – focus on keeping people safe and providing a fun activity
 - Cost of joining and what that pays for (2 minutes)
 - How the person can join your unit. Decide if you will be sending out email invitations with QR codes or the URL from Invitation Manager, or through the BeAScout URL. (3 minutes)
 - Parents can fill out the online application using their smartphone, tablet, or PC, and pay their national registration fee by credit card (if the unit has turned on credit card setting)
 - If you have a unit fee you will need to determine how that will be collected and inform the parents
 - Q&A from parents and wrap up (15 minutes)

STEP 3 – Send out the invitations to the rally

- If you have collected the email addresses for prospective families:
 - Customize the invitation to include the virtual meeting URL and password for the event.
 - Let them know that a friend has referred them to join your unit and you are having a short meeting to explain the virtual activities youth and families will have available if they join the unit. Include a message that you are looking forward to meeting them virtually on this meeting.
 - Include the QR code or URL to your unit's online application. This can be found in my.Scouting tools. Select menu and then Invitation Manager to download these two items. Full instructions can be found in the Unit Guidebook to Online Registration which you can find at <https://www.scouting.org/resources/online-registration/>.
- If you have not collected email addresses from prospective families:
 - Send an email with the virtual meeting URL and password for the event.
 - Also include the QR code or URL for your unit's online application.
 - Let the Scout parents know this email is for them to forward to their friends and contacts that have youth of Scouting age and that the QR code and URL are specific to your unit, so they should so they should keep that in mind when they invite people to join.

STEP 4 – Hold the virtual rally – execute your plan from Step 2.

STEP5 – Accept new members online –

- The Cubmaster, Committee Chair, or Chartered Organization Representative can open the Application Manager in my.Scouting and accept the new youth as applications come in.
- The Chartered Organization Representative can also accept or reject new adult applications as they come in, so be sure the COR knows your plans and is ready to take action as well.
- The system will automatically send the family a welcome email upon your acceptance of their paid application. And, if the unit has selected to automatically send a message, the unit welcome message will also be sent to the family within 24 hours.

- New youth and adults who have been accepted will show up in your unit roster in Member Manager on my.Scouting within 24 hours of your acceptance in Application Manager.

Email and Social Media Peer-to-Peer recruitment plan.

This plan does not involve a virtual meeting, rather, it is just a grass-roots effort by your parents and youth to invite their friends to join your unit.

Like the plan above, it involves sending emails to all of your current families asking them to forward your email that includes your units QR code or URL to the unit's online application. In the text of your email outline what your unit will be doing over the next few months and how fun it would be to have more youth and families they know take part in these meetings by joining your unit. Similar to the virtual meeting plan, also be sure the let them know that the QR code and URL are specific to your unit so they should keep that in mind when they invite people to join. Ask them to include a personal story about what their child has learned through Scouting and a personal ask for the family to join them in their Scouting adventure.

Once the email to your members is sent, follow STEP 5 – Accept New Members Online above to process the applications that come in through the online registration system.