

TRANSATLANTIC COUNCIL

2026 Volunteer Survey - Results Summary

Survey open: August 12–31, 2026 | Prepared for Council & District Leadership

Emails Sent	Delivered	Responses	Response Rate
1,315	1,305 (10 bounced)	110	8.4% of delivered

Executive Summary

The Transatlantic Council surveyed all 1,315 registered volunteers between August 12 and August 31, 2026. Of the 1,305 emails that were successfully delivered, 110 volunteers responded (an 8.4% response rate). This is a modest sample, so the results below should be read as a directional snapshot of volunteer sentiment rather than a statistically precise measurement - but the patterns are consistent and clear enough to act on.

The headline finding is good news: volunteers like Scouting in TAC. 79% are satisfied overall, and 85% would recommend TAC to a friend. But that goodwill is masking real friction in a few specific, fixable areas. Below are the four things leadership should focus on first.

SO WHAT - Money is a black box for the people running units

Only 1 in 5 volunteers feels well-informed about the council's budget, and nearly half feel actively uninformed. This gap is worst exactly where it matters most: unit-level leaders - the majority of the volunteer base - rate financial transparency far lower (2.35/5) than council-level volunteers do (3.6/5). The information isn't reaching the front line. A short, regular budget update in the existing newsletter would directly close this gap and build trust at low cost.

SO WHAT - Getting to programs is the hardest part of participating

Outside of financial questions, transportation and scheduling are the lowest-rated items in the entire survey - 40% of families say it's genuinely difficult to arrange transportation to TAC events. This is a quite a barrier to participation: families may be opting out not because they're uninterested, but because logistics don't work for a geographically spread-out, overseas council. Regional carpool coordination or satellite/hub-based programming is worth piloting.

SO WHAT - Commissioner support is the weakest link in the volunteer support chain

About 1 in 4 unit leaders say their Commissioner isn't visible or doesn't effectively help solve problems. Commissioners are the closest layer of support to units, so this likely has ripple effects on other scores - units that feel well-supported tend to rate everything else more favorably too. Recruiting and training more Commissioners (a recurring theme in the write-in comments) is a high-leverage investment.

SO WHAT - Some districts are doing noticeably better than others

Overall satisfaction ranges from 3.69/5 (Mayflower) to 4.64/5 (Horizon) - nearly a full point apart on a 5-point scale. Rather than a uniform council-wide fix, this points to specific district practices worth studying.

Understanding what Horizon is doing differently - and exporting it - may lift the lagging districts faster than any council-wide initiative.

How to Read This Report

Every question in the survey asked volunteers to rate something on a 1-to-5 scale (1 = very dissatisfied/poor, 5 = very satisfied/excellent). Throughout this report, scores are color-coded so you can scan quickly:

- **Strong / Good (3.5 – 5.0):** This area is working well for most volunteers.
- **Needs Attention (3.0 – 3.49):** A meaningful share of volunteers are unhappy here; worth a look.
- **Priority Concern (below 3.0):** More volunteers are dissatisfied than satisfied - act on this first.

Who Responded

Understanding who took the survey helps put the results in context.

Role in Scouting

Role	Respondents	% of Total
Unit-level Leader (only)	72	65%
Unit + District Leader	13	12%
Unit + Council Leader	10	9%
Commissioner	5	5%
Other (parent, merit badge counselor, etc.)	10	9%

Nearly two-thirds of respondents are unit-level leaders only - the people closest to Scouts and families day-to-day. Their views should be weighted heavily, especially on the financial-transparency finding above.

Age Group

Age Group	Respondents
45–54	46
35–44	25
65+	18
55–64	16
25–34	3

Age Group	Respondents
18–24	2

District

District	Respondents
Charlemagne	31
Edelweiss	25
Barbarossa	17
Mayflower	13
Horizon	11
Other	9
Mediterranean	4

Scouts (17 or younger) in Household

# of Scouts at Home	Respondents
0 (no Scout-age children at home)	34
1	34
2	28
3+	14

Nearly a third of respondents (34 of 110) have no Scout-age children at home - they're volunteering for the mission itself, not just their own kids. That's a strong signal of volunteer commitment worth recognizing and retaining.

Results by Topic

Categories are ordered from lowest-rated to highest-rated so the areas needing attention appear first.

1. Financial Transparency - Priority Concern (avg 3.16/5)

This is the lowest-scoring category in the survey, and the one with the clearest fix.

Question	Avg. Score	Rating	% Rating Low (1–2)
I feel well-informed about the council's budget and expenditures.	2.59	Priority Concern	46.8%
TAC is transparent about how donations and fundraising are used.	2.87	Priority Concern	35.2%

Question	Avg. Score	Rating	% Rating Low (1–2)
I trust that the Council uses funds responsibly for Scouting programs.	3.68	Good	15.9%
The registration and camp fees are reasonable for the value provided.	3.49	Needs Attention	20.8%

Notably, trust that funds are used responsibly (3.68) is much higher than feeling informed about the budget (2.59). Volunteers aren't accusing the council of misusing money - they simply don't see where it goes. That's a communication gap, not a governance one, and it's the easier of the two problems to solve.

2. Commissioner Service - Needs Attention (avg 3.37/5)

Question	Avg. Score	Rating	% Rating Low (1–2)
My unit's Commissioner provides helpful support and guidance.	3.44	Needs Attention	25.5%
The Commissioner is visible and available to our unit.	3.38	Needs Attention	25.7%
Commissioners effectively help with problems in our unit.	3.30	Needs Attention	25.2%

About a quarter of respondents rate each Commissioner question poorly. Write-in comments repeatedly call for recruiting more Commissioners and making them more visible at events ("more boots on the ground").

3. Programs & Events - Needs Attention (avg 3.49/5)

Question	Avg. Score	Rating	% Rating Low (1–2)
How easy is it for your family/Scout to arrange transportation to events?	2.88	Priority Concern	39.8%
How convenient are the dates and scheduling of programs/events?	3.40	Needs Attention	20.2%
Accommodations for Scouts with special needs/disabilities.	3.41	Needs Attention	11.8%
Facilities and accommodations (tents, cabins, dining, meeting space).	3.76	Good	7%
Medical/first-aid support at programs and events.	4.01	Strong	8%

Transportation stands out as the single hardest-rated item outside of finances. Facilities and medical support, by contrast, are genuine strengths - families feel physically safe and well-housed once they arrive; getting there is the problem.

4. Training - Good (avg 3.58/5)

Question	Avg. Score	Rating	% Rating Low (1–2)
Training events are offered frequently enough.	3.31	Needs Attention	18.9%
TAC provides sufficient training opportunities for adult leaders.	3.53	Good	17.8%
I find TAC's online training (Learn Center) easy to use.	3.68	Good	8.2%
The quality of training (courses, workshops) meets my expectations.	3.80	Good	13%

Quality is well-regarded once training happens - the complaint is frequency and availability, not content. Comments frequently ask for more in-person and cold-weather/first-aid training, offered further in advance.

5. Program & Supply Center - Good (avg 3.61/5)

Question	Avg. Score	Rating	% Rating Low (1–2)
Ease of ordering and receiving items.	3.43	Needs Attention	21.6%
Selection of uniforms, advancement items, literature, and supplies.	3.61	Good	17.6%
Customer service.	3.79	Good	12.5%

Shipping/postage cost is the most repeated complaint here, along with occasional stock-outs of rank and merit badges overseas - both logistics issues rather than service-quality issues.

6. District Support - Good (avg 3.87/5)

Question	Avg. Score	Rating	% Rating Low (1–2)
The District demonstrates clear direction and purpose.	3.75	Good	15.1%
My District keeps units well-informed through timely, useful communication.	3.84	Good	10.3%
District leaders are accessible and provide support when I reach out.	4.03	Strong	10.5%

7. Council Leadership - Good (avg 3.95/5)

Question	Avg. Score	Rating	% Rating Low (1–2)
TAC leadership has a clear vision/goals for the future.	3.70	Good	17.6%
Overall, I am satisfied with Council leadership (staff and governance).	3.81	Good	14.8%

Question	Avg. Score	Rating	% Rating Low (1–2)
Council leadership is responsive when I have questions.	4.03	Strong	11.1%
The Council communicates clearly and regularly.	4.24	Strong	9.2%

Council-level communication is one of the strongest scores in the whole survey - the challenge is less about the council communicating and more about that information reaching all the way down to unit leaders (see Financial Transparency above).

8. Overall Experience - Strong (avg 4.23/5)

Question	Avg. Score	Rating	% Rating Low (1–2)
Overall, how satisfied are you with the TAC experience?	4.11	Strong	6.5%
How likely are you to recommend TAC to a friend?	4.34	Strong	6.5%

85% of respondents rated their likelihood to recommend TAC a 4 or 5, and only 6.5% were clear detractors (1–2). This confirms the overall goodwill described in the Executive Summary - the issues above are real, but they exist against a backdrop of strong loyalty to the mission.

A Closer Look: District Variation

Overall satisfaction differs meaningfully by district - worth investigating what's driving the gap.

District	Avg. Overall Satisfaction	Respondents
Horizon	4.64	11
Other	4.33	9
Charlemagne	4.30	30
Mediterranean	4.00	4
Barbarossa	3.94	17
Edelweiss	3.92	24
Mayflower	3.69	13

Transportation ease follows a similar, though not identical, pattern - Mayflower and Mediterranean score it lowest (2.25/5), while Barbarossa and Charlemagne score it highest (roughly 3.1–3.2/5), still well below other categories council-wide.

What Volunteers Are Saying

110 respondents left 401 individual written comments across the survey's open-ended questions - a strong sign that people wanted to be heard, not just click through. The topics that came up most often line up closely with the rating data above:

Topic	Mentions across comments
Camp / programs & events	48
Training	43
Volunteers / recruitment	39
Commissioners	39
Fees / cost	37
District Executives ("DE")	35
Communication	27
Funding / fundraising	15
Financial transparency	11
Program & Supply Center	10

A recurring, cross-cutting theme in the comments is a call for more volunteers - more Commissioners, more District Executives, more hands to share the load. Several respondents specifically suggested recruiting parents whose Scouts have aged out of the program, since they already understand TAC and have time to give back.

Recommended Focus Areas

In priority order, based on the size of the gap and how fixable it is:

- **Publish Open-Book Budget Metrics:** Address the council's lowest-rated category by introducing transparent, easily digestible financial information and infographics detailing how registration fees, fundraising, and donations directly fund youth programs and staff operations on the Council website and in the annual report.
- **Implement a Regionalized Calendar Strategy:** Mitigate geographic constraints by scheduling council/district events at least 12 months in advance and rotating locations or establishing regional sub-hubs to reduce volunteer travel burdens.
- **Invest in Commissioner recruitment and visibility:** A stated, repeated ask from volunteers themselves, and likely to have positive ripple effects on other scores.
- **Optimize Supply Logistics:** Fix military APO shipping surcharge anomalies that exceed item costs and maintain dedicated inventory reserves for high-demand essential supplies like badges and literature.

Prepared from raw survey export data. Percentages are based on the number of respondents who answered each individual question (n varies by question due to skipped answers).