



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA



**VOICE OF THE SCOUT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:
2012 SPRING CYCLE**



INTRODUCTION

The Voice of the Scout (VOS) inaugural member feedback program launched this March, in a first-ever effort to systematically capture experience of Scouts, parents, volunteers and chartering organizations across 218 participating councils. The ultimate goal of the Voice of the Scout is to define and create interactions with Scouting that are so positive and powerful that subsequent referrals for Scouting are generated. This aim is in full concert with “the main thing” – delivering a quality Scouting experience to a growing membership.

Using the Net Promoter Score™ (NPS) approach, this system provides a way to understand and act upon the tendency of members to recommend or promote Scouting to others. With membership in the millions, turning more people into loyal Promoters has incredible potential—therefore we must be ready to listen, learn and methodically act upon what the Voice of the Scout is saying at every level of the organization. The following Executive Summary highlights this spring’s survey cycle with key insights taken from the feedback received.

THE MAIN STORY

The Scouting experience basically has two interdependent components, the program itself and how it is delivered. It is a question asked by volunteers and professionals alike: Are both being optimally fulfilled in the dynamic environments within our various communities, as well as the nation overall?

Enough is known at the national level to say that when the Scouting experience is negatively impacted it typically is the delivery of the program rather than the program itself. What is being said loud and clear across all segments – they believe the program is great, good, and fine; and it is loved by all. Responses, both quantitative and qualitative and across all segments, provide this confirmation.

This is not to say the program is perfect and without critics. What is being said is the experience can be improved initially by resolving issues with delivery:

- Better organization and general improvements in troop and den meetings were consistently mentioned for improvement by Cub Scout Parents, Boy Scout Parents and Boy Scouts.
- Improved leadership is a recommendation made by all audiences.
- Training – more opportunities, relevant and improved - was suggested by the Volunteer segments.

The following breaks down the common themes into four main member groups:

- Youth/Scouts overwhelmingly enjoy their experience, citing it is fun, life skills learned are very valuable and activities are of interest. However, the way in which the program is delivered is not consistently hitting the mark. The two themes are meetings are boring and unit leadership is not strong. More great outdoor activities is a strong request by a majority of respondents.
- Parents echo their sons' sentiments: Scouting is a critical part of developing character, but the meetings are not always a good use of time. Parents’ number one area for improvement is better trained adult leaders.
- Volunteers completely embrace Scouting, but are challenged to support delivery because the organization has too much red tape, inconsistent rules and excessive paperwork. Cost to be a volunteer and a shortage of leaders were top areas for improvement.
- Charter Orgs are sold on the benefits of Scouting, but find the chartering process cumbersome. They also are asking for a stronger, reciprocal relationship with their Council.



DRILL DOWN: THE SEVEN SEGMENT AUDIENCE

While many councils work to increase response rates, the national findings outlined below may have correlations to known issues already known but not qualified at the local level. When this is the case, findings from the VOS spring cycle should support taking corrective actions where pertinent.

This is not to say the program is perfect and without critics. What is being said is the experience can be improved initially by resolving issues with delivery:

CUB SCOUTS: AN NPS OF 39%

Creating experiences for Cubs that would drive them to recommend Scouting to their friends is overwhelmingly dependent on the delivery of fun at den meetings and other organized events. In fact, the importance of having fun supersedes all other situations for Cubs and is four times more important than any other activity reported in the Cub Scout survey. The second highest driver of the member experience is learning new things in den meetings. While definitive statements from the Cubs are not directly reporting the delivery of the program being a problem, there is anecdotal evidence that it is impacting the experience in Scouting in a fundamental way.

What is Working: Eighty-five percent of respondents agree that their Scouting experience is really fun. The Program appears to continue to generate excitement about earning badges with 83 percent of Cubs. Seventy-six percent agreeing that they do learn new things in den meetings.

Needs Improvement: It's Too Boring: There are numerous negative comments (boring, not fun) scattered throughout the Cub Scout responses in the context of meetings, gatherings, and experience. In the case of Detractor experiences, about 90 percent of those who commented were negative, specifically citing boring and not fun.

Get Outdoors More: Satisfaction with outdoor activities is at 68 percent agreeing that these activities are great. This may appear to be a substantial number in agreement; but when interpreted within the context of the NPS score of 39 percent the frequency and reach of outdoor activities is recommended for attention.

Bullying Exists: While 73 percent of Cub Scouts agree that boys in their group are not mean, 27 percent are neutral or disagree. For these 27 percent, comments were alarming and indicate the need for heightened awareness among leaders and training on how to effectively deal with the bully and the boy being bullied.

BOY SCOUTS/ VENTURERS: AN NPS OF 34%

Boy Scouts have the second to lowest NPS score of 34 percent, with just one-half the respondents being Promoters of the program. Interestingly, those that stated they are no longer members have a much higher loyalty level with an NPS score of 67 percent. Digging into the loyalty levels even further, older Scouts (those age 14 and above) reported a 22 percent higher NPS than the younger Scouts. The disconnect might be found in the way the value driving activities are being experienced for each, which are: 1) Scouting makes me feel like I am part of something bigger; 2) Meetings are a good use of my time; 3) Scouting includes activities I am interested in.

However, the fourth driver speaks specifically to an appreciation and awareness of learning life skills. For more mature, older Scouts they have more of a perspective of how this is applicable to success in life. With perspective to younger scouts, outdoor activities are a more important value driver for them than for older Scouts.

What is Working: Boy Scouts reported high levels of satisfaction with the program. Seventy-five percent agree that being in Scouting makes them feel like they are a part of something bigger than themselves. They see the value in



Scouting from a development perspective, with 89 percent agreeing they are learning life skills that are very valuable. Lastly, 82 percent agree that Scouting activities are of interest to them.

Needs Improvement: Wasted Time & Disorganization: Only 52 percent of Scouts indicated that meetings are a good use of my time. Comments included references to boring, unorganized, too long and not productive. In general the program is very well received, but better management of the meetings or delivery of the content is in need of help.

CUB SCOUT PARENTS*: AN NPS OF 31%

Cub Scout Parents have the lowest levels of member satisfaction and loyalty with an NPS of 31 percent. While just over half of the Promoters provided comments that were largely positive related to program and delivery (experience, program and character development), Cub Scout Parents Detractors outweighed the feedback. Roughly 61 percent of Detractors had provided additional comment describing the experience as boring, not organized, disappointing, not satisfying or not fun (15 percent of Passives had similar comments). In the NPS question optional comment box, Promoters and Passives had very few negative comments whatsoever, but of the 257 Detractors, 97 percent of the comments were negative about the program, experience, cost or communication. Over 90 percent of ALL negative comments were about the “experience”.

What is Working: Over 80 percent of parents agree that Scouting provides activities that their son/s enjoy. Specifically, parents made comments about Scouting being a positive learning experience, rewarding and good at developing character.

Needs Improvement: A Structured, Rewarding Time: The very most important fulfillment for Cub Scout Parents is feeling that Scout meetings are a good use of

their sons’ time, yet it is the second lowest of all the activities rated with only 68 percent of parents in agreement. The lowest agreement for Cub parents was that their son was learning skills in Scouting that he could not learn anywhere else at 47 percent. Numerous statements were reported about the meetings being disorganized, needing more structure, waste of time and boring. Reviews of perceived importance of skills should help councils deliver more effectively, and nationally there could be geographic variation in the value and applicability of what is being taught.

Unique Skills Development: Activity with the lowest satisfaction is “my son learns skills in Scouting that he could not learn anywhere else”. Less than 50 percent of parents agree this was happening.

* While this summary focuses on active members, it needs to be noted that parents no longer affiliated with the organization have a negative NPS of -15 percent. For this isolated group, a negative NPS means more would detract others from joining Scouting than recommend involvement. Former Cub Scout Parents are the only group with a negative NPS. Specifically they indicated that the experience was disorganized or disappointing, which lead to this negative experience.

BOY SCOUT/ VENTURER PARENTS: AN NPS OF 63%

Boy Scout Parents have the highest levels of member satisfaction and loyalty of all the customer segments. Over 50% of the Promoters who provided written feedback cited an excellent experience that is interesting, enjoyable and fun. About 30 percent of Detractors that commented referenced the need for better leadership.

What is Working: Boy Scout Parents are most likely to recommend Scouting to others when they believe that the program helps prepare their son/s to be successful in life. Seventy-two percent of respondents agree that the program is indeed accomplishing this goal, along with 92 percent who state that Scouting reinforces worthwhile values for their son(s).



Needs Improvement: Time Matters: Much like the Cub Scout Parents, Boy Scout parents need to see meetings as a good use of time for their teens. While the program is solid, all levels of Parents - Promoters, Passives and Detractors – expressed their disapproval on its delivery at Scout meetings. In excess of 90 percent of open-ended comments to this question were negative.

YOUTH-FACING VOLUNTEERS: AN NPS OF 43%

Youth-Facing Volunteers believe, without a doubt, that Scouting delivers unique benefits to youth...plus they desire support to be more effective leaders in delivering the program. This group's NPS of 43 percent is in the middle of all the customer segments. Digging deeper, Cub Scout Volunteers' NPS is 33 percent lower than Boy Scout Volunteers, which should be an area for focus immediately.

What is Working: Youth-Facing Volunteers' are more apt to recommend Scouting to others when they embrace the concept that Scouting provides a unique benefit for today's youth. Currently, 94 percent of volunteers agree, which is the highest satisfaction of all seven activities rated. Even the Detractors were very engaged in making comments about the program being great, yet they also assessed that it is outdated or needed a return to more traditional quality.

Needs Improvement: The Importance of Business Ease: Leaders perceive that there is too much bureaucracy and red tape. Making it easier for volunteers to carry out their desired responsibilities of working with the youth, instead of wasting time trying to "do business" with the organization would increase their overall experience as a leader.

Council Support: While 74 percent agree they are receiving what they need to be an effective leader, only 36 percent feel that roundtables are an effective means to provide support. Only about half believe service & support from council goes beyond average. Improving roundtables and providing exceptional service

at the council level will improve the value in the relationship and improve leaders' perspective.

DISTRICT/ COUNCIL VOLUNTEERS: AN NPS OF 56%

With the second highest NPS of all segments at 56 percent, almost all comments provided were positive about the program from Promoters, Passives and Detractors alike in this group. However, these volunteers were less enthusiastic about the delivery of program quality and the council's responsiveness to volunteers. Comments from this group are also largely positive, with Detractors citing the experience being frustrating, the process is bureaucratic and the time commitment being too large.

What is Working: Overwhelmingly, District and Council Volunteers understand and believe in the unique benefits that Scouting provides to youth. Fully 96 percent of respondents agree or strongly agree with this statement. About 70 percent state they have the tools and resources to be an effective volunteer.

Needs Improvement: Serving Volunteer Needs: Volunteers are essentially split on agreement that the organization (possibly either local or national council) is responsive to volunteers' needs. Forty-three percent also do not agree that committee/board is accomplishing its goals in a timely manner.

Council Support: The second most important driver of the volunteers' experience is related to the perception that that district/council is doing everything it can to deliver quality programs. However, only 63 percent agree this is occurring. Of those respondents with comments to this question, 36 percent suggested problems existed such as more training is need and improvement is needed in the program.

CHARTERED ORGANIZATIONS: AN NPS OF 52%

Chartered Organizations spoke clearly and in unison: They do not need "to be



sold” on the benefits of Scouting. Rather, these entities need a reciprocal relationship through making sponsoring process uncomplicated and having Scouting families more involved with their organizations.

What is Working: Fully 85 percent agree that Scouting provides a way for their organization to make an impact in the lives of youth, which is also the second most important driver of their loyalty to BSA. Over 80 percent have a good understanding of their responsibilities as a chartering organization.

Needs Improvement: Chartering Process: The ease of the sponsoring process is the most important driver of this groups’ experience with Scouting and only 67 percent think it is easy and simple. A majority of comments from Promoters, Passives and Detractors related to this question were negative stating that there are problems with the process and too much paperwork.

Council Relationship: Respondents were the least satisfied with the level of interaction between the council and their organization. Yet throughout the comments the phrase “being professional” was used, which may suggest that the quantity and possibly not the quality of the interaction or information supplied needs to be addressed to optimize relationships with Chartered Organizations.

FINAL NOTE

At this time, areas and councils can gather membership details in a very targeted way on the VOS dashboard, which displays Scouting experiences of each of the seven segment audiences. By utilizing dashboard reports and downloads, VOS should evolve into a consistent reference for decision making that impacts members. Located on MyScouting.org and MyBSA.org, the VOS Dashboard can be referenced for national, regional, area and council specific results.

In closing as Voice of the Scout prepares to go national, evolution of the VOS program will continue. Areas of development continue to be: 1) VOS Dashboard development for District usability; 2) Integration into all existing professional and volunteer training materials, 3) Integration into planning cycles; and 4) Standardization of communication both before, during and after all survey cycles. Even with all that accomplished, motivation and charting progress at the district and unit levels will be critical to a successful program.

Source Info: The 2012 Spring Voice of the Scout Research Briefing, which includes research methodology and statistical validity is at www.scouting.org/jte in the “Findings & Analysis” section of the Voice of the Scout. The Voice of the Scout Dashboard, which provides national, regional, area and council specific results is live on MyScouting.org and MyBSA.org.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH: THE VOICE OF THE SCOUT SURVEYS ARE SENT OUT TO MEMBERS WITH VALID EMAIL ADDRESSES IN THE SPRING AND FALL. RESEARCH FINDINGS WILL BE PUBLISHED TWO TIMES PER YEAR. NET PROMOTER, NPS, AND NET PROMOTER SCORE ARE TRADEMARKS OF SATMETRIX SYSTEMS, INC., BAIN + COMPANY, AND FRED REICHHOLD.

FOR THE FULL 2012 SPRING VOICE OF THE SCOUT RESEARCH BRIEFING, GO TO WWW.Scouting.org/jte AND SCROLL TO THE VOICE OF THE SCOUT SECTION. ADDITIONAL DETAIL IS AVAILABLE IN THE FULL REPORT ON THE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND STATISTICAL VALIDITY. FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT BSA MISSION IMPACT TEAM: jte@scouting.org



ARE WE DELIVERING A QUALITY SCOUTING EXPERIENCE?

WORKING WELL

The percentage of Boy Scout parents who agree that Scouting is reinforcing worthwhile values.



The percentage of Cubs who are excited about their next rank badge.

The percentage of Boy Scouts who agree that the life skills that they have learned in Scouting are very valuable.



The percentage of Boy Scouts who agree that Scouting includes activities that they are interested in.

The percentage of volunteers who understand the unique benefits that Scouting provides to today's youth.



For more detail, see the VOS 2012 Spring Research Report on scouting.org/ite in the Voice of the Scout section under Findings and Analysis.

NEEDS IMPROVEMENT

The percentage of parents, who were detractors, that think meetings were boring, not organized, disappointing, not fun.



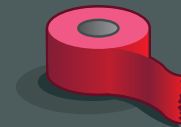
The percentage of Boy Scout parents who think that meetings are a good use of their sons' time.

The percentage of Cub Scout parents who think that their sons are learning skills in Scouting that could not be learned anywhere else.



The percentage of volunteers who think that attending roundtables help them become better leaders.

Volunteers are challenged to support delivery because the organization has too much red tape, inconsistent rules and excessive paperwork. Cost to be a volunteer and a shortage of leaders were top areas for improvement.



PERCENTAGE INDICATE THOSE THAT RESPONDED "AGREE" OR "STRONGLY AGREE"

WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO THEIR EXPERIENCE?

Based on a set of seven, statistically proven attributes, those shown in the biggest font are 3-4 times more likely to impact the tendency of members to recommend Scouting to others. When councils have an extra hour to focus on improving member experience, resources should be applied to these activities.

YOUTH

PARENTS

VOLUNTEERS

CHARTER ORGS

HIGHEST IMPACT

"REALLY FUN"
"LEARN NEW THINGS"
"MEETINGS ARE A GOOD USE OF TIME"

"PROGRAM FOR YOUTH TO BECOME SUCCESSFUL IN LIFE"
"MEETINGS ARE A GOOD USE OF TIME"
"REINFORCING VALUES"

"RECEIVES OTHER LEADERS' SUPPORT TO BE AN EFFECTIVE SCOUT LEADER"
"DISTRICT/COUNCIL IS DOING EVERYTHING IT CAN TO DELIVER QUALITY PROGRAMS"

"IT'S A WAY FOR MY ORG TO HAVE AN IMPACT"
"EASY + SIMPLE TO SPONSOR A GROUP"

HIGHEST IMPACT

LOWER IMPACT

"GREAT OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES"
 "EARNING BELT LOOPS, AWARD, NEXT RANK"
 "LEARNING LIFE SKILLS"
 "ACTIVITIES I'M INTERESTED IN"

"LEARNING UNIQUE SKILLS"
 "ACTIVITIES MY SON ENJOYS"
 "GREAT VALUE"
 "OPPORTUNITY TO VOLUNTEER"

"ROUNDTABLES"
 "COUNCIL CUSTOMER SERVICE"
 "TOOLS + RESOURCES TO BE A GOOD LEADER"
 "BOARD/COMMITTEE IS EFFECTIVES"

"COUNCIL AND DISTRICT INTERACTION"
 "GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF OUR RESPONSIBILITIES"

LOWER IMPACT

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

CUB SCOUT

"We have so much fun. I slept at a zoo overnight, went camping in a cabin and now I get to go camping in a tent. I love earning belt loops, too. It's fun."

PARENTS

"Although the Scouting program is good, the implementation of it in our area isn't building boys into leaders. They are not being taught nor empowered to lead."

VOLUNTEERS

"Programs are too bureaucratic and complicated. They need to be simplified and made more compatible with reality of the youth."

CUB SCOUT

"The pack meetings aren't fun everybody runs around yelling and people are mean to me. I don't get awards anymore, and I don't have fun."

CHARTER ORGS

"This question assumes that chartering relates to Scouting. Scouting is Scouting and has great programs, but your chartering and registering is a MESS! Communications between the various Scouting families is beyond bad. Get it cleaned up!"

CHARTER ORGS

"The Boy Scouts is beyond compare in the leadership and training opportunities it provides to youth, and sponsoring a BSA unit is a rewarding and easy way for an organization to enhance their community involvement."

BOY SCOUT

"Once you get into 6th and 7th grade, the meetings are repeating over and over. I know we are supposed to lead new/younger Scouts but it would be good to have activities that are new at meetings for older troop members."

PARENTS

"It is a program that gives boys a wholesome well-rounded experience. Boys learn to serve and think of others besides themselves. It also draws families closer and builds friendships that can last a lifetime. As a single mom, it provided me a way to show my boys 'the world' and we traveled to places I could never have afforded on my own. It builds memories and character. I am proud to be a part of this organization that teaches reverence not only to God, but to the flag and to give respect to those who have served our country."

VOLUNTEERS

"The Boy Scout program is an excellent source for our youth. Having excellent, able, and willing volunteers makes that happen. If I know someone and they are interested, it only helps the program continue to be as good as it is."

BOY SCOUT

"I would never have scuba dived, flown in a World War II bomber, gone on a navy sub, rock climbed a 3-story rock mountain, got to meet the BSA driver of the indy car, got extra credit in high school for taking merit badge classes. This is just to name a few!!!!!"

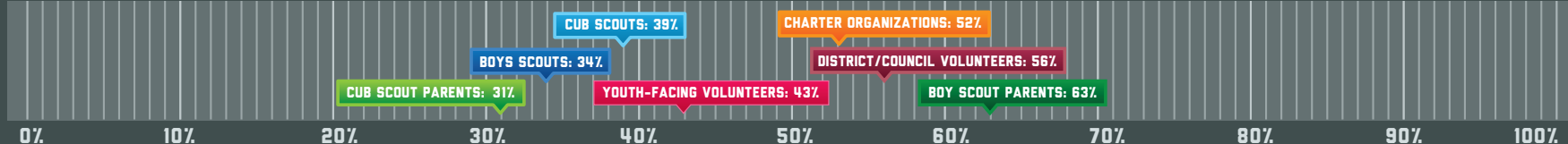
To read specific comments from your members, go to the Voice of the Scout Dashboard on myscouting.org

WHO IS GETTING THE BEST EXPERIENCE?

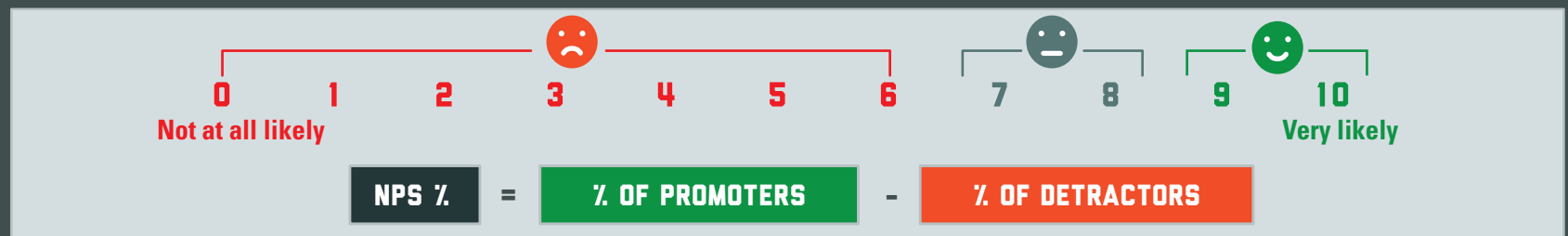
NATIONAL NPS®

46%

An NPS of 46 percent means that about half of the Boy Scouts' members and leaders are promoters and likely to recommend their friends and families to Scouting. Focusing on those activities that have a significant impact on the member experience will increase the number of promoters. See the section "What is most important to their experience?" for more insight.



"How likely are you to recommend Scouting to friends or family with Scout-age children?"



Those who are highly likely to recommend Scouting to others are considered "Promoters" by responding to the loyalty question with a 9 or 10. Survey respondents who are wavering score Scouting at 7 or 8 and are classified as "Passively Satisfieds", and "Detractors" are those who score Scouting at 0-6 and would most likely not recommend Scouting.

For more about Net Promoter Score methodology, see "Net Promoter Score Overview" at scouting.org/ite in the Voice of the Scout section under References and Resources link.

WHO IS DELIVERING THE BEST SCOUTING EXPERIENCE?

18 ELITE COUNCILS

Those that achieved Gold benchmarks and 11% (or more) responded, achieved the national response rate.

35 GOLD COUNCILS

60% or more of members have email addresses in PAS = Silver JTE
45% or higher council NPS score = Gold JTE

- Alapaha Area: Valdosta, GA
- Anthony Wayne Area: Fort Wayne, IN
- Blue Grass: Lexington, KY
- Buckeye: Canton, OH**
- Calcasieu Area: Lake Charles, LA
- Calumet: Munster, IN
- Capitol Area: Austin, TX
- Central New Jersey: Dayton, NJ
- Chattahoochee: Columbus, GA
- Cherokee Area: Bartlesville, OK**
- Chester County: West Chester, PA**
- Coastal Carolina: Charleston, SC
- Connecticut Yankee: Milford, CT
- Crossroads of America: Indianapolis, IN
- Del-Mar-Va: Wilmington, DE
- Evangeline Area: Lafayette, LA
- Far East: Tokyo, JA**
- Flint River: Griffin, GA
- Great Trail: Akron, OH**
- Heart of America: Kansas City, MO
- Jayhawk Area: Topeka, KS
- Jersey Shore: Toms River, NJ
- La Salle: South Bend, IN**
- Lincoln Heritage: Louisville, KY
- Long Beach Area: Long Beach, CA**
- Los Padres: Santa Barbara, CA
- Louisiana Purchase: Monroe, LA
- Mecklenburg County: Charlotte, NC
- Mid-Iowa: Des Moines, IA
- Minsi Trails: Lehigh Valley, PA**
- Monmouth: Morganville, NJ
- Monterey Bay Area: Salinas, CA**
- New Birth of Freedom: Mechanicsburg, PA**
- Northeast Illinois: Highland Park, IL
- Northeastern Pennsylvania: Moosic, PA**
- Ohio River Valley: Wheeling, WV
- Otschodela: Oneonta, NY**
- Ozark Trails: Springfield, MO**
- Patriots' Path: Florham Park, NJ
- Piedmont: Piedmont, CA
- Pine Tree: Portland, ME**
- Samoset: Weston, WI**
- Santa Clara County: San Jose, CA
- South Texas: Corpus Christi, TX
- Southeast Louisiana: New Orleans, LA
- Southern New Jersey: Millville, NJ
- Stonewall Jackson Area: Waynesboro, VA**
- Suffolk County: Medford, NY**
- Transatlantic: Livorno, IT**
- W.D. Boyce: Peoria, IL
- West Central Florida: Seminole, FL
- Westark Area: Fort Smith, AR

WHO DID WE LEARN FROM?

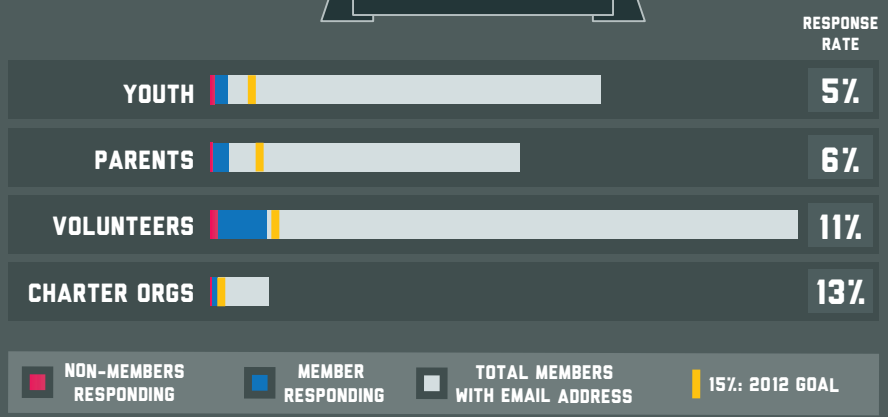
78,829 RESPONDENTS

11% RESPONSE RATE

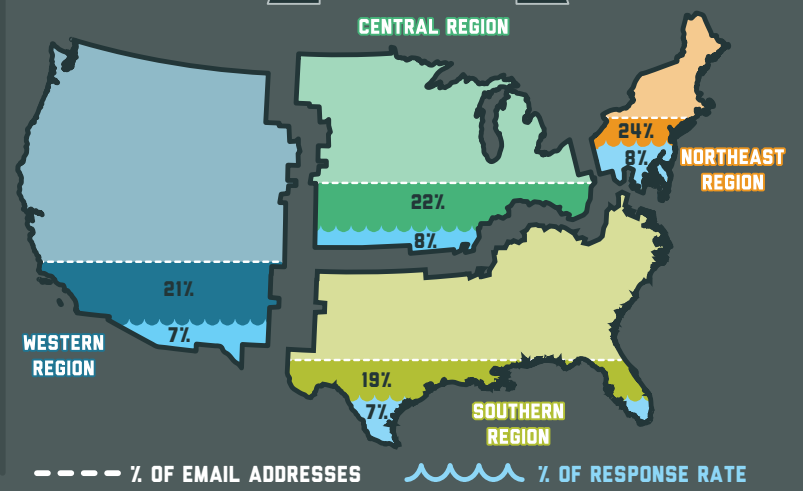


Is the data valid? Yes. For the statistical detail, see "Research Note" on scouting.org/jte in the Voice of the Scout section under "Findings and Analysis."

BY GROUP



BY REGION



19 OUT OF 111,000 NUMBER UNITS WITH 5 OR MORE RESPONSES

WHAT ARE A COUNCIL'S NEXT STEPS?

INCREASE EMAIL SATURATION by adding more emails to ScoutNET to reach at least 60% of our members and leaders.

IMPROVE RESPONSE RATE through increased promotional efforts in the Fall, in order to hit our response rate goal of 15%. Materials are provided on Scouting.org/jte

LOOK FOR QUICK WINS by working in areas identified to focus on in the panel "Are we delivering a quality Scouting experience?" and reviewing your council's results on the VOS Dashboard