



FOCUS 2019: Unit Election Rate Committee

# Unit Visitation Guide

Exist Today, Thrive Tomorrow



The first point of the purpose of the Order of the Arrow is to **“Recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition.”**

We set out to recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives through annually conducted a visit to all 38,183 troops, crews, and ships in the entire nation. But we can't truly fulfill that purpose as long as we are only conducting elections historically in under 50 percent of units. That means there are actually more units that DO NOT see the OA annually than those who do. We lose over half of our potential membership right from the get-go before those scouts even have a chance to experience the OA.

We were all elected to the OA because Arrowmen before us took the time to connect with our unit leader and schedule an election. More than half of the eligible youth aren't even getting an opportunity to be on the ballot. Why is that?

The Order of the Arrow is one of the only organizations in which members are elected primarily by non-members. We rely on Scouts unaffiliated with the OA to select those who will become our organization's future. While critical to our organization's purpose, this can cause some challenges. Some may be resistant to the OA because they don't know the experiences that you and I have had as Arrowmen.

It's up to us to bridge that gap. It's up to each one of us to do everything in our power to conduct an OA election in every unit. We owe it to every Scout, Venturer, and Sea Scout to give them an opportunity to become a candidate.

It is our sincere hope that throughout the course of this workbook, you can truly understand what it means to plan and execute a successful unit visitation program in your lodge, and leave a lasting impact on our future Arrowmen for generations to come.

With eyes to the sky,



Matt Parsons  
2019 National Chief



Eric Harrison  
2019 National Vice Chief

## What is a Unit Visitation?

Before we can explain how a unit visitation works, we have to understand what it is.

The definition of achieving a **90% unit visitation rate** is as follows:

*1) The unit leader is directly contacted by or contacts the lodge or chapter to arrange a unit election in the applicable year*

- AND -

*2) If the unit has eligible youth, an election is conducted by the lodge or chapter election team.*

- OR -

*3) If the unit has no eligible youth, the lodge or chapter requests the opportunity to visit the unit to make a presentation on the lodge or chapter and the election process. While it is hoped most units will respond positively to these requests, the lodge or chapter is not penalized if the unit leader declines the request.*

*A unit visitation has 3 components:*

**(5 min) Local Lodge/OA Opportunities Promo** | This section serves the primary purpose of providing the members of the unit information about how they can become involved with the Order of the Arrow, as well as how the OA can benefit their unit. While events and programs such as the National Order of the Arrow Conference (NOAC) and the National Leadership Seminar (NLS) are great assets to showcase, involvement begins at the local level. It is recommended that the majority of the 5 minutes be spent talking about opportunities/events in your chapter/lodge. Pictures to display showcasing Arrowmen having fun is highly recommended. If your chapter/lodge hosts or supports any event open to the entire council, it's recommended to discuss that as it will show that there are opportunities to become engaged even if a Scout isn't a member of the OA.

**(5 min) Council Camping Promotion** | This section serves the primary purpose of supporting your council's camping program. Items to discuss should include but are not limited to: summer camp program, cub camp program, council-wide events, etc.

**(15 min) Unit Election** | This section serves the primary purpose of electing Scouts into the Order. The election should be conducted using the rules and procedures outlined [here](#). The national unit elections video should be displayed in accordance with the procedures outlined in the guide previously mentioned. The national unit elections video can be found [here](#).

## Who's Responsible For Ensuring A **High Quality Unit Visitation Program?**

### **Leadership Position(s) Needed** | **Overview**

With only 50% of units receiving a visitation in the organization, a Vice Chief of Unit Visitation or a Unit Visitation Chair is a necessary, and crucial position needed in every lodge. This individual would be under the direct supervision of the lodge key 3, sit on the lodge executive committee, and report to the lodge chief. This sense of involvement will show our concentrated focus, and priority centered around conducting high quality unit visitations, and ultimately, strengthen the relationship between the unit(s) and the chapter/lodge. The individual will oversee all unit visitations conducted by the lodge, each including a local lodge/OA opportunities promotion, council camping promotion, and election (if there are eligible scouts). He/She will work with the chapter/lodge representatives to ensure a 90% unit visitation rate is achieved.

### **Inside The Role** | **General Responsibilities**

- Works with lodge leadership to contact every unit in the council
- Coordinates training of unit visitation team members by using the national unit visitation team training
- Arranges visitations with units
- Reports unit election results (if election was conducted) directly to the Lodge Key 3

### **Inside The Role** | **Resources Needed**

- Updated list of unit contact information (Request from lodge staff adviser)
- Location and times of district roundtables
- Materials to conduct unit visitations (See checklist below)
- Unit election script/video





## The Unit Visitation Timeline

Focusing on the timeliness of your chapter/lodge unit visitation process is crucial to a successful unit visitation cycle. This next segment of the unit visitation guidebook will equip you with a timeline which seeks to help your lodge's unit visitation team(s) stay on-time and in-sync with some of the country's most successful lodges.

*(Recommended)* **3 MONTH PERIOD** | Marketing the opportunity of a unit visitation to local units

- Promote your visitation opportunities to your council's units.
  - Allow units to begin signing up to receive a unit visitation.
  - Make sure you track which units have already been contacted, so that they aren't contacted multiple times, and the units who have not responded can become the focus point.

*(Recommended)* **4 MONTH PERIOD** | Providing a unit visitation to local units

- Conduct a unit visitation in 90% of your council's units.
  - Ensure that even if a unit is apprehensive to holding a unit election or no scouts in the unit are eligible, a unit visitation presentation is still provided.
  - Make sure to document what units have received a unit visitation in lodgemaster.

*(Recommended)* **2 MONTH PERIOD** | Surveying units on the quality of their unit visitation

- Follow up with unit leaders to receive input as to how their visitation went, and how it can be improved for the following year.
  - Provide the "Unit Visitation Performance Review" to unit leader(s) no more than 24 hours after the unit visitation has been completed.
  - Results should be documented, and a plan should be put into place to improve upon any negative feedback the following year.
  - Even if the feedback isn't positive, always thank the unit leader for the opportunity. Remember, the unit is always right.

## Unit Visitation Checklist

Many lodges in our organization face challenges in their efforts to provide a high quality unit visitation program. Maintaining a high level of organization within your lodge's unit visitation team will not only boost the perception of your lodge within the units of your council, but will also dramatically increase the productivity of your team. The next segment of the unit visitation guidebook will equip you with the tools and information necessary to lead your lodge's unit visitation team into the most successful unit visitation season yet!

When your unit visitation team is contacting unit leaders, the individual assigned to maintain these communications should remain consistent. For instance, if Johnny Arrowmen is assigned to units A, B, and C, he/she should be contacting those unit leader(s) to ensure the lodge has scheduled a unit visitation, reminding them of their unit visitation date and time, and to field any comments, questions, or concerns the unit leader(s) may have.

Holding small meetings with the members of the unit visitation team before conducting a unit visitation is a great way to everyone on the same page. This heightened sense of organization will set your team off on the right foot for a productive evening.

Overall, your **biggest goal heading into each unit visitation is to boost the perception of the Order** within the units of your council.

Pre Unit Visitation Checklist		
	ITEM	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
	Train unit visitation team(s) using the national online certification training program found <a href="#">here</a>	Unit Visitation VC/Chair
	Begin contacting unit leaders for unit visitations (at least 3 months prior)	Unit Visitation VC/Chair
	Once a unit has requested a unit visitation be conducted, a team member must be assigned to conduct it	Unit Visitation VC/Chair



	Send initial email to confirm the unit visitation with the unit leader (A copy can be found <a href="#">here</a> )	Assigned Unit Visitation Team Member(s)
	Send email to remind the unit leader of the unit visitation - 1 week prior to conducting it (A copy can be found <a href="#">here</a> )	Assigned Unit Visitation Team Member(s)
	Ensure all materials needed have been acquired	Assigned Unit Visitation Team Member(s)

## Post Unit Visitation Checklist

	ITEM	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
	Submit unit election form to lodge unit visitation vc/chair (if election was conducted)	Assigned Unit Visitation Team Member(s)
	Send unit leader(s) the "Unit Visitation Performance Review" (Survey lodges should create/send to unit leaders regarding overall performance)	Unit Visitation VC/Chair
	Log unit election information in LodgeMaster (if election was conducted)	Lodge Key 3 Member or Designee

### Day of Unit Visitation | Materials/Resources Needed

- Unit visitation team member(s)
- Pens
- Ballots with names of potential candidates
- Projector to display video (unless unit has one)
- Laptop and cables
- Full BSA uniform, including sash