

## **Recruiting** from [venturing.org](http://www.venturing.org) > Crew Resources > Recruiting

In order for a crew to be sustainable, they must continually draw in new members. Luckily, this isn't a chore! A larger crew can lead to more activities and more fun! Often times, crews lose members as their youth grow older and either move to a different location or age out. One of the best ways to prevent this is to ensure that your crew membership always represents a variety of age groups. A crew that is constantly bringing in new members will not only positively impact more youth, but will also offer a better program to the Venturers already involved.

Research has shown that the best way to draw in new members is quite simple: talking to them! We call this peer-to-peer recruiting. Asking your friends to join you for an activity or event and try out Venturing is the heart of peer-to-peer recruiting. Sharing your experiences of the amazing adventures you've completed and posting exciting pictures on social media can definitely help to get the word out to your peers. To assist with this effort, a Venturing Recruiting Toolbox has been put together with helpful resources you may need to recruit new members. They are intended for an individual crew member to hand flyers or brochures to prospective members. Councils and crews may use these materials to promote recruitment.

Your crew may find it helpful to create a Recruiting Plan. One aspect of the plan is to design events that draw in new members. One of the requirements for the Pathfinder Award is actually to design a project that sustains and grows your crew! However, be sure to remember that recruitment is not a once-a-year experience. Your crew may have multiple open houses throughout the program year, or invite guests to many of your events. Crew sustainability and recruitment are ongoing responsibilities for your crew.

### Open House Events

The Venturing crew open house is a crew event where prospective members (and possibly their parents) are invited to a crew activity, given an opportunity to find out about your crew and its program, and invited to join. The open house may be a prelude to inviting prospective members to a crew outing organized as a Tier I adventure.

The event has two purposes. The primary purpose is to introduce potential new members to your crew. First impressions are key, so plan an open house with that in mind. You might get only one opportunity to show off what you do and to invite someone to join. The second purpose of an open house is to make the crew feel good about what the crew is accomplishing and how it brings its vision to life.

When planning an open house, be bold and creative! The open house could be a very simple meeting where the potential members learn about the crew's past and future programs, or it can be BOLD. A high-adventure oriented crew, for example, could meet potential new members outside the meeting place, where they will climb and then rappel off the side of the building. A sports-oriented crew could offer a sports maze where guests do several sports, such as shooting basketballs, throwing a football at a target, hitting a hockey puck into a net, and identifying famous athletes.

Crew officers have the primary responsibility for planning and conducting the open house. Usually the Vice President of Administration is the chair for planning the open house, or the Crew President can assign another crew member to be the chair. The open house chair then recruits a committee to plan and conduct an open house.

Planning the event will take one or two meetings and should start at least four to six weeks before an open house. The first planning meeting will be to explain why you are doing the open house, plan what you will do, and make assignments. The next meeting, which occurs one or two weeks before the open house, is a follow-up, is-everything-done-type meeting. Open houses and their planning meetings should be Venturer-run, not adult-run.

### **Recruiting and Program Tips for the Fall**

from the Central Region Venturing Officers Association Newsletter

**The good news is**, back to school season is the perfect time to start growing your crew's membership and program! The beginning of a new school year is a great time to invite friends to join your crew. Here are some great tips to help your crew gracefully make the transition from summer to school year and gain a few new members along the way.

**Plan your annual program:** Before you can start recruiting new members, you need to have a plan for your annual activities. Take some time to sit down with the officers and advisors of your crew and plan meetings, day outings, and campouts for the year. Make sure to take everybody's school schedules and extracurricular activities into consideration. Does your crew meeting schedule still work for everybody in your crew? Are there any extended weekends that are perfect for camping? Be sure to accommodate for important events, like Graduation, Homecoming, and holidays.

**Look for opportunities to promote in your community:** At the beginning of the school year, many schools provide opportunities to promote student activities to parents and students. Talk to your school about setting up an info booth at an open house, parent teacher conferences, or during lunch. If you are chartered through a church or another community organization, ask your chartering organization what opportunities they have for promoting your crew as well. Use the fun events you planned during program planning to catch the interest of teens in your community!

**Aim your recruitment efforts at a younger audience:** While recruiting teens of all ages is very important, the beginning of the school year is a great time to catch the interest of new freshmen at your school. Many freshmen use the first year of high school to get to know clubs and programs offered at your school, so be sure to talk to them about Venturing and invite them to participate in crew activities. This is a great way to gain new members and make new students feel welcome at school!