

LLD:Endeavor | Unit Relations

Session Length: 45 minutes

Learning Objectives:

- Understand how to develop relationships with units.
- Develop methods to increase unit leader contacts and unit meeting times.
- Realize the importance of working closely with the unit leader in developing effective representatives.

Required Materials:

- Zoom Pro account with breakout rooms
- PowerPoint

Outline of the Session:

This session will help the Lodge with their Performance Measurement Program.

This session will relay this theme in the following ways:

- By giving learners an understanding of how to increase Unit Election and Visitation rates.
- Demonstrating ways to build meaningful relationships with unit leaders.

Trainer Preparation:

The ideal trainer should have the knowledge of what it takes to run proper unit visitations, and preferably served as an OA Unit Representative. Read the syllabus thoroughly. Prepare PowerPoint and Breakout Rooms before the presentation. Evaluate your audience and adjust your presentation tactics to fit their mindset.

Session Narrative:

Introduction: 2 minutes

The trainer should introduce themselves and the topic. They should provide a background of his Order of the Arrow experience in building unit relations. Although this session narrative is written in the first person, trainers should not read directly from the syllabus and work to develop their own delivery style while maintaining the integrity of the content.

During this session, we will be taking the time to discuss the foundation of our membership: the units, and how we can build meaningful relationships with them. While we go over the content, you may find that your Lodge already does some of these things well and other items that might need work on. I encourage you to take notes, review the resources, and build a dynamic Unit Relations program in your Lodge.

The purpose of this session is not to discuss the OA Unit Representative program in detail but to increase the program's awareness, give resources on developing your own, and give you the tools to overcome the challenges that you will face when dealing with unit leaders.

Before we can talk about those challenges, we need to understand the OA Unit Representative program.

OA Troop Representative Background 3 min

In 1999, the Order of the Arrow and Boy Scout Committee introduced the OA Troop Representative position. This marked the first time in the history of the Boy Scouts of America that the Order of the Arrow had a formal role in unit operations. When the Order of the Arrow became the Honor Society of all Scouts BSA programs, the position shifted to be the OA Unit Representative role.

Another significant aspect of the OA Unit Representative position is that it is an official unit position, and time served counts towards rank advancement.

In addition to the OA Unit Representative, there is also a role for an adult Arrowman in the unit. As with all other youth positions in the Order of the Arrow, the OA Unit Representative should have an adviser. This individual should be an Assistant Scoutmaster in the unit.

To quickly summarize, the OA Unit Representative's purpose is to serve as a 'bridge' between the unit and the chapter or Lodge. The ideal situation would be that each unit that desires to have one would appoint a representative. This person would perform several tasks, including:

- Attending chapter/lodge meetings, passing information onto his unit, and providing information back to the chapter/lodge.
- Serves as the primary contact when information needs to be distributed from the Order of the Arrow to each individual unit.
- Serves as a mentor to unit Arrowmen on their way to attaining the Brotherhood honor.
- Facilitates unit elections, visitations, and camp promotions for their unit.
- Works with the Patrol Leader's Council to take Order of the Arrow activities into consideration when planning the unit's program calendar.
- Serves as a knowledgeable source about the Order of the Arrow within his unit.

There are several other roles that a Unit Representative can assume, but these are the most important.

The OA Unit Representative must be under 18 years of age. They are appointed by the youth unit leader with the approval of the adult unit leader.

So now that we have a basic understanding of the program. How can we implement this?

Implementation 5 min

Trainer tip:



- Talk with the Lodge before the session to determine what category the Lodge fits under.
- Start by using that implementation area.
- If the Lodge seems to not respond, go over the other example or mix the two's characteristics to fit the Lodge's needs.

Large Lodge with Chapters:

In a lodge with chapters, the chapter chief should appoint a Unit Representative Chairman to the Chapter Executive Committee. This individual could serve under a vice chief or report directly to the chapter chief. If your Lodge has large chapters, the Unit Representative Chairman could appoint several liaisons underneath them to coordinate all the Unit Representatives.

It will also be necessary for the lodge chief to appoint a chairman on the lodge level to serve on the Lodge Executive Committee under the Lodge Vice-Chief most applicable to the program. They could be responsible for coordinating with the camping promotions, activities, publications, and other chairmen to ensure that the Unit Representatives receive the most current and up-to-date information on what they should be doing in their home units.

Small Lodge with no Chapters:

For lodges without chapters, the lodge chief would appoint a chairman to run the program on the Lodge Executive Committee. It might need liaisons to work underneath them to help coordinate Unit Representatives.

Other Items:

The chapter/lodge has the responsibility to ensure that the program is successful. The chapter/lodge would take responsibilities of:

- Administration – The Unit Representative Chairman should keep an updated roster of the Representatives for each unit. This is critical to ensure that the representatives are receiving the information needed.
- Communication – The chapter/lodge should mail Unit Representative registration forms to all the units at the beginning of the year with instructions on who to contact when a representative is appointed.
- Training – The chapter/lodge should provide unit Representative training seminars twice a year for newly appointed representatives.
- Recognition – The chapter/Lodge must recognize the service of its Representatives and advisers.



This all sounds great but organizing and coordinating an effective program will have its challenges. Let us look at some of those:

Challenges of the Troop Rep. Program 8 minutes

There are many challenges that you will face when developing the OA Unit Representative program. We have brought together the four most common ones:

1. Awareness:

How many of you have heard of the OA Unit Representative program? Now, how many of you knew what the Unit Representative does before this session?

I am sure we all knew learned a couple of items that we did not know prior. Now imagine that you are a unit leader that is not active in the OA. How do we increase awareness? I am sure many of the units in your council may have heard of the program but do not understand the purpose or the benefits it can provide them.

Without the Lodge or chapter working to increase awareness among units, the program will not succeed. Furthermore, it may be hard for unit leaders to select individuals for the role they do not understand.

Awareness challenges also occur from apathy among unit, Lodge, and chapter leaders. Lack of concern or interest from all parties can make the process extremely difficult.

2. Recruitment

Another challenge facing lodges and the chapter is recruiting the Unit Representatives and their advisers.

Recruitment difficulty arises because the program gives control over the appointment to the unit leadership, not the chapter or Lodge. The success of the program relies heavily on positives relationships between chapter/lodges and units.

3. Communication

Effective communication can help lead to success in any project. For the Unit Representative program, first representatives need the training to understand what their new job entails and

serve the position effectively. Communication with unit leaders can be challenging with turnover in a unit.

4. Commitment

Successfully implementing and maintaining a strong program can be difficult and time-consuming. Those in charge of the program from the chapter/lodge must contact every unit, encourage the unit leaders to buy in, and provide representatives the proper training and tools.

Addressing Challenges – 20 minutes

Now that we know the challenges, we want you to divide them into the 4 breakout rooms and discuss how to address that challenge. Each breakout will be assigned a challenge. Good luck!

(Give time 10 minutes to discuss and 10 minutes to share, use the appendix page "Addressing Challenges Solutions to fill in if needed.)

Conclusion – 7 minutes

Now that we know about the OA Unit Representative Program, the challenges associated, and how to address those challenges. I want to end by taking 5 minutes to have you all discuss how to start implementing the program in your Lodge. Thank you.

Addressing Challenges Solutions

Awareness

- **Lodge Mailing:** The chapter/lodge should mail out the OA Unit Representative information and resources to every Unit Leader in the council. The Lodge should include a letter explaining the program's benefits to the unit, council, Lodge, and chapter. The mailing should also have a form with the unit representative and their adviser's contact information to be updated or filled out by the Unit Leader and mailed to the council office.
- **OA Unit Representative Resource Packet:** The lodge/chapter should create many OA Unit Representative resource packets. These packets should include OA Unit Representative resources and information for unit leaders, with forms including information such as program benefits, lodge/chapter contact information, Q&A, OA Unit Representative/Adviser contact information, etc.
- **Unit Visitations:** When your chapter/lodge conducts their unit visitation—for either camping promotions and/or unit elections—each team should bring unit representative resource packets. They should also spend some time with the unit leaders to answer any questions, address all concerns, and "sell" the program.

Recruitment

- **Make It a Big Deal:** The OA Unit Representative program is a big deal. Make it a big deal. Provide important tasks to OA Unit Representatives and their advisers. Recognize them at every opportunity. Have special meetings and/or gatherings of OA Unit Representatives at lodge activities.
- **Chapter/Lodge Contact Database:** The challenge of differing leadership calendars from unit to unit and unit to lodge will always be a problem. The only thing the lodge/chapter can do is make this difficulty easier to deal with. An easy way to solve this problem is to create a master database in each Lodge and/or chapter of units, Unit Leader contact info, representative contact info, and their leadership term. With this, you have one place to look for every unit leader and representative's contact information. You also know precisely when their leadership calendar ends. You need to contact them again to get information about the new OA Unit Representative. This is a great tool your Lodge can utilize with this program and unit elections and camping promotions.

Communication

- **Chapter/Lodge Website:** Up-to-date information for units and their OA Unit Representatives available on a lodge/chapter website. However, the key to making this communication method success is spreading the word about the website. The website should be linked from the council site and advertised in every Lodge and council publication.
- **Council Newsletter:** The lodge/chapter could also relay information to representatives through their council's newsletter. The Lodge would need to contact the editor and write an article providing any necessary information the OA Unit Representatives would need.

Commitment

- **Chose a Capable Youth and Adviser:** To expect others to be committed to the program's success, the lodge/chapter must first save themselves. To do this, you will need to appoint a youth capable of succeeding in the position and the right adviser to supervise, support, and help whenever required. As a lodge/chapter chief, you must recognize that the OA Unit Representative program can have a substantial positive impact on your lodge/chapter. The program's benefits are worth appointing one of your best youth and advisers to implement and build a successful program.
- **Eliminate other Responsibilities:** One of the easiest ways to increase one's commitment to a program is to eliminate his/her other responsibilities. This can be done by creating a special committee position for the troop representative program instead of placing it under another committee or position. Suppose the youth and adviser can focus their efforts on this one task. In that case, it will be much easier to make the time commitment necessary to build the program into a success.

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- Support once you have capable youth and advisers, without any other responsibilities, you must support them. Provide them with all the proper resources, guidance, training, and support they will need to succeed. Without permission from their lodge/chapter, the youth, adviser, and OA Unit Representative program will not overcome the challenges.
- Recognition Serving as a chairman or adviser for this program is a time and energy-consuming task. We are all here to cheerfully serve the Scouting program, but every hardworking individual deserves recognition. If youth and advisers commit their time and efforts to the success of this program, the Lodge and chapter need to show their appreciation for their hard work. Acknowledging individuals' endeavors is one of the best ways to keep them committed to continuing their efforts.