

Exploring Officers Association Administration Guide

EXPLORINGTM

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PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide will help youth and adult volunteers, as well as professional Scouters, to not only start Exploring Officers Associations (EOA) on a council level, but also provide methods for maintaining them. Research has shown that councils that have an EOA in place lose fewer members, and in some instances, demonstrate membership growth.

One of the unique program opportunities Exploring offers comes from the fun that take place beyond local posts—activities that are organized and delivered by and for Explorers themselves. These activities are supported by Exploring Officers Associations.

While this book will be of most interest to Explorers and advisors at the district and council levels, it is also of interest to area and region level officers and advisors as they work to support the establishment and program goals of local council EOAs.

While most of the language refers to districts and councils, the information may apply equally well at the area and region level.

This is a guidebook—not a rule book. Practices described here have been found to be of value in operating EOAs across the nation. Your local circumstances may vary. Use the guidelines presented here paired with good sense and the recognition that Exploring is operating well when well-prepared and well-supported youth officers lead a fun and invigorating program for their peers.

Suggestions for improvements or additions to this document should be directed to exploring@lflmail.org. Include in the subject line the words “EOA Administration Guide.”

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PART I. THE EXPLORING OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

The purpose of the Exploring Officers Association (EOA) is to provide support and guidance to maintain and grow the Exploring program. EOAs collaborate with other committees in providing training for Explorers and advisors, programming for posts, and monthly or quarterly forums to bring together youth and advisors.

What is an Exploring Officers Association?

A team of officers (youth president and vice presidents for administration, program, and communication), supported by an advisor, keeps the EOA organized. This forum provides a voice for youth to help strengthen the Exploring program. An EOA holds several meetings during the year and hosts a few events that help to bring the posts, districts, councils, or areas together. Each event may have a different goal: training, adventure, recognition, fun—or all the above. The EOA is made up of Explorers that were nominated by each post in the district or council. These Explorers can be anyone that holds a leadership position or has held one in the past. All members of an EOA must be under 21 years old and active in an Exploring post.

How Do EOAs Operate?

EOAs operate in many ways like a post does. A post plans activities that are fun and of interest to the members of the post. A post plans activities that build a well-balanced program of career awareness, leadership, and service. The EOA does the same things, but it offers a program and leadership opportunities that extend beyond an individual post. An EOA, like your post, ensures that everyone has fun as a key part of the program.

What is the Purpose of the Exploring Officers Association?

Exploring Officers Associations provide opportunities for, leadership, personal growth, and service. By doing so, they serve to model best practices in programming for local posts and to provide a program resource for Explorers and advisors throughout the EOA's area of operation.

Exploring Officers Associations provide opportunities for personal growth and leadership for their officers, just as the leaders and members of the EOA provide programming that is of interest to their constituents. A strong EOA usually means strong posts. Program and training events offered by the EOA give Explorers the chance to meet other Explorers to build friendships and networks, to learn from their experiences, and to have fun!

The purpose of EOAs is not to hold meetings, but to provide fun and informative program opportunities for Explorers. In many ways, the EOA serves as a forum for planning and carrying out great programs. The youth leadership and advisors for an EOA know they have done their job well when they see that the efforts of the EOA have served to strengthen the Exploring program in their area of operation.

Benefits of a Having an Exploring Officers Association

Operating an Exploring Officers Association meets several needs that support Exploring in your local community. As a youth-led program and governance body, the EOA is in an excellent position to take charge of their own Exploring destiny through the activities they support.

Benefits to Exploring Posts

- An EOA is especially helpful to new or struggling post. EOAs provide preplanned council activities, ongoing support, and resources to help the posts grow and succeed. New and struggling posts are also introduced to more successful posts, which will provide them with additional ideas and lessons learned.
- An EOA is helpful to more established posts by offering an opportunity for leadership beyond the post. An EOA will showcase the strong posts and help those leaders flourish through the program and training offered by the EOA. The EOA helps sustain these strong posts.
An EOA provides Explorers a representative voice in the program and policies of Exploring.

Benefits to the Overall Exploring Program

- Creates a body of youth leadership from within the district or council.
- Creates and maintains communication channels between all posts, the council, and higher levels of the national Exploring program to bring them together, to help promote and grow the Exploring program overall.
- Provides youth and adult leadership the opportunity to plan, promote, and facilitate district or council Exploring events (including weekend activities, summer camps, social activities, etc.). These events may be of a scale or complexity that a normal post would not be able to do on their own.
- Provides opportunities beyond the post for youth to explore and exercise leadership, planning, and communication skills.

Benefits to Councils and Districts

Money. An EOA can provide a self-sustaining and self-financing program resource for Explorers in local councils. Operation costs are modest and should not prevent Explorers from taking part in activities that the EOA sponsors.

Membership and Retention. Because of the EOA, posts have better program available to them, and the posts can plan better programs themselves. Program drives membership and retention.

Long-term strength is provided as the EOA develops a base of adult volunteers and talented young adult leader who give ongoing support to Exploring. There are also additional opportunities to serve as mentors and to provide the “institutional memory” as Explorers join the program, mature, and depart from the program. Previous EOA members may be recruited as adult mentors upon aging out of the program.

Manpower and Service. The EOA can also provide youth leadership (or staff) for training events such as district- and council-level volunteer training, etc. If your local council has a youth development or program committee, the Exploring president can provide a crucial “youth voice” to this committee.

What Else Does An EOA Do?

To organize your EOA there are some other tasks that need to take place. The table on page 10 addresses the responsibilities associated with a council-level EOA. Keep in mind that these functions and responsibilities may be part of a successful district, council, area, or regional EOA. Use these functions as part of an ongoing commitment to build and refine support for a successful Exploring program.

Function	Description
Officer Selection	The officer election or selection process ensures that Exploring is ready to thrive in the year ahead. The term of office for all national, region, and area youth officers is from June 1 to May 31 of the following year. Councils are encouraged to adopt this schedule.
Represent Exploring	The EOA offers an opportunity to represent Exploring interests nationally, regionally, and in areas, councils, and districts. The EOA president is encouraged to submit written or oral annual reports to members of the various executive boards (national, regional, area, council, and district), in person if possible. The EOA president may be a member of an executive board.
Newsletter	Regularly publishing a newsletter (on a monthly, bimonthly, or quarterly basis) promotes Exploring within the EOA's area of operation and the local community. EOAs are encouraged to publish at least quarterly newsletters per year. For many EOAs this is a great opportunity to make use of their social media expertise (Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, web pages, etc.) and to share the Exploring message with a wider audience.
EOA Meetings	Meetings should be held to manage the progress of projects and to deliver engaging programs. The frequency may vary from monthly to quarterly. Additional monthly or quarterly EOA meetings may be needed to manage progress of a project and to deliver an engaging program. EOA meetings need to have a clear focus and purpose, and not be held unnecessarily. Additional meetings could be held via the Internet, teleconferencing, or social media conferences, as well as face-to-face meetings. <i>(Led by EOA president)</i>
Financials	An EOA treasurer ensures that events are solvent and operate in a fiscally sound manner, guided by an advisor. It is strongly suggested that the EOA work with the volunteer and staff advisors assigned to the EOA to set up an account to collect and distribute funds that may roll over from year to year. The EOA should work to ensure that this account follows the fiscal standards and guidelines that may be in place in the region, area, and/or council.

	<i>(Led by EOA treasurer)</i>
Orientation	Hold an annual officer orientation for the newly elected officers. Support and contribute to the organization and delivery of council or district level training for Explorers.
Programming	Plan and conduct council-wide Exploring program conferences to bring together post officers and advisors for program planning idea sharing, and leadership training. <i>(Led by EOA vice president of program)</i>

EOA Officers

Exploring participants can be elected or appointed to hold office within an EOA. All applicants require the prior approval of their post advisor and local council Scout executive. Job descriptions for officers and advisors are in Appendix 1 of this document.

The term of office for all national, regional, and area youth officers is from June 1 to May 31 of the following year. It is strongly recommended that all councils adopt the same term for their EOAs.

Note that all Exploring youth officers must be under age 21 throughout the term of office.

Each youth not selected for an office should be offered the opportunity to be considered for the next tier down. If the candidate accepts this opportunity, the application should be promptly transferred to the selection panel of that office for consideration.

If no applicant for an office exists at the time of selection, the volunteer advisor and staff advisor for that office may extend the current officer’s term.

It is important to understand that an Explorer may only hold one area, region, or national position during his or her term. It is recommended that an Explorer hold no more than one post, district, or council position while holding an area, region, or national position.

Post Presidents

Post presidents, with the EOA officers, make up the youth membership of the EOA. Post presidents represent the interests of their post in the EOA.



Activity or Committee Chairs

In addition to the EOA positions of president, and vice presidents for program, administration, and communication, youth can participate as activity chairs.

All activity and committee chairs are leadership positions that support Exploring at each level of the program. These positions are appointed by the Exploring president at that tier with the approval of that president's volunteer advisor and the applicant's post advisor. Additional youth positions serve at the appointer's discretion. Some examples include: webmaster/social media specialist, activity chair(s), council or district committees, or other groups the EOA leadership believes need representation by an Exploring participant. Chairs may be appointed for one event or serve throughout the year.

EOA Advisor

The EOA advisor shall be appointed by the top volunteer officer at each tier (e.g., national, regional, area, council, and district chairs) with the approval of the BSA/Learning for Life staff leader. His or her responsibility is to provide advice and support for the officers who lead the EOA and to appoint associate advisors and activity advisors. Advisors are appointed to annual terms with opportunities for reappointment.

EOA Associate Advisors

Associate and other subsidiary Exploring advisors shall be appointed by the top Exploring volunteer advisor at that tier, be approved by the Exploring staff advisor at that tier and serve at the appointer's discretion.

EOA Activity Advisors

Advisors may also be appointed for specific activities and serve to mentor the Exploring participant leaders who are involved in the activity. They follow the same appointment process as EOA associate advisors.

Professional Staff advisor

The EOA staff advisor shall be appointed by the Scout executive or staff leader at each tier (e.g., national, regional, and area, council, and district) and serve at the appointer's pleasure. His or her responsibility is to provide support and guidance to the advisors and officers of the EOA, provide access to the resources of the council, ensure compliance with council and national policies, and in many councils, provide support regarding the financial operation of the EOA.

EOA Organization Chart

A standard Exploring Officers Association organization chart has been included in Appendix 1. For councils that also operate an EOA and a district or council Exploring committee, a "key four" model (staff advisor, EOA advisor, Exploring committee chair, and EOA president) may be implemented. The local council EOA is generally accountable to the local council Exploring committee.

PART II. EXPLORING OFFICERS ASSOCIATION OPERATIONS

Effective leadership requires vision, setting clear goals, and planning to achieve those goals. Having a clearly defined vision is the first step in forming a successful EOA program. Your vision should define what you want your EOA to be—its destiny—and all your activities will serve as the steps you take to achieving that vision. This chapter is designed to be of special help to councils establishing their first Exploring Officers Association.

Vision

A vision helps you to design and carry out your EOA's program with your EOA officers. It keeps you on the right track and ensures that everything the EOA does is pointed toward bringing that vision to life.

A large part of making sure your vision is brought to life is by sharing that vision with all the EOA officers. By sharing a vision and maintaining common goals, your EOA will maintain similar expectations and work as a unit.

Be sure to use your vision. Put it at the top of your agenda for EOA meetings. Use it to reflect on each EOA activity: *Did this activity help your EOA achieve its vision?* The answer to that question speaks to the alignment between the EOA's program and its vision.

Bylaws

Bylaws help the EOA deliver its program to the Explorers it serves. While not required, bylaws spell out the processes used to deliver the EOA's program. The EOA bylaws are guided also by the *Exploring Guidebook for Leaders*, found at www.exploring.org.

Your local practices must be aligned with the *Exploring Guidebook for Leaders*. In addition to being in alignment with the *Exploring Guidebook for Leaders*, your EOA bylaws should reflect the following:

- Governance
- When, where, and how EOA meetings will be held and conducted
- How EOA officers and Advisors are to be appointed or elected
- Voting procedures, such as what constitutes a quorum, so that your EOA can make a decision
- How committees are created and discontinued
- How the bylaws can be changed or amended

Constructing a set of bylaws can help your EOA stay organized. Bylaws serve as a platform to maintain structure and can help your EOA regulate expectations. Bylaws, of course, should be revisited regularly to ensure that they still serve the purpose for which they were designed.

Depending on local council practices, district EOAs may not have their own bylaws but operate under the auspices of the council EOA.

Beginning a New EOA Program Year

As you begin your tenure as an EOA officer, you are starting a new EOA program year. The first three months as an EOA officer can affect how well the EOA operates and how much you enjoy serving as an officer.

While every EOA is unique, most effective EOAs follow a program year similar to the program year followed by your post. Typically, the year begins with elections and then continues with the EOA officers planning the year's activities before it moves on to the detailed planning for each adventure and its execution. Depending on the EOA, some of the steps may be reordered to suit their needs. In the case of some EOAs with established practices and protocols, wide interests, and varied capabilities, some steps may even be skipped.

Selection of EOA Officers

Selecting or electing officers for a one-year term should be held annually.

For a new EOA, it is common for the first president to be selected by the youth involved. Your first selection of officers may be conducted based upon who is interested in the different officer positions. One of the important roles of an EOA advisor involved in the establishment of a new EOA will be to help identify candidates for the inaugural EOA president.

The selection of officers at the area, region, and national level is guided by the current version of the *Exploring Guidebook for Leaders*. These officers are determined by an application and selection process. The selection process is guided by an advisor, but the selection is conducted by Explorers.

Councils with well-established EOAs may have an election process in place. Local council and district EOAs may elect EOA officers through a process determined by the local Exploring Officers Association.

Electing Officers

Election of officers is one way that the EOA and participants of Exploring in a district or council can provide leadership to the program. An election provides the most direct interaction in determining the direction of an EOA and the Exploring program for participants. This direct involvement often helps Explorers feel more a part of the EOA even without holding office. The visibility of a well-run election can also spur interest in what's in store for the years ahead.

If your EOA uses an election process, it is important to develop and communicate clear guidelines so that the elections operate with integrity. *Robert's Rules of Order* may provide your EOA with guidance when developing an initial election process. Some points to consider:

- How are candidates nominated?
- Are there qualifications that candidates must meet in order to stand for election? Who determines eligibility?
- How is the election carried out—voice, secret ballot, via electronic voting?
- Is campaigning for office acceptable? What norms need to be established for the election to commence?
- Who is eligible to vote?
- What constitutes a quorum?
- If more than one candidate runs for office, is the winner selected by a plurality of votes cast, or must the winner receive a majority of ballots?
- Who counts the ballots?
- When does the winner take office?
- How are irregularities in elections addressed?

Selecting Officers

There are different ways to conduct an election for the EOA officers. The following steps are recommended:

1. Eligible applicants should submit an application.
2. The council Exploring volunteer advisor, the area EOA president or their designee, the current council EOA president, and any council EOA vice presidents and post presidents who are not candidates will form a selection committee to interview and select a new council EOA president from the qualified applicants.
3. An interview of the applicants should be conducted. The interview process may be determined by the council EOA leadership and may include remote conferencing.

For the vice presidents, the selection process involves the following:

1. Eligible applicants will submit an application by the date of the president's announcement at the tier for which they are applying.
2. The president-elect will review all the applications.
3. The president-elect can determine his or her own selection process.

4. The volunteer advisor must approve of each vice president selection.
5. It is recommended that the appropriate volunteer associate advisor be involved in the selection process.

Both processes can be edited and modified according to the needs of your individual EOA.

Officer Briefing

Right after the election or selection process, the advisors and the new EOA officers should schedule an EOA officers' briefing. This two-hour meeting can take place after school, on an evening, on a Saturday morning, or whenever convenient for the group. Choose a location where the briefing can be held without interruption.

The new youth president chairs the EOA officers' briefing with guidance and assistance from the advisor. Consulting with the previous office holder should help guide the efforts of the new president. Before the meeting, the new EOA president should carefully review the following areas with the advisor so that he or she is fully prepared to chair this meeting effectively.

1. The president and advisor should review the previous programming delivered by the EOA.
2. If this is a functioning EOA, the president should be ready to discuss the vision statement and either affirm that it represents the vision of the EOA or decide that it needs to be revised to speak better to the officers and members.
3. Also review bylaws and operating procedures. If this is an established EOA, the records from the previous officers should be given to the new officers.

This meeting should be fast-paced—it's your kickoff meeting! Its purpose is to prepare the new EOA officers for the upcoming EOA officers' seminar, which is probably the most important event in the first three months of an officer's term

Following the EOA officers briefing, schedule the EOA officers' seminar.

EOA Officers' Seminar

The EOA Officers' Seminar serves as a training and planning seminar for newly selected officers. It is led by an EOA Officers' Seminar facilitator provided by your council or district (if available), with the assistance of your advisor, associate advisors, and post president. This important session provides in-depth training for officers and the development of the year's program of activities. In many cases the seminar facilitator is the former EOA president.

This meeting should provide training opportunities for new officers and serve as a kickoff for the new program year.

If a council has both council and district EOAs, it is strongly recommended that a single seminar be conducted for both council and district officers.

The objectives of the EOA Officers' Seminar are

- To have you, the youth officers, learn your position responsibilities
- To build a working leadership team

- To plan the EOA's program of activities for the coming year
- To discuss the vision of the EOA leadership for the term
- To establish expectations and goals for the term

This important seminar is an experience that, in one day, parallels the kind of leadership that will be needed throughout the coming year. It is probably the most important step you make as an officer. What you do here affects the whole district, council, or area.

Consider holding the post officers' seminar in a retreat setting such as a weekend campout or going to a motel. An area EOA might host this event for council EOA officers and advisors, or a council EOA could host it for district EOA officers and advisors. Use this opportunity to have some fun while working, and don't rush the task.

This seminar is a great opportunity for your team to build relationships and gain a sense of trust and teamwork. Some of your officers may not be acquainted with one another, so providing a chance for them to bond can really set up your EOA for success. Utilize this event to its full potential by providing plenty of information *and* an element of fun.

Sample Agenda—Officers' Seminar

- Why are we here?
 - Introductions
 - Review the vision of the EOA either from bylaws or perhaps from the officers' seminar. If this is a council/district seminar, have the council officers describe their vision and help the district officers to create one.
- What is the EOA?
 - Review the structure of the EOA and its meetings.
 - Review position descriptions.
 - Hold breakout sessions to set goals (if this was not completed at the officers' briefing). Breakout sessions might be organized around functions, such as gathering together all the vice presidents for administration.
- What does the EOA do?
 - Review: What activities are planned? How are they conducted?
 - Review event planning skills.
 - Review committees for each of these (if applicable). Introduce the concept of activity chairs and event advisors.
 - Break out to districts (if applicable) to plan the year and discuss specific goals.
- Get the EOA going.
 - Turn over the seminar completely to the new officers and start an EOA meeting.
 - Review old business: events from last year, new information from the council.
 - Activity breakouts: Break out or have the entire EOA discuss activities or events for the year.

Exploring Officers Association Annual Program

A yearly plan is vital and can be a lot of fun to put together. This plan is important for a variety of reasons:

- It enables the EOA to achieve its vision.
- An annual plan allows Explorers and advisors to mark their individual calendars. Participation in EOA activities increases when post members know what to expect.
- An annual plan enables the EOA president to start appointing activity chairs to be responsible for planning and leading each activity the EOA will sponsor during the year.

An EOA may begin by planning a schedule for meetings and other activities that will start in the fall. But of course, each EOA is different. The key is to look at the year ahead and develop a plan.

The first step in building your EOA's annual program is "preparing to plan." Start by identifying the individuals who will help inform the plan, gathering resources, considering alternatives, and laying the groundwork for the detailed program planning to follow. Carrying out the organizational steps will allow the EOA to apply the planning model with ease and efficiency. Note that to ensure integration with the overall council calendar, a group of officers will probably be naming and scheduling events and activities that the next set of officers will plan and carry out.

When it comes to developing an annual program plan, the initial preparation process involves three basic steps.

Step 1. The EOA advisor, in consultation with the incoming president, holds an EOA officers' briefing immediately after the EOA's annual election and starts the program planning process. The advisor and president explain the process, goals, and what each officer needs to do to prepare for the next step. This process is often supported by the outgoing EOA president.

Step 2. Gather the following key information:

- Key school dates, such as holidays and exams that are relevant to your local council or district
- Community event dates, such as proms, homecoming, and graduations
- Personal dates that may affect your EOA's activities, such as the advisor's anniversary cruise
- Key district, council, area, and region dates
- Data from the annual Council Exploring Interest Survey
- Last year's EOA annual plan, if you have it
- EOA priorities and goals

The EOA will be better prepared for the coming year if you develop this plan and possibly even alternate plans. It's especially important to plan thoughtfully. Dates and events will need to be placed on your council calendar and shared with individual posts so that they can build council EOA activities into their posts' calendars.

Planning EOA Meetings

A lot of planning takes place at EOA meetings (and between the meetings) but making the meetings productive takes planning. This is the purpose of the EOA officers' meeting. If you are the EOA officer responsible for a meeting, think through the EOA meeting ahead of time. Each meeting needs a purpose. That purpose will, of course, vary from EOA to EOA and from meeting to meeting. Some EOAs meet monthly; others meet quarterly. But no matter how often your EOA meets, each meeting's purpose will depend on the EOA's goals and its upcoming activities. Meetings will involve discussion and decision-making, but they also can involve active skills training, service activities, and games.

The officer responsible for a meeting should formulate a plan or agenda that takes into account the EOA's goals, input from other officers, and any advice from the volunteer and professional advisors. Once an agenda is developed, it helps to make it available at the meeting for everyone to see. The key is to develop and use a meeting plan or agenda that helps the EOA make meetings both productive and fun. An agenda provides the meeting with a basic structure for moving through the business portion quickly and efficiently. Try to focus as much of the meeting as possible on hands-on learning and doing, minimizing the amount of talking and filing reports. Make time spent at EOA meetings a part of the adventure!

Tips for EOA Meetings

- Be sure that fun is part of every meeting.
- Keep EOA meetings active.
- Be sure there are activities of interest for everyone.
- When planning the meeting, think of it as five to seven short activities instead of one long meeting.
- Be sure that meetings further the EOA's annual program.
- Keep the business parts of the meeting brief.
- Be sensitive to time constraints from school, jobs, and extracurricular activities that young adults experience.
- Team-building games and initiative games provide rich opportunities for members to learn to work together better—and have fun at the same time.
- Follow up with reminders and action items through email, phone, text, or preferred social media.
- EOA leadership, supported by advisors, should work together to ensure that every meeting is well-planned and ready to go.

It is often helpful to have something for advisors to do who are not involved in the deliberations of the EOA officers. This provides a great leadership development opportunity for advisors and allows the EOA officers to operate a meeting without undue adult involvement.

PART III. ESTABLISHING NEW EXPLORING OFFICERS ASSOCIATIONS

An Exploring Officers Association (EOA) exists at all levels of Exploring in order to provide support. This support is youth-led with adult guidance. An EOA is not an end unto itself but exists to support Explorers through their post program.

Governance

A council EOA serves and supports the posts in the council. Some councils may decide that it is more beneficial to have EOAs in each district (an administrative unit of a council). In this case, the district EOA supports the posts and the council EOA supports the district EOAs. Thus, a district and/or council EOA

exists to support the posts in the district/council as an extension and supplement to posts programs. The district/council EOA should be made up of representatives from local posts.

The EOA should be active in the programming at the local council/district Exploring level.

Area and regional EOAs exist to serve and support the local councils by providing proper communication within the levels of the program. They serve as a liaison between the national EOA and the local council/district EOAs. Area and regional EOAs should help to strengthen the Exploring program in local councils, ideally through providing resources and support for local EOAs.

The national Exploring Officers Association has a mission to support the Exploring program as a whole. The national EOA works to help advance Exploring as a movement and to promote the ideals and vision of the program. The national EOA supports the work of regional and area EOAs so that they can support the local Exploring programs.

Steering Committee

When Exploring recognizes the need for an EOA (most likely the district or council level), they should form an ad hoc team to help establish a new EOA. Sometimes this may involve restarting or reforming a past EOA that is no longer active. The ad hoc team will work as a “steering committee” for the formation of a new EOA.

If adult volunteers decide to champion the cause of an EOA (in the case that no youth have expressed this interest), the volunteers should recruit youth to serve on this ad hoc steering committee from local posts. It is vital that the endeavor be led by youth interest and support—that’s the key to Exploring!

An EOA led by advisors is not an EOA! When EOAs and posts deliver programs that the adults *want* Explorers to experience and are implemented for Explorers, the EOA frequently fails within a short period of time. Participation and input from the Explorers are essential to the formation of an EOA – and to its ongoing operation.

Developing New EOAs

What follows is a general set of steps to follow when establishing a new EOA. These are guidelines and not policies, so the steering committee can use common sense and local factors when developing the EOA.

Declaration of Interest to Professional Staff/Council

The first step that a steering committee should take is to contact the professional staff member assigned to support the Exploring program at the district or council level. If the committee is not sure who to contact, a local district executive or the council program director should know.

Ideally, the steering committee should submit a short, written declaration of interest in forming an EOA. It can be helpful for the steering committee to demonstrate that youth interest is driving the formation of the EOA. Since a district/council EOA exists to serve the program needs of posts, it could be helpful to share the names of officers in posts that are interested in exploring this concept.

If adult volunteers are the people spearheading the effort to start an EOA, they should be seeking out youth interest and ideas from local posts. These youth should be recruited on to the steering committee. Exploring is a youth-led program, so youth involvement from the beginning of any project is essential.

Discussion with Professional Staff/Council

The appropriate local BSA/Learning for Life professional should schedule a discussion with the ad hoc steering committee. A key volunteer may also be involved in this meeting (such as a district Exploring chair, district program chair, council Exploring chair, or council vice president of program). The following questions may be useful for the steering committee and the BSA professional to discuss during this meeting:

- How much local interest is there in starting an EOA?
- How can information about the formation of the EOA be communicated to all posts?
- What is the youth vision for the purpose of this EOA?
- How can an EOA help grow Exploring in the district/council?
- How can an EOA help develop Explorers for posts in the district/council?
- How will posts feel supported by this EOA?

Once there is support for the local professional staff and key district/council volunteer(s), the steering committee can proceed with forming the EOA.

First Officer Appointment

You have a few options in terms of deciding on officers. The steering committee should carefully consider how to set an image of engagement with all local Exploring posts in the district/council. It may be that the youth members of the steering committee are the strongest choices to be officers in the new EOA, but the committee should consider whether this can be perceived poorly by the local posts (for instance, if youth from a single post form the steering committee and then are selected as the officers, other posts may feel left out and not welcome to engage with the EOA). Knowing your local posts well can serve as a good guide for this process.

One option is for the steering committee to appoint officers to start. Appointing the initial group of officers is a very common practice. Once there is a youth president, she or he can appoint the remainder of the officers. If a youth president is not initially identified, the adult advisor can step in and appoint youth to the positions.

The term of office should also be decided at this point. Will the initial officers serve six months or a year? It is best for all members of the steering committee to agree on this before people are appointed to the offices. A group may decide that the standard term of office will be one year but that initial officers will serve until the first EOA activity in order to give more voice to additional posts. A group may also decide that having initial officers serve a full year will give more continuity to the program as the EOA forms.

The selection of the EOA advisor will be decided by the top volunteer who serves Exploring at the level in question. For example, a district EOA advisor will likely be appointed by the district Exploring chair (or program chair) in consultation with the district executive. A council EOA advisor will likely be appointed by a vice president of Exploring or council Exploring chair in consultation with the professional staff

member assigned to support Exploring for the council. Once an EOA advisor has been selected, it is common for that person to appoint associate advisors.

Should the EOA president be selected before or after the selection of a qualified EOA advisor? This is a local decision. If the steering committee is empowered by the local council to select the initial EOA advisor, the committee should decide upon the process for selecting the youth officers before this appointment. This can avoid awkward situations that might derail the efforts to form an EOA (for example, if a parent is selected as the advisor and the parent then chooses his or her child as the initial president, will the rest of the committee be dissatisfied?)

The initial officers should be energetic supporters of Exploring. Ideally, they will be good communicators who can engage other posts in the EOA. This support can be developed in a similar manner as is common for advisors and presidents in local posts. Ongoing discussion and support of a new EOA president by a perceptive and accomplished advisor is essential.

How to Advertise/Market the Initial Meeting

An EOA is only useful to Exploring if it exists to serve the posts in the local district/council. Getting involvement from as many posts as possible is essential. Posts will be more open to support from the EOA if they see it as an accessible group of helpful people rather than a “clique in charge.”

In some ways, social media has made advertising easier than ever before. On the other hand, many of us are so overwhelmed with messages via email, Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, Snapchat, etc., that Exploring messages can get lost in the buzz. Develop a list of multiple ways to market the initial meeting to posts. While Exploring is a youth-led program, adult support can help drive interest in the formation of an EOA. Therefore, consider a mix of new and old marketing methods.

Assistance from members of the professional staff can be helpful in reaching out directly to post advisors.

Here are some ideas:

- Email blast to local post presidents, committee chairs, advisors, and leaders at the district and council levels
- Facebook postings by youth officers who are friends with other Explorers in the area
- Posting on the council website or newsletter
- Postal mail postcard to all Explorers and advisors

Getting people to help form a new committee or organization is not easy. Many times, people shy away from new groups because they think they will be required to volunteer too much time or that there won't be any fun programs yet. Here are a few ideas to include in your advertisement to make the group look organized and ready for action:

- Have clear start AND ending times
- Select an engaging location that can offer meeting space but also something fun afterwards
- Can someone sponsor free refreshments as an incentive to come?
- Is the day/time chosen convenient for potential youth officers?
- Is there a way to organize rides for youth who cannot drive themselves?
- Give some examples of the types of work that the EOA will do—make it appear fun, not dull!

Preparing for the Initial Meeting

The initial meeting for an EOA should be open to all youth and adults on the council and district level—anyone who is interested. This meeting is an opportunity to discuss all the benefits of an EOA to the youth, units, council, and districts. Be prepared to use a short, concise speech that defines the EOA in a few sentences. Make the meeting fun and interactive. Getting the information across is vital, but you want to make sure the youth and adults are engaged. The ultimate goal of the EOA is to support the units and supplement program, so you don't want to forget the fun aspect.

While much of this first gathering will be focused on sharing information, consider that adding activities of interest may increase attendance. A bowling alley with a meeting room, for instance, could serve as a place to conduct the business of forming the EOA while drawing Explorers and posts to participate.

Be sure to be organized and well prepared for the initial meeting. This may be a cliché, but first impressions **do** count! It is helpful to have an agenda printed out in advance to guide the meeting. Below is a checklist of things to consider when planning for the meeting.

45 days out

- Find and reserve a location that meets your needs (meeting space, activity space if desired).
- Establish a communication plan

30 days out

- Develop a detailed agenda that will keep the meeting on task and engaging.
- Develop some engaging activities that can be conducted during/after the meeting.
- Decide whether there are funds to support refreshments at the event.

15 days out

- Order refreshments ordered (if possible).
- Follow through with reminder emails, postings, and/or phone calls.
- Have copies of agendas.

Day of Initial Meeting

- Officers arrive early to set up the meeting space.
- Set up enough chairs for the realistically expected attendance (It's always better to be seen setting up extra chairs as people arrive than to end up with too many empty seats).
- Create a space for refreshments.
- Greet people at the door.
- Deliver an excellent and memorable meeting.

Be Guided by Hope But Be Prepared for Reality

Sometimes an initial meeting might not draw the attendance that you hoped for. Don't despair. Starting a new organization takes time and effort. If only a few people other than the steering committee show up, they deserve as much excitement as a group of 100. Get them engaged and wanting to be involved with the EOA. Many successful groups grow organically, meaning that they grow over time as people connect with their friends and bring them to future events.

Conducting the Initial Meeting

Start the meeting on time and end it on time. Make sure that everyone feels that their time is respected. Also, be sure to engage everyone who attends. Don't turn this meeting into a lecture by the EOA officers—that isn't likely to engage support or engagement by other youth and their posts.

Sometimes those who come may seem disengaged. It could just be that they are shy or not sure what to do in a new social setting (especially if they don't know anyone else there). Be sure to be inclusive and to make them feel comfortable. They might not want you to ask their opinion about every single issue but give them a chance to share their thoughts or reactions if they desire.

Organize First Activity

EOAs exist to serve and support posts. Activities are often the most welcome form of support. New or small posts might be financially unable to conduct some types of super activities, or unskilled in planning and carrying out their own activities.

For the EOA's first activity, try to plan modestly. Sometimes the simplest activities are the most rewarding. Activities that are fun and easy to plan could be anything from a picnic at a local forest preserve to a group movie night. Have an activity that is fun and achievable. Whatever is chosen, it's important to pay attention to the process. This may be a difficult task so allow yourself enough time for planning. Another key point is promotion: be sure to promote the event to all the local posts. It is important that the units are encouraged to get involved.

Be sure that local posts have a voice in selecting the activity, or else the EOA might find itself planning an activity just for itself. Balance the passion and interests of the EOA officers with the interests of the local posts. The Council Exploring Interest Survey (see Appendix 2) can help in this. See guidelines for planning annual programs in Part II of this guide.

Interest Survey/Program Development

Something that can aid the EOA in deciding on different activities is completing an interest survey. After your first event you can have all units complete the survey, which will provide the EOA with ideas of activities that the youth are interested in.

People are surrounded by requests for surveys, so be sure to keep the interest survey focused and convenient. Long and complicated email or Internet surveys might provide a lot of data, but not if people are too annoyed or busy to fill them out. Sometimes just asking youth or adults (via email, Facebook, or even a paper survey delivered to posts by a service team member) for a list of three activities they'd like to do can yield great ideas for an EOA's program calendar.

As the officers become more comfortable, the EOA should be adding events throughout the year. Depending on the participation level by local posts, events can be as large or small as desired. Including a special annual event gives posts the opportunity to interact and make connections with one another.

Since posts have an array of interests, diversifying your program will allow the council or district EOA to plan activities that hit the interests of all Posts involved. The most important part of program is making sure it is fun! Youth need to be interested in the activities you are planning. An EOA is there to support Explorers and their units by providing engaging events that they are excited to participate in.

Selecting Permanent Officers

An Exploring Officers Association will only be truly representative and sustainable once permanent officers are selected or elected on an ongoing basis. The steering committee decided upon officer terms when the EOA was formed (one-year terms are common, but not required). Remember that EOA officers need to be under 21 years of age the entire time that they are in office.

Officer terms should be set up to be most beneficial to youth in your area. Does a calendar year make sense for terms? A school year? Note that the term of office for area, region, and national Exploring officers is from June 1 to the following May 31—so this too may be a consideration.

The more inclusive an EOA is, the more support it will have from local posts. Therefore, plan for good communication with all local Explorers about the EOA elections. The EOA should decide how the elections will be conducted (electronically or in person). Additionally, the EOA should decide whether all individual youth Explorers in a local area are eligible to vote or if each post will cast votes for officers. Election results will be respected more if the rules are clear to everyone in advance.

Finally, will the new officers take over immediately after the election? Will there be a brief period of time where new and old officers overlap to allow for a better transition?

PART IV. THE COUNCIL EXPLORING COMMITTEE

Council operating committees help implement the programs of the Learning for Life. The members of these committees have yearly appointments. Some committees have district representation as recruited by each district chair, and most committees have at-large members appointed by that particular committee chair. Members evaluate current programs and make decisions regarding future program enhancements. Typical committee functions include membership and relationships, finances, program (which includes camping, activities and civic service, training, and advancement and recognition). Youth development committees (which may be present rather than program committees) and a district and council operations committee are also used to organize the functions of the local council.

Special council committees operate to focus on specialized tasks such as employee relations, government relations and funding, legal counsel, strategic planning, risk management, health and safety, alumni relationships, property and maintenance, marketing, and the nominating committee.

Council Governance Structure

Governance is focused on developing and mainlining relationships so that the tasks of the organization are accomplished. Sometimes, local council governance structures are modified to meet local needs. In the case of Exploring, there are several possible approaches that may be implemented:

- No EOA and no council Exploring Committee
- Council Exploring support and no EOA
- A stand-alone EOA without a council Exploring committee
- A council Exploring committee and an EOA

No EOA and No Council Exploring Committee

This approach is least desirable for obvious reasons. Without an organized body to advocate for Exploring, the program languishes. It is especially helpful to have a coordinating body or a forum to facilitate post-to-post interactions. Without Exploring advocates, the program runs the risk of becoming marginalized.

Council Exploring Support and No EOA

There are two basic options here:

- Incorporating Exploring into existing operating committees
- Having a stand-alone council Exploring committee that handles all functions

Option 1: Incorporating Exploring into Existing Operating Committees

Many guidebooks designed for council and district committees recommend organizing committees on the basis of function. For example, advancement committees handle all advancement-related activities for all units; activities committees plan and run council or district activities to help supplement what Scouting units offer.

This is the recommended approach for districts: supporting Exploring through your normal district operations. A good reason for this approach at the district level is numbers. Most districts don't have enough available staff members, volunteers, or energy to run separate district-level committees. Therefore, volunteers are recruited to represent Exploring on each of the standing committees at the district level:

- Activities
- Marketing
- Service Team
- Training
- Finance
- Membership

A concern associated with this option is that Cub Scouting or Scouts BSA, which may be the strongest areas of the council's program and have the most membership, could take all the attention of the committee members and resources of the council or district, leaving Exploring shortchanged. People you have recruited for Exploring could become discouraged and quit. Two keys to avoiding this issue will be to have a chair who personally gives attention to all four areas and to recruit members who can effectively support Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouts, and Exploring.

Option 2: Stand-Alone Exploring Committee

A stand-alone Exploring committee might have the same functions as outlined above (activities, marketing, service team, training, finance, and membership), but at your committee meetings, you would discuss only Exploring.

Many councils have found this method attractive for council-level support. The stand-alone committee usually cover all the functions of other council committees with also including help with recruiting for career fields.

There are pros and cons with this option. An advantage is that volunteers are immersed in Exploring and all their energies go to that one area. One report or action easily leads into another, creating continuity. But a disadvantage is that Exploring may be seen as essentially separate and different from Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, and Venturing, and the three areas may not interact; such interaction can benefit everyone. Spend some time discussing what could be the challenges or roadblocks to supporting Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouts, and Exploring equally.

At the council level, the size of your Exploring committee depends on the number of districts and Exploring posts you support, your council size, the availability of volunteers, and other factors. You could have subcommittees for each function, with a chair for each subcommittee; or you might have just one person in charge of some functions.

You will have to determine how many people you need and develop a plan to recruit them. Committee members need not come from within the council but from outside business and organizations leaders.

A Stand-Alone EOA Without a Council Exploring Committee

In some local councils, this is an optimal and successful arrangement. A strong, stand-alone EOA can provide a successful Exploring program within a council.

A challenge associated with this model is that the EOA is designed to focus on program and leadership opportunities for Explorers in a local jurisdiction, whereas a council Exploring committee focuses on

areas beyond program and leadership development such as, activities, marketing, service teams, finance, and membership. An EOA is not fully equipped to manage those sorts of operations.

An Exploring Committee and an EOA

The EOA is designed to act much like a post with members drawn from all the posts in the council for programming and Explorers, leadership development, personal growth, and service. The EOA also acts as a representative body in that all post presidents and their advisors serve on the EOA. The Exploring committee should offer support to the EOA just as a unit committee supports a post.

Some details are provided below for councils that maintain a council Exploring committee and an Exploring Officers Association.

Structure and Membership of the Council Exploring Committee

The role of a council Exploring committee (CEC) is to support the delivery of the Exploring program in the local council.

The purpose of a council Exploring committee is not to supervise the Exploring Officers Association, but to *work with it* to support Exploring in a local council.

Ideally, the council Exploring committee works as an advocacy team for supporting Exploring in a local council. The table shown below represents the most appropriate relationship among the various committees.

Members of the council Exploring committee have assignments to participate in the various operating committees of the local council advocates for Exploring. They are also charged with sharing with the CEC any updates of interest to the other members of the committee. The CEC chair's responsibility is to bring this information to the council EOA advisor and council Exploring president to keep them updated on Exploring issues that are addressed in the various operating committees.

For example, an Exploring representative on the council training committee (CTC) advocates for Exploring leaders to receive appropriate training. The CTC may ask for participation by Explorers or advisors in delivering the training. Relaying and confirming this request would be a responsibility of the training representative on the council Exploring committee, who may report to the CTC that the EOA will host (in consultation with the training committee) an Exploring-specific training event to meet training needs for Explorers and advisors. The point of these training-related examples is that the CEC works to support program delivery of Exploring, serving often in the role of disseminating information or advocating for program needs. Supervision of the EOA is not their role.

The EOA is designed to act much like a post with members drawn from all the posts in the council for programming and Explorers, leadership development, personal growth, and service. The EOA also acts as a representative body in that all post presidents and their advisors serve on the EOA. The council Exploring committee should offer support to the EOA just as a unit committee supports a post.

The council Exploring chair may be the same person as the EOA advisor, or they may be different.

For councils that support a council Exploring committee, the roles of the council Exploring chair and council EOA advisor are complementary rather than identical.

Council Exploring Chair	Council EOA Advisor
<p>Selected Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appointed by the council president with board status ▪ Chairs the council Exploring committee ▪ Is a vice president or reports to the council vice president of program ▪ Uses Exploring Journey to Excellence scorecard to provide benchmarks of program progress ▪ Supports council-level Exploring much like a unit committee chair provides support for their unit ▪ Is the EOA advisor or may consult on the appointment of the EOA advisor ▪ Appoints council Exploring membership chair/representative to coordinate with the council membership committee and district and unit membership chairs. ▪ Appoints other persons who will be liaisons with various council committees, such as membership, marketing, training, service teams, and fundraising. 	<p>Selected Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Selected with the same care and consideration as applied for selecting an Order of the Arrow lodge advisor or council Venturing chair ▪ Provides advice for the council Exploring president and the officers of the EOA much like a post advisor does for post officers. ▪ Advises the council EOA president ▪ Appoints advisors to support EOA vice presidents ▪ Oversees the administrative, programmatic, and communications missions of the officers. ▪ Uses Exploring Journey to Excellence scorecard to guide development of the EOA program

Exploring Committee and Exploring Officers Association Relationship

The council Exploring committee (CEC) and the EOA are both charged with supporting Exploring in local councils. The difference comes from how their responsibilities guide their actions. As noted above, operating a separate council Exploring committee and an EOA leads to a “Key Four” leadership structure involving the EOA president, the council Exploring chair, the EOA advisor, and the EOA staff advisor.

	Council Exploring Committee	Exploring Officers Association
Membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adults (21+) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Explorers (14-20) ▪ Advisors (21+)
Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support an Exploring program that achieves the mission of the LFL Exploring program ▪ Support and grow Exploring within a local council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Support an Exploring program that achieves the mission of the LFL Exploring program ▪ Provide program opportunities for Explorers ▪ Develop leadership competencies among Explorers

Methods	Provide support in these areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Activities ▪ Marketing ▪ Service Teams ▪ Training ▪ Finance ▪ Membership 	Organize and deliver program activities supporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership ▪ Personal growth ▪ Service ▪ Career exploration
Interaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Council Exploring chair serves in an advisory and support role to the EOA advisor and EOA president ▪ Council Exploring chair may serve as an ex officio member of the cadre of EOA advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EOA president and advisor maintain open communications with the membership of the CEC ▪ EOA president and advisor serve as ex officio members of the CEC

Key Points for Productive Relationships

Successful working relationships among volunteer groups has, at its core, open and frequent communications. That open line of communications is further supported by understanding the nature and purpose of the EOA and the CEC. Use the guidelines below to assist the EOA and the CEC in working together effectively for the good of Explorers, Exploring, and the advisors and committee members who support them.

- Understand the purpose of the CEC and the EOA.
- Jointly determine the preferred communications formats.
- Commit to building a strong relationship.
- Focus on governance as leadership.
- Be clear about roles.
- Be clear about the council Exploring committee’s mandate.
- Respect boundaries.
- Respect each other.
- Commit to understanding Exploring as a youth career development program.
- Honor the youth role in Exploring.
- Respect the wisdom of advisors.

PART V. SUSTAINING AND REVIVING EXISTING EOAs

The initial excitement about founding an Exploring Officers Association can sometimes wane for several reasons. The EOA may not feel tangible successes in terms of plans and programming, next generations of EOA officers are becoming hard to find, or officers and advisors find themselves too busy in other areas of their lives to fulfill the vision of their job descriptions.

To gain a deeper understanding, let us reexamine the roles of each of the key members of the Exploring Officers Association. While Exploring focuses on youth-led leadership, the operations of the Boy Scouts of America are entrusted to the commissioned BSA and Learning for Life professionals who work at district, council, area, regional, and national levels of the organization. Because of the BSA’s operational structure, it is important to view the Exploring Officers Association within the context of the overall

organization. To situate EOAs appropriately within the BSA's operations, it is critical to start with the staff advisor—the BSA/LFL professional assigned to directly oversee and support the EOA.

Staff Advisors to the EOA

Regardless of the EOA's service area within the BSA—whether district, council, area, regional, or national—a BSA or LFL professional should be directly responsible for all the programming, people, decisions, appearances, and actions of the Exploring Officers Association. In many circles, this professional is called a staff advisor. A staff advisor's role with the EOA has some overlap with the EOA's volunteer advisor (discussed next), but the staff advisor's purview is wider, deeper, and more fundamental to the EOA's existence. Thus, it is crucial to an EOA's success that the staff advisor possess an intimate understanding of both the theoretical and the practical goals, processes, and guiding principles of adolescent leadership development, advisement of youth leaders, and best practices of Exploring. The staff advisor has the responsibility to find and/or develop the volunteer adult advisors who can bring the truest vision of Exploring to life, to continually monitor those volunteer advisors in their work with the EOA, and to coach and counsel the entire EOA team—youth officers, youth members, and advisors alike—to act in the best interests of supporting and growing the Exploring program in the EOA's service area. Finding a suitably qualified staff advisor is a challenge and may require an investment of time and resources by the professional and volunteer personnel appointing the staff advisor to his or her role (e.g., a Scout executive and council president helping a new district director to develop an understanding of Exploring so that he or she can assume the staff advisor role). The appointment of an enthusiastic, committed, and prepared staff advisor is the keystone to the entire EOA operation. Training for new staff advisors is available from the National Exploring Service Center.

Staff advisors assume a set of weighty responsibilities regarding the overall function and form of the EOA and its activities. The staff advisor ensures that all applicable LFL policies are accurately interpreted and correctly implemented and is committed to Exploring's purposes to foster youth leadership and remain ever interesting and relevant to the target member audience within the EOA's specific service area. In short, the staff advisor is less about “no, you can't do that” and more focused on, “let's see how we can make it happen.” With this mindset, the staff advisor selects, develops, and maintains volunteer adult advisors who adhere to similar tenets of supporting the EOA's youth leadership while also remaining subtly attentive to (but not fixated upon) minimizing risks to health, safety, finance, and public perception of the Exploring program and LFL. If any volunteer advisor is not a fit with these goals, the staff advisor assumes responsibility for consulting with appropriate volunteer/professional leadership and either counseling or removing the volunteer from their role with the EOA. As staff advisor experience increases, the appropriate balance of being “hands-on” and “hands-off” will develop, but it is important that the staff advisor be neither too manipulative of nor too disengaged from the EOA's operations. The staff advisor can value the consultation and advice of their volunteer advisor but should maintain a personal awareness and careful consideration of all that concerns the personnel of the EOA—the volunteer advisors, EOA officers, and EOA members.

EOA Advisor

The primary adult facilitator of the Exploring Officers Association's operations is the appointed EOA advisor. The EOA advisor is a volunteer appointed by overseeing professional and volunteer administration of the service level. While the advisor maintains a broad view across the entire EOA

team, the two particular people with whom the advisor communicates is the staff advisor of the EOA and the EOA's president.

A well-prepared and properly developed EOA advisor will devote their work to supporting the EOA's youth officers and members in their pursuits to enhance and improve the Exploring program across the entire EOA service area. The EOA advisor is not a volunteer with a personal agenda, but rather a volunteer committed to growing, developing, and guiding the ideas and agenda(s) of the EOA officers and EOA members.

How can an advisor find the ideal balance between appropriately supporting the best ideas of the EOA while still framing and guiding the EOA's work to be within the policies and best practices of Learning for Life?

Keeping EOAs Operating

EOAs that have a mindset of innovation and continuous improvement are more likely to keep their meetings, programs, and missions relevant and popular versus an EOA that focuses on maintaining traditions and setting up policies and procedures. Below are some suggestions for conversation starters for EOAs to ask themselves as they evaluate their meetings and programs.

EOA Overall Evaluation

- What purpose does your EOA serve in your district/council?
- Is this purpose still relevant to the "now" of Exploring?
- Do posts see the EOA as a useful resource?
- Do posts feel that the EOA effectively communicates with them?
- Does the EOA feel that it hears the voices of all posts?
- Is the EOA asking too much of officers?
- Is the EOA asking too much of Exploring posts?
- What is driving the selection of activities for the EOA?
- Do members of posts have a voice in the operation of the EOA?
- Is the EOA still led by Explorers?
- Is the role taken by advisors appropriate?
- Are officers and advisors the appropriate role models for Exploring?
- Are officers and advisors aspiring to serve as servant leaders?
- Are adult advisors supportive of the EOA officers and members, or do they have their own agenda?
- Does the EOA successfully attract and retain participants from a variety of posts?
- Whose EOA is it?

Any organization requires effort to keep it functioning and sustainable. A key to keeping An EOA effective and operating is to maintain a youth-led perspective. Continuity in youth leadership often comes in cycles because, as youth officers age, they typically move on to college. Quality adult advisors can help smooth this transition, but it may be tempting sometimes, even to the most caring adults, to "do it themselves" when they see a task left undone. Unfortunately, this often leads to new youth officers becoming bored or disenchanted with a program that is supposed to be youth-led.

Evaluating EOA Meetings

- Is attendance growing, steady, or declining?
- What is the ratio of youth to adult attendance at meetings?
- How many posts are represented at the EOA?
- Do EOA members come from all areas of the district/council?
- Are youth officers leading the meetings?
- What role do advisors play at meetings?
- How do youth perceive the adult participation at EOAs?
- Do meetings feel like a productive use of time?
- Are decisions made at meetings (forward looking)? Or are the meetings mostly reporting sessions (backward looking)?
- Do meetings include a quality training opportunity each time?
- Do meetings include something fun?
- Are face-to-face meetings convenient for the members?
- Are virtual meetings (teleconference/web conference) convenient for the members?
- What are the pros and cons of face-to-face vs. virtual meetings for your local area?

Having clear-cut and detailed job descriptions can help officers know what is expected of them and what their duties are. This helps youth make an informed decision when they choose to run for an office as to whether they have the time to be active at the level they are seeking.

The main purpose of an EOA is to serve the program needs of the posts in the district/council. If an EOA is perceived as a clique or a group only out to serve its own “agenda,” it will not be long before very few posts are participating in any of the activities sponsored by the EOA.

Below are some suggestions to consider in keeping your EOA post focused:

- Are the programs offered ones that the current posts want?
- Are there a variety of program offerings that meet the needs of different post specialties?
- Do posts feel a sense of ownership about programs? Are they invited to send representatives to help plan events?
- Are EOA activities supplementing post programs? Or are they “overtaking” the calendar so that a post finds their calendars crowded out by too many EOA-sponsored activities?
- Do EOA activities add variety to the experience of Explorers by focusing on events that individual posts are not able to do by themselves?
- Is the event calendar active and vibrant? Is it exciting?
- Is the event calendar planned well in advance (12-18 months)?
- Is the EOA helping the local district/council meet its goals and mission to serve youth with the program of Exploring?

Evaluating your EOA: Reset/reboot

If your EOA reflects on its work and discovers that it is not reaching the majority of posts or that it is having a hard time attracting youth leaders, it is important to consider the need for a “reset” or

“reboot.” This is not some sort of admission of failure. Society is changing at a lightning pace. Exploring, just like all community organizations, will continue to face the need to adapt and change as youth interests, time, and choices evolve. Below are some ideas for questions for the EOA to consider as it evaluates ways to change its structure or approach.

Program

- What level of participation is there at events?
- How many posts are represented at events?
- Are new programs developed or is the same calendar of events repeated each year?
- Are there candidates for all the youth officer positions?
- Do officers believe that they are leading the EOA?

If the participation at EOA programs or meetings is declining, it may be wise for the EOA to discuss whether it is time to consider one of the following:

- **Reset:** If the overall structure of the EOA seems sound and youth officer and leadership positions are filled, it may be time to consider “resetting” the annual program offered to posts. Seek out input and design a new set of programs that may be more attractive to current post membership.
- **Rebuild:** If the structure of the EOA is sound but the group is having trouble filling all officer and leadership positions, it may be time to consider “rebuilding” the EOA. This could be necessary even if the program offered to posts seems to be succeeding—because that will only happen for a little longer until there is no active EOA to plan such activities. A new plan for recruiting qualified and capable youth to consider leadership positions is a must. It may be tempting for advisors to lead the effort, but it is essential that a youth lead the rebuilding.
- **Reboot:** If the participation at EOA meetings and activities is low (or nonexistent) and very few youth positions are filled, it may be time to “reboot.” It may be necessary to bring together many (if not all) of the posts in the district/council to draw up a new structure for the EOA, recruit youth officers, and start by planning one event to build success.

One of the most difficult situations may be changing the adult advisor for the EOA. This is not an indictment of the skills or dedication of the person who has been in that role. However, when an EOA is no longer serving the needs of posts and participation is dropping, it is probably time to consider a change in perspective. This should be done respectfully, acknowledging all the positive work that the advisor has done in the past. A council-level volunteer such as a vice president of program or council Exploring chair should be the person to share this decision with the current advisor.

There can be value in appointing new EOA advisors on a regular basis. This sort of diversity of perspective and experience serves the program well.

It is also important to remember that volunteers are appointed to one year terms, subject to reappointment. Helping advisors understand at the outset that the role they serve is not a lifetime appointment makes it easier to retire a struggling advisor at the time of annual reappointment.

EOA Meetings

The impulse to have regular EOA meetings is a good one. However, when a meeting is held just to hold a meeting—rather than as a means of accomplishing a goal or engaging in meaningful discussions—the meeting itself can become an obstacle.

Use the list below and the EOA meeting evaluation questions above to help improve meetings by improving their purpose and their execution:

- Commit to meetings that are led by officers.
- Ensure that there is a planned agenda for the meeting.
- Give notice of the meeting on an annual calendar, and make sure reminders are sent out in advance.
- Ensure that the meeting is designed to accomplish something constructive.
- Make sure that the meeting is fun.
- Advisors should coach officers to lead effective and productive meetings.
- Meetings are not forums for advisors and other adults with an agenda.
- Do meeting discussions have mostly adult or Explorer input?
- Look for alternative ways to deliver the EOA meeting: Teleconferencing? A Saturday or Sunday afternoon? A quarterly meeting at the close of an EOA-sponsored event?

Reestablishing Program Goals

The expression, “if you build it, they will come” has some truth to it. However, this maxim is more effective if what you build is connected to what Explorers would like to do.

Some ideas that are often forgotten:

- Gather information from posts. What would they like for program?
- Keep the program provided active and engaging.
- Don’t over-program posts. Four EOA-sponsored events per year is not only a goal to aspire to, it should also be considered a limit.
- Keep the program manageable. While some EOAs can sponsor a 2,000-participant event on an annual basis, it is better for most EOAs to sponsor more manageable activities.
- Make sure the EOA programs serve as supplements to the post’s program without replacing it.
- Use EOA activities to add variety to a post’s annual program opportunities; deliver experiences that individual posts cannot accomplish.
- Work to achieve a 12-18 month program calendar.
- Take into consideration other calendars when organizing the EOA calendar.

Leadership Concerns

Leadership involves guiding a group of people or an organization to accomplish specific tasks. Leadership involves communicating and sharing a clear vision with others that they, the members of the team, are inspired to invest time and talent in meeting the team’s goals.

When an Exploring Officers Association struggles, it is helpful to consider challenges in the leadership of the team. Some possible areas of concern include

- One or more members of the EOA’s leadership are not prepared to carry out the responsibilities of the position.
- Interests of participants are not considered.
- Communication skills are ineffective.

- Planning and preparation are inadequate.
- Courage to try new activities is lacking.
- There is a lack of investment in growing other leaders.
- Some of the EOA leadership may have hidden agendas.
- The culture of the EOA leadership is unhealthy.¹

Unprepared to Carry Out the Responsibilities of the Position

Be sure that officers and advisors have clear job responsibilities and are ready to use them to achieve the goals of the EOA. As advisors work regularly to coach officers in their roles, so too must professional staff members and senior volunteer leaders work with EOA advisors to ensure that they are prepared to support the delivery of a successful program.

Interests of Participants Not Considered

The key volunteers in Exploring are the youth. If they do not willingly take part in the program opportunities offered to them, it may be due to their interests not being considered during the planning phases. Exploring is part of a movement: it must change and adapt to attract and keep participants or it will fail to thrive.

Ineffective Communication Skills

Poor communication is a factor in the failure of many organizations. Effective and demonstrated communication skills are essential for all members of the EOA—officers and advisors. Advisors need to be skilled not only in effective communication themselves, but in the ability to coach officers to become more effective communicators.

Lack of Planning and Preparation

Poor planning and preparation skills are often associated with poor communication skills. Communication provides the medium, and the plan offers the content that is communicated. A clear plan helps set priorities—to simplify and guide decision-making, to get the team working together on a project, and to establish the message that the team delivers.

Lack of Courage in Trying New Activities

A tendency to focus on activities that have been successful in the past is a natural approach. However, it is observed that a successful activity, when repeated multiple times without change and enhancement, tends to decrease interest not only in the activity but in the perception that the EOA can deliver a strong and engaging program. Experiences must be refreshed regularly for them to remain successful.

¹ Adapted from “Six Leadership Failures that Put Your Company at Risk.” Retrieved on November 29, 2015 from <http://www.forbes.com/sites/glennlopin/2015/03/24/6-leadership-fails-that-put-your-company-at-competitive-risk/>

Lack of Investment in Growing Other Leaders

Officers are elected or selected annually. Advisors may serve for several years, with an opportunity for annual reappointment. One of the key responsibilities of all EOA leaders and advisors is to search continuously for new talent. Among the key points for an annual review of the success of an EOA advisor is the responsibility to identify and cultivate new talent.

Hidden Agendas

A team leader whose purpose is not aligned with the mission of the EOA is rare, but the possibility must be considered. Using an EOA position as a stepping-stone to another role or as an item to include in a resume are causes for concern and coaching. Success in an Exploring position, or a successfully executed program, should absolutely be considered when other volunteer roles become available, but excellent service in one's current role is the critical part of the process.

Unhealthy Culture

It is important to maintain the youth-led perspective, organizational structure, and program delivery of Exploring. Among many factors, advisors need to be selected for their proficiency in youth development. Their goal is to coach Explorers to lead a program of interest to young adults. A culture that forgets that essential truth becomes an unhealthy one that misses the point of Scouting.

Professional staff advisors need to be vigilant in watching for such problems and be prepared to assist the key volunteer with Exploring oversight, in removing advisors who fail in this regard.

Terms of Office

Terms of office should be set for both the youth officers and adult advisors. An annual election for youth officers is a good starting point for discussion. If youth officers would benefit from shorter terms (e.g., six-month terms might give them more leadership opportunities), the EOA may consider that. In general, adult volunteer roles in Exploring are annually appointed.

Term limits are not likely to be an issue for youth officers due to the age limits on Exploring, but an EOA may wish to discuss whether limiting officers to a single term in any position might allow more leadership opportunities for individuals and posts.

Term limits can be an important consideration for adult advisor roles. Exploring benefits from both the youthful excitement of Explorers and the wisdom of experience from older Explorers and advisors. However, there are many examples of volunteers who hold on to a role for longer than is beneficial to themselves or to Exploring. Sometimes when a volunteer remains in the same role too long, they limit the program because they tend to recruit other adults from their own circle of association, thus limiting the program to one person's perspective.

In general, a good practice may be for a local council to appoint EOA advisors to terms of up to three years with annual reappointments. There may be times when a second term of three years is appropriate (for instance, a very complex change is occurring, and stability will benefit the organization).

An EOA advisor's main role is to help youth officers succeed. This is probably best accomplished by the advisor helping to recruit other adult volunteers who can serve as resources to the EOA's youth leadership. It is vital that these adults understand how Exploring operates—they are not being recruited

to run committees or make decisions; they are being recruited to work with youth “behind the scenes,” to coach and mentor as appropriate, and to let the youth take all the credit.

Subject Matter Experts

An EOA should not be limited to officers and advisors. It will have a better chance for success if subject matter experts (SMEs) are recruited. These are youth and adults who bring specific knowledge and/or experiences that will help the EOA to plan a special event (e.g., recruiting caving experts for a caving activity) or lead a task force (e.g., identifying how to help more Explorers utilize the award programs for leadership growth).

Recruitment of Officers

An EOA will only be sustainable if there are future officers and leaders. While planning events is always important, preparing for the years ahead should also be a consistent focus. The EOA should have a plan to actively recruit future officers. If an EOA has committees, the committee chair positions can be a training ground for Explorers who may eventually want to serve as officers. In general, an EOA needs to be sure that it is always bringing in fresh youth voices and perspectives. This is a primary responsibility for the EOA president and advisor.

A good transition plan is also necessary. When new EOA officers are elected, do they get a chance to learn from the past officers? This could be accomplished by a training conference conducted by past officers for the new officers—or by having overlapping terms where the new officers “shadow” the current officers for a few months before officially taking over. One challenge with this method is that the officers who are leaving may have other commitments (job, school, etc.) that make it difficult for them to stay in the position through the period of overlap. It’s important to have an open discussion about these issues BEFORE the transition takes place.

Rotating assignments and duties can be an effective method of keeping an EOA energetic and functioning. Youth members of the EOA often find that change makes their roles more enjoyable, and it’s also helpful to cross-train members so that they are prepared for future leadership roles.

There is no one-size-fits-all profile for EOA advisors, except that they have an understanding of how Exploring works and how to be a good advocate for youth. Ideally, advisor candidates will be former Explorers, possibly even past EOA officers. This is not to say that quality advisor candidates cannot be volunteers who were never Explorers. However, council-appointed EOA advisors should not be merely dedicated volunteers, but volunteers who understand the methods of Exploring, seek to empower youth, and prefer to be in the background without receiving recognition (since that belongs to the youth officers).

Reengaging Posts and Explorers

An EOA will only be sustainable if there are future officers and leaders. Some suggestions for reengaging Explorers and Exploring posts include the following ideas, drawn from successful practices in the non-profit sector.²

Provide incentives

A reward system is a great way to recognize dedicated Explorers and advisors and keeps them engaged in your EOA’s mission for the long run. Your EOA may establish recognitions for participation, profiles of new or reengaged members through an EOA newsletter or social media posting, or other means of recognizing participation and involvement.

Create leadership opportunities

In addition to defined officer roles, an EOA has numerous tasks that need to be accomplished to support the EOA program as it supports local post programs. Provide support and guidance to ensure success in projects of the EOA. Independence and autonomy are empowering and provide strong incentives to participate and contribute.

Communicate effectively

Mass email and generic social media postings don’t often serve the needs of the recipients. Make sure that communications are targeted to Explorers and advisors that have expressed interest in the message’s content. Determine what sort of information Explorers and advisors want by asking them when they start working with the EOA.

Focus on interests & skills

People participate in Exploring for many reasons, such as getting involved in their community, meeting new friends, or trying something new. The leadership of your EOA can help them to contribute to the success of the EOA by identifying each participant’s skills and interests.

Provide an active program

An active and engaging program, well-publicized and well planned, is the most important tool for attracting young adults to Exploring and to service with your EOA.

Build teams

Help the members of your EOA build relationships by creating teams to carry out projects that support the EOA. Explorers will meet new Explorers and be able to contribute a unique skill or perspective that will make any project or task more successful.

² Adapted from Holt, G. C. (2016). Strategies Your Nonprofit Should Implement to Engage Volunteers. Retrieved from <http://blog.techimpact.org/7-strategies-nonprofit-implement-engage-volunteers/>

PART VI. PROGRAM IDEAS FOR EOAS

This section of the *Administration Guide* is designed to “prime the pump,” to make use of an old metaphor. The first eight events described below are examples of what an EOA can realistically do to provide fun and engaging program. The intention is to give you some ideas that have found success in other councils. Use these ideas for inspiration for what might work in your local council or area.

Keep in mind when organizing an EOA event that it should be on the scale that an individual post could not accomplish it themselves.

Service Events

Arbor Day Project

For an Arbor Day event, one EOA collaborated with a local park district to restore native trees to a plot of cropland. The project was started and completed in one day, as 75 Explorers worked to plant several thousand trees.

Giving Thanks

In celebration of Thanksgiving, a district EOA worked in concert with a local shelter to provide Thanksgiving dinner for residents of the shelter. The Explorers secured food donations and coordinated with the shelter leaders to prepare and serve the meal.

Recognition Events (Personal Growth)

Annual Recognition Dinner

Your council could host an annual recognition dinner to recognize Explorers for their achievements throughout the year.

Great Program Ideas for EOAs

These samples are drawn from the *Exploring Guidebook for Leaders*, where their inclusion supports advisors in brainstorming new program ideas for posts to try out. They serve a similar purpose here, for EOA officers to help their EOA leadership come up with new program ideas.

Ideas for Fun Events

- Bowling
- Haunted Hike
- (Your Community) After Dark
- Exploring Day at an amusement park
- Road Rally
- Exploring Campout (which could include many of the elements below)
- Sponsoring an annual Exploring camp

- Bike hike on country roads
- Swimming at a lake or beach
- Sailboat sailing
- Catamaran sailing
- Canoeing expedition
- Whitewater rafting
- Whitewater canoeing
- Caving
- Rock climbing
- Ice climbing
- Houseboat trip
- Snow camp
- Ice fishing
- Scuba diving
- Backpacking
- Fishing trip
- Ropes/COPE course
- Zip-lining
- Snowmobile trip
- Ice skating
- Cross-country skiing
- Downhill skiing
- Waterskiing
- Horseback riding
- Fly-fishing
- Mountain biking
- Camping under the stars
- Sleep in wilderness survival shelters

Ideas for Service Events

- Lend a hand on a farm for a weekend—see where our food comes from
- Meals on Wheels
- Sponsor a STEM camp
- Spring/fall cleanup for elderly neighbors
- Safe driving campaign
- Food drive
- Support a blood drive
- Place wreaths on tombs in a cemetery on holidays
- Recognize local veterans
- Buddy up with elementary school students to read
- Eating disorder awareness information

- Book drive
- Perform the national anthem or lead the Pledge of Allegiance for a group other than the post
- Conduct a flag ceremony for naturalization ceremony
- Provide service for community run marathon/fitness event
- Provide service for community festival
- Cultural awareness clinic
- Disabilities awareness clinic
- Visit elderly and special needs adults
- Sports clinic for elementary or middle school youth
- Soapbox derby for youth with special needs
- River cleanup
- Prairie restoration
- Hiking trail maintenance

Ideas for Recognition Events

- Annual dinner
- Exploring ball
- Exploring dance
- Support and participation in council annual recognition event

Ideas for Training Events

- First-aid training
- Project management
- Time management
- Mentoring training
- Personal Safety Awareness Training
- Post Committee Challenge
- Advisor-Specific Training (have youth train advisors)
- Career fair
- Training fair
- GPS training
- EMT or first-responder first aid
- Lifeguarding
- Hunter education
- Historical reenactment
- Edible plants
- Becoming U.S. Sailing instructors
- Search and rescue
- Treating water in the wilderness
- Wilderness first aid
- Bird calls
- Identifying local plants by sight
- Identifying local animals by track or sight
- Ballroom dancing

- Folk dancing
- Native American dancing
- Faith walk (visiting diverse faith communities)
- Cooking without utensils over an open fire
- Learning some constellations
- Geocaching
- Observing planets through a telescope

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Position Descriptions

Note that some flexibility is provided for council- and district-level EOA operation that is not available for area, region, and national level EOAs. This allows operations above the council level to be better coordinated and for local council and district needs to best reflect local concerns. As an example, while it is recommended that local councils establish a term of office for officers that run from June 1 through May 31 of the following year, it is not required.

President

The president is selected by a prescribed process to serve for a specific term of office (June 1 to May 31). The president:

- Reports to the Youth Development Committee Chair (see the organization chart if a Youth Development Committee has not yet been established) and serves as a member of that committee.
- Works with volunteer advisors and staff advisors of his or her own EOA and with Exploring presidents at the tiers above and below him or her.
- Appoints and supervises vice presidents, EOA liaisons, and additional optional EOA youth positions.
- Leads the youth officer selection process and interviews.
- Represents the EOA to council leadership at the same tier.
- Motivates and coordinates the three vice presidents and any other appointed EOA members in assigned tasks and conducts meetings with them as needed.
- Helps train and mentor presidents in lower tiers.
- Plans and leads regular meetings of the EOA.
- Assists EOA members with the selection of subsidiary youth members.
- Assists the volunteer advisor with selection of associate advisors.
- Tracks all goals for the EOA and provides regular progress reports to the Youth Development Committee.

Vice President of Administration

The vice president of administration is appointed by the president-elect (for a term concurrent with that of the president) and serves at the president's discretion. The vice president of administration:

- Works with an associate volunteer advisor of the EOA.
- In consultation with the president, appoints and supervises subsidiary youth positions needed to perform the administrative functions of the EOA.
- Develops and implements strategies to increase Exploring membership within the territory of the EOA.
- Actively pursues positive relationships with representatives of sponsoring organizations, businesses, community organizations, and other groups of interest to the EOA and Exploring.
- Develops and maintains knowledge of customs, traditions, and relevant facts about sponsoring organizations, religious groups, businesses, community organizations, and other groups of interest to the EOA and Exploring.
- Promotes and organizes the youth officer selection application processes (at the same tier). They can also assist the president in communicating with the selection committee, organizing the call, etc.
- Maintains records of recognitions, membership, officer selections, and EOA leadership alumni.
- Keeps contact with EOA alumni for future mentor or advisor roles when needed.

- Takes minutes at EOA meetings.
- Performs any other duties as assigned by the president.

Vice President of Program

The vice president of program is appointed by the president-elect (for a term concurrent with that of the president) and serves at the president's discretion. The vice president of program:

- In consultation with the president, appoints and supervises subsidiary youth positions needed to perform the program functions of the EOA.
- Works with an associate volunteer advisor of the EOA.
- Supervises activity chairs and the planning of activities (conferences, outings, summits, and other events).
- Facilitates internal training events of the EOA.
- Promotes external training events and maintains a knowledge base of all training opportunities available for youth and adult members in Exploring.
- Manages EOA finances, if required.
- Coordinates and implements innovative ideas for development.
- Performs any other duties as assigned by the president.

Vice President of Communication

The vice president of communication is appointed by the president-elect (for a term concurrent with that of the president) and serves at the president's discretion. The vice president of communication:

- In consultation with the president, appoints and supervises subsidiary youth positions needed to perform the communication functions of the EOA.
- Works with a volunteer associate advisor of the EOA.
- Actively studies and remains aware of the best way to communicate to ensure that the EOA web presence is being maintained, updated, and scaled appropriately for effective publication of information and collection of feedback.
- Periodically publishes a newsletter of past, current, and future events, including articles of noteworthy events and other items of interest to Explorers.
- Submits articles about EOA activities to other media (e.g., council or region newsletter and websites).
- Actively pursues opportunities to increase EOA exposure by submitting articles, comments, photos, and upcoming event announcements, and reports to external publications such as local newspapers and other appropriate venues.
- Maintains groups, pages, blogs, calendars, message boards, etc., on the most relevant social media and social networking sites.
- Develops and maintains the tools to communicate with all relevant parties using a variety of methods such as telephone, text message, email, and postal mail as appropriate.
- Maintains rosters of EOA members and frequently involved persons, including as many forms of readily available communication as possible, and identifies preferred methods, making them available to the EOA as needed and appropriate.
- Develops, updates, maintains, and makes readily available marketing strategies, solutions, and materials.
- Actively pursues contact information for people, groups, and businesses of interest to the EOA.

- Performs any other duties as assigned by the president.

Subsidiary EOA Member

The subsidiary EOA member is appointed by the president and serves at the president's discretion. The subsidiary EOA member:

- Reports to a vice president or president.
- Completes duties as assigned by the vice president to accomplish the objectives of the EOA.

Ad Hoc EOA Members

A position profile will be established by the president and approved by the commensurate tier volunteer Advisor for any appointed ad hoc (temporary) positions.

EOA Volunteer Advisor

The volunteer Advisor is appointed by the top volunteer officer at each tier (e.g., district chair, area president) and serves at the appointer's discretion. The volunteer Advisor:

- Reports to the Youth Development committee chair and serves as a member of that committee.
- In consultation with the staff advisor and president, appoints and supervises associate volunteer and subsidiary volunteer advisors to work with any youth appointed by the president.
- Works with the president and associate volunteer advisors, and coordinates with advisors at the tiers above and below him or her.
- Serves as a mentor and advocate for the president.
- Ensures fiscal, programmatic, and risk management issues are properly addressed.
- Is familiar with the operations of any relevant Scouting organizations in their territory.
- Appoints volunteer associate advisors and subsidiary volunteer advisors

Staff Advisor

The staff advisor is a professional staff member appointed by the BSA/LFL staff leader at that tier and serves at the appointee's discretion. The staff advisor:

- Serves as a member of the Youth Development Committee.
- Ensures that the policies and interests of the BSA and Learning for Life are maintained.
- Approves all adult appointments of the EOA.
- Ensures that advisors consistently serve with the best interests of the program and officers at the forefront.

Associate Advisor

The associate volunteer advisor is appointed by the volunteer advisor and serves at that advisor's discretion.

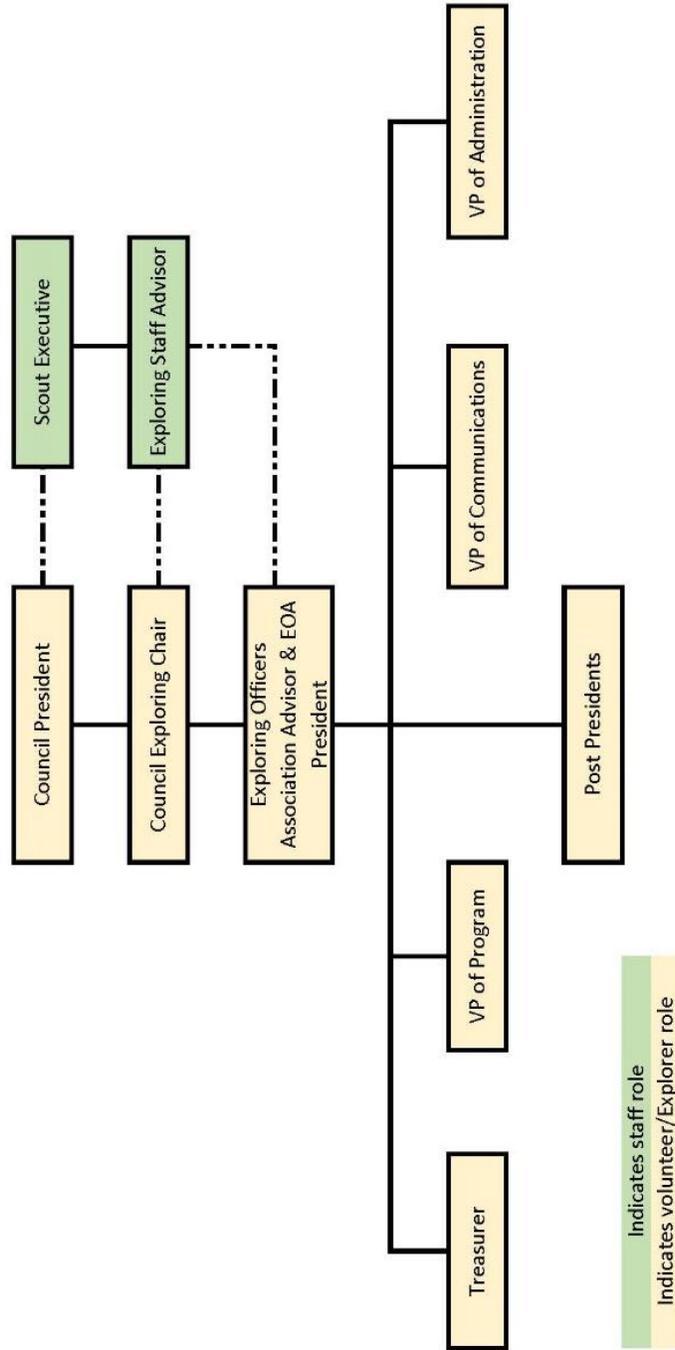
- Supervises any subsidiary adults appointed by the volunteer advisor.
- Serves as a mentor and advocate for the youth members he or she advises.
- Supports the volunteer advisor in ensuring that fiscal, programmatic, and risk management issues are properly addressed.
- Provides expertise and/or training to specific youth officers to help them accomplish assigned tasks.

Subsidiary Advisor

The subsidiary volunteer advisor is appointed by the volunteer advisor and serves at that advisor's discretion.

- Reports to a volunteer associate advisor or the volunteer advisor.
 - Supports youth subsidiary EOA members in accomplishing assigned tasks.

Organization of the Exploring Officers Association - Council



Appendix 2. Council Exploring Interest Survey

This document can be adapted to suit local needs. It can be administered in a paper format or shared online. Keep in mind when organizing an EOA event that it should be on the scale that an individual post could not accomplish it by themselves.

The Exploring program gives your post the flexibility and resources to follow your passion. We need your help to deliver exactly what YOU want in this program.

Please complete the following questions to help your council Exploring Officers Association (EOA) obtain a better understanding of you and your post's interests.

Council: _____

Unit Number: _____

Name: _____

Generally, how involved are you in your council's EOA activities?

I actively participate in/help plan events.

I attend events.

I am not currently involved but would like to be.

I do not know if our council has events/activities.

I do not attend or participate in events.

Our council does not have an EOA that I know of.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements:

I am satisfied with the number of programs offered during the summer (June-August).

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neutral

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

N/A

I am satisfied with the number of programs offered during the school year (September-May).

Strongly agree

Somewhat agree

Neutral

Somewhat disagree

Strongly disagree

N/A

What is the main type of activity or focus of your post?

- Career development
- Camp staff
- High adventure
- School club
- Community Service
- Other: _____

Please indicate the activities that are of interest to you and your post. These can be activities your post has done and would like to see more of, or simply activities you want to see. Please feel free to suggest other ideas as well.

Adventure

- Backpacking super activity
- Inter-post beach party
- Inter-post bowling event
- Camping super activity
- Inter-post canoeing event
- Inter-post CPR course
- Inter-post climbing/rappelling
- Inter-post cook-off
- Inter-post sailing
- Cycling/mountain biking
- Inter-post sports day/tournament
- Council wide Exploring fashion show
- Inter-post COPE course
- Geocaching challenge

Other:

Leadership

- National Youth Leadership Training
- Inter-post Introduction to Leadership Skills for Posts
- Goal setting
- Model post officers' orientation
- Communication training
- Time management training
- Project management training
- Conflict management training
- Meet and greet with: _____

Other:

Personal Growth

- Career clinic expo
- College/university panel
- Ethical controversy sit-in/debate
- Presentation/talk from: _____
- Religious workshop
- Job interview skills workshop

Other:

What are your personal goals for this year:

Service

- Community cleanup project
- Conservation project
- Assistance to disabled citizens
- Emergency preparedness
- Hiking trail cleanup
- Care package for soldiers
- Helping with camporee
- Volunteer with: _____

Other:

What additional support can your council provide to you and your post? (For example: recruitment help, officer training help, event ideas for post, etc.)
