



TRAIL LIFE USA®

Trail Tracks

This tool was developed to help you track your progress as you strive to become a *thriving* Troop! Your Charter Organization Representative, Committee Chairman, and Troopmaster should review the following characteristics together, then self-evaluate to determine where your Troop is now—and where improvement is needed.

THRIVIN' TROOPS

- *Embrace the church-owned model; COR (church leader) is regularly engaged with Troop operations
- *Have many active leaders (15 minimum if all program levels are offered)
- *Meet weekly throughout the school year
- *Communicate important information consistently to all parents—have scheduled activities (Campouts, service projects), providing general annual calendar and meeting/activity schedule, and consistent follow-up reminders and advance participation notices
- *Are involved with the Area (attend Roundtables, Training, Camporees, and utilize the *Levels of Support*)
- *Have high parent participation (all parents are involved and help in some capacity)
- *Have a well-planned Summer Adventure
- *Active Woodlands Trail program (Troops with Navigators and Adventurers ONLY soon “age out”)
- *Focus on Advancement and Faith-development (provides the opportunities for mentoring)
- *Continue to grow (growth breeds excitement!)
- *Schedule an annual Open House recruiting event
- *Have knowledge of:
 - other Troops—nearby, or at least in the *Official Trail Life USA Forum* (to connect with/learn from);
 - *TroopTrack* (where to find resources);
 - *JoinTheTrail.com* (actively recruiting new members);
 - and how to conduct an annual *Planning* (a full year’s program) & *Budgeting* (how to pay for it) session with all Troop stakeholders
- *Have top leaders who are committed to God, passionate about the mission of TLUSA, and willing to learn and use TLUSA methods and support systems including youth leadership methods.

STRIVIN' TROOPS

- *Accept the church-owned model; involve the COR on a need-to-know basis
- *Have enough active leaders to get by, 2-deep at each program level
- *Meet regularly, but not every week
- *Communicate sporadically, often last-minute
- *Participate in campouts and activities (do more than just Troop meetings)
- *Keep to themselves, but might interact with Area if there’s a problem in the Troop
- *Same leaders “run” almost everything (the program leaders are also on Troop Committee), little youth leadership development
- *Not much emphasis on Advancement or Faith-development
- *Like to keep the same families involved, not actively recruiting new ones
- *Know about TroopTrack, Join The Trail, and Planning & Budgeting but don’t use those resources
- *Scrape to get enough money to “keep the promise” of regular trips and adventures
- *Are more about the Program than the Mission—into outdoor adventure, but not religious stuff



SURVIVIN' TROOPS

- *Don't really understand/buy into "church owned-and-operated"—program leaders run the show
 - *Struggle to find enough leaders—many "wear more than one hat"
 - *Rarely experience outdoor adventure
 - *One leader is actually in charge (no COR involvement or active Troop Committee)
 - *Don't participate in Area/multi-Troop activities
 - *No focus (Advancement or Faith-building)
 - *No growth or recruiting plan
 - *No \$, no budget plan
 - *Don't know where to go for help
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SCORE YOUR TROOP:

We are faith-focused. We use Worthy Life, Manhood Journey, or Band of Brothers curriculum (1 point), and embrace male mentorship/discipleship methods (1 point). [self-evaluation, total of 0-2 points] [Faith Building Options Guide](#)

Our COR is a paid staff or lay leader within the host Charter Org (1 point), and is engaged in communications at least weekly with Troop Committee (1 point). [self-evaluation, total of 0-2 points] [COR Position Description](#) & [How a Troop is Chartered & Operates](#)

We have enough active, registered leaders (15 is the minimum allowable if all program levels are offered). Less than 5 leaders=0 points; 6-9 leaders=1 point; 10-14 leaders=2 points; 15 or more leaders=3 points). [self-evaluation, total of 0-3 points] [Selecting and Recruiting Volunteer Leaders & Video](#)

We have a Woodlands Trail unit (1 point), which meets at least 2x/month (1 point) [self-evaluation, total of 0-2 points] [WT Overview](#)

We send out weekly communications to all Troop member families (1 point), provide an annual calendar that includes weekly meeting and activities schedule (1 point), and guide each new family through *FastStart* training (1 point). [self-evaluation, total of 0-3 points] [FastStart Training Document](#), [Understanding How the Program Year Works](#)

We hold a *JoinTheTrail.com* Open House to recruit new members every fall (1 point); added at least 5 new families last time (1 point); re-charter with a growth over last year (1 point). [self-evaluation, total of 0-3 points] [Plan/Promote/Grow/Thrive at Jointhetrail.com](#)

We conduct an annual *Planning & Budgeting* session (1 point), inviting all Troop stakeholders—Troop Committee, direct contact leaders, parents, and youth (1 point). [self-evaluation, total of 0-2 points] [Annual Program Planning and Budgeting](#)

Troop is involved with Area (regularly attending Roundtables, Camporees, or other multi-Troop activities). [0-2 points] [Resources your Area Team Provides](#)

Troop's top leaders are committed to God (1 point), passionate about the mission of TLUSA (1 point), and willing to learn and use TLUSA methods and support systems including youth leadership methods (1 point). [total of 0-3 points] [Core Values Video](#)

Scoring Results:

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|--------------|---|
| 0-7 points | Please seek help from your Area Team |
| 8-12 points | Survivin'— good start, room to grow! |
| 13-17 points | Strivin'— on your way to something great! |
| 18-22 points | Thrivin'— wow, you have it going on! Find a nearby Troop to mentor! |