

Chapter 3

LODGE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

INTRODUCTION

The Lodge Assistance Program makes available a section's extensive resources to help the lodges of the section. With the section's help, lodges will be able to provide better service to their councils and fulfill the requirements of the Quality Lodge Recognition program.

The assistance program encompasses two major elements, lodge visits by a section assistance team and use of the council of chiefs meetings to provide training. Use of the council of chiefs to provide training is presented in Chapter 5. Through a system of evaluation and review, lodge leaders are able to interact and learn from experienced Arrowmen within the section. The lodge visits help identify the resources, training and guidance that lodges require to ultimately increase the service they provide to their councils.

Sections gain first hand knowledge of lodge strengths through the onsite visits. This in turn enables the section to prepare programs to meet the needs of the lodges, and provide them through conclave training and council of chiefs discussions and presentations. The Lodge Assistance Program uses the resources of the section to improve and strengthen the lodges.

TEAM ORGANIZATION

The section assistance team is organized as a subcommittee of the council of chiefs. Its primary responsibility is to carry out the Lodge Assistance Program including training and leading discussions at council of chiefs meetings and conducting lodge visits. The team also identifies and provides a pool of resources that all lodges in the section and neighboring sections may access.

The section vice chief chairs the team, and the section adviser appoints an adviser to the team. The team will have a minimum of two additional youth members or young adult members who have recently turned 21. These additional members are appointed by the section chief with the guidance and approval of the section adviser. Additional members may be appointed as required by the number of visits to be conducted during the year. None of the team members on a particular visit should be members of the lodge being visited.

All assistance team members must

- Be in good standing with the Boy Scouts of America, and an Order of the Arrow lodge,
- Have proven leadership abilities, such as serving as a past or current lodge chief, section officer, or national officer-,
- Have an understanding of the rules and program elements of the Order of the Arrow, and
- Have attended a National Leadership Seminar (optional)

PLANNING THE VISITS

Annually, the section vice chief in consultation with the section adviser will determine which lodges the assistance team will visit, Lodges within the section should be visited

- At least once every three years,
- Upon the recommendation of the region, or
- Upon a direct request from a lodge or its council Scout executive.

Once it is determined which lodges in the section will be visited, the section adviser should request the area director obtain council approval for the visit. After approval is obtained, the section vice chief may contact the lodge chief to set the date and place for their meeting.

Lodge visits should be held within the lodge's council area and should last no more than two hours. During the visit, the Key 3 and other officers (at their discretion) should represent the lodge, along with the council Scout executive, if he chooses. The section assistance team should not have more members present than the lodge being visited.

The entire section assistance team should meet following the conclave to train the team members. During the training, plans should be made for the lodge visits to be conducted during the year. The individual program strengths of each team member should be assessed so that they may be best assigned to lodge visits where they may be of greatest use.

Prior to the section assistance team meeting, the section vice chief should collect the following resources and distribute them to the other members of the team for review

1. From the lodge:

- Lodge's rules or guidelines
- Lodge's annual program plan or planbook

2. From the region office:

- Completed Lodge Charter Renewal Application (most recent)
- Completed Quality Lodge Recognition Petition (most recent)
- National program attendance

It is important to keep in mind while conducting the visits that feedback should be gathered to plan section programs, including training at conclaves, section meetings, and council of chiefs discussions. Programs that individual lodges run well, or innovative program ideas that lodges use should be brought to the attention of the entire section and presented at a future meeting.

TRAINING THE TEAM

In training the team the section vice chief should use the following Outlines

Section Assistance Team Training

Learning Objectives: Each section assistance team member will be introduced to the following items and gain basic understanding of how they perform the mentoring process

- Vision and strategic plan for the Order,
- Lodge's role as an integral part of the Scout council,
- Quality Lodge Recognition program requirements,
- Relationship between the vision, strategic plan, and Quality Lodge Recognition program requirements-, and
- Role of the section assistance team

Materials Needed:

- *Order of the Arrow Handbook*
- Copies of the *Strategic Plan of the Order of the Arrow*
- The Quality Lodge Recognition program requirements for the current and upcoming years

- Section Assistance Team Evaluation and Report

I. Opening Comments

The *Strategic Plan of the Order of the Arrow* emphasizes the importance of the following:

- Leadership development
- Membership extension
- Adventurous programming
- Broader service to Scouting and the community

A significant role of the section is to support and assist the lodge in achieving quality lodge recognition and providing better service to the Scout council. This is accomplished through a close monitoring and mentoring relationship between the section and lodge leadership, much like the relationship between a unit commissioner and a unit leader. The section assistance team is key to developing and improving the relationship between the lodge and section.

The purpose of the lodge visit is to:

- Identify and understand how the lodge is doing.
- Familiarize the lodge leadership with the quality lodge recognition requirements and national policy.
- Identify opportunities for the lodge to better serve the Scout council.
- Develop a trusting, working relationship with the lodge leadership to assist in achieving quality lodge recognition, improving lodge operations, and providing better service to the Scout council.

II. Section Assistance Team

The section vice chief will serve as the chairman of the section assistance team. A minimum of three other members consisting of two youth and one adult will also serve on the team. These members are to be appointed by the section chief with the guidance and approval of the section adviser. Additional members may be appointed, as needed. None of the team members on a particular visit should be members of the lodge being visited

Members of the section assistance team should meet the following requirements:

- Be a registered member in good standing with the Boy Scouts of America and the Order;
- Have proven leadership abilities in the lodge or section, such as a past or current lodge chief, section officer, or national officer;
- Understand national policies and procedures; and
- Have attended a National Leadership Seminar (optional).

During the visit, the Key 3 and other officers (at their discretion) should represent the lodge, along with the council Scout executive, if he chooses. The section assistance team should not have more members present than the lodge being visited.

III. Scheduling and Organizing the Lodge Visit

Establish a backdating schedule and process. A suggested schedule is provided later in this chapter. Stress the importance of obtaining approval for the lodge visit from the Scout executive and communication with lodge leadership. The section vice chief should also schedule follow-up contacts with the lodge leadership.

IV. Suggested Agenda for the Lodge Visit

Review the suggested agenda for the lodge visit provided in this chapter. The lodge visit should be held in the lodge's council area and last no more than two hours. The lodge chief should conduct the meeting, and at the conclusion of the meeting, he should provide leadership in completing the Section Assistance Team Evaluation and mail copies to the region staff adviser.

V. Leadership and Coaching Skills Refresher

The key to this program's success is that the section and the lodge leadership must work together and establish a trusting relationship focused on achieving Quality Lodge Recognition. Leadership and coaching skills, like those presented in the National Leadership Seminar, are key to achieving this relationship. Examples of difficult topics and recommended approaches for discussion of difficult issues should be addressed with the section assistance team members.

THE VISIT

The section assistance team's visit with the lodge's key leadership should include

- A review of the lodge's Quality Lodge Recognition program accomplishments
- A discussion of how the lodge can provide better service to the council and achieve the purpose of the Order of the Arrow
- Setting obtainable lodge goals, aimed at achieving all Quality Lodge Recognition program requirements
- A review of the national and lodge rules and regulations
- A review of the lodge's annual program plan
- Information about new CA policies, procedures, and programs
- Creating obtainable goals for the section in order to help the lodge achieve its purpose in the Order of the Arrow
- Creating a list of resources the section can make available to the lodge

The suggested meeting agenda found later in this chapter should be used as a guideline to steer discussion towards a helpful end.

REPORTING THE VISIT

At the conclusion of the visit, the team should give a copy of the Section Assistance Team Evaluation to the lodge chief. He should be asked to complete the evaluation and mail it directly to the region staff adviser for the region chief and region chairman.

On the same day of the visit, team members should assist the team chairman in completing the Section Assistance Team Report. This report should be forwarded to the section chief, section adviser, lodge Key 3, and the region staff adviser within a week of the visit.

Once a section assistance team has returned from a visit with a lodge, they need to quickly gather the resources that the lodge requested and get them to the lodge. The assistance team must set up the means and methods for the section to follow through with the goals they established to help the lodge. Within 90 days of the visit, the section vice chief should contact the lodge chief to follow the progress made by the lodge in achieving their goals.

At the conclusion of the program year, the section vice chief must complete the Section Assistance Team Final Report. The section chief will include this with the reports of the conclave.