

# Council Service Territory Volunteer Leadership Newsletter



**Scouting**  **America**

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## **Week of November 17, 2025**

*The Council Service Territory Volunteer Leadership Newsletter is an official weekly digest of information for key local council and council service territory volunteers from multiple official Scouting America sources. Learn more about the items that may be important to you and **please share appropriate content with other Scouters.***

### **Family Troop Option**

In response to a growing need for some of our Scouting families, the National Executive Board has approved a family troop option for Scouts BSA, following a successful pilot. This new option will be available *December 15, 2025*. Scout executives and territory directors have received detailed information (attached.)

### **Raffles and Other Games of Chance**

The National Executive Committee, at its *October 27, 2025*, meeting, passed a resolution amending the *National Rules and Regulations* relating to Local Council and Unit Fundraising. The amendment provides that fundraising projects involving games of chance are now permitted, provided they adhere to the applicable rules, regulations, and policies of Scouting America. The rules governing such activities have been communicated with council Key 3 members and are attached. This amendment is effective immediately. Note – *as articulated in the attached, the laws, rules, and regulations governing games of chance, raffles, and lotteries vary from state to state, so it is strongly recommended that each council consult with a local attorney before proceeding with these activities.*

### **Scouting Safety Newsletter**

As the holiday season approaches, many Scouts and leaders will be hitting the road for service projects, family visits, and winter adventures. Getting to and from Scouting events is one of the highest-risk activities we face — but with planning, awareness, and adherence to Scouting’s transportation policy, we can make sure every journey is a safe one. Find the newsletter [here](#).

### **2026 Silver Antelope Nominations Reminder**

It is time to nominate deserving Scouters for the 2026 Silver Antelope Award. Complete nominations must be submitted to [awards@scouting.org](mailto:awards@scouting.org) by *November 30, 2025*. Read more and find the nomination form [here](#).

### **Scouting U Training Week at Philmont**

Scouting University’s Training Week will be held *June 14–20, 2026*, at the Philmont Training Center. This event brings together volunteer trainers from across the country for a week of skill-building, community, and inspiration designed for today’s generation of leaders. This year’s theme is “Trained To Make A Difference” and participants will be able to customize their week by selecting from more than a dozen half-day learning sessions. Watch for registration and more information soon.

## Den Leader Title Migration

Named den leader positions (i.e., Tiger Cub den leader, Webelos den leader, Lion den leader, Lion coordinator) will be transitioned to den leader. In addition, assistant Webelos den leader will be transitioned to assistant den leader. Leaders with named den leader positions will be given new positions with the same expiration and end dates and should not experience any changes in functionality with their new position.

## 2026 Special Needs Prepared Camp Pilot Program

Please see the new overview and sign-up link for the form for councils to be included in the 2026 Special Needs Prepared Camp Pilot Program. This is for new councils to take part and/or councils that are in the pilot but want to add more camps to become certified. Deadline for signing up starting in 2026 is *January 15th*. See more [here](#).

## Holiday Letters for the Military Promotional Press Release

As part of our nationwide 2025 Cub Scout Holiday Letters for Military initiative, we have prepared a local press release to help amplify this important program in your communities. We ask that each council share the release with your local media outlets starting **Tuesday, November 18**, along with photos and details from your own events to showcase local participation and impact. This is a great opportunity to highlight how Scouting America supports our service members and engages youth in meaningful acts of gratitude. You can access the press release template [here](#).

## Board Member Resource Hub

[This resource](#) is for board members, who play a key role in advancing Scouting's mission to develop character, leadership, and life skills in young people across the nation. This page is their dedicated resource to help them excel in their role and make a lasting impact. The page contains a podcast updated regularly with concise and informative episodes crafted to equip members with essential knowledge and insights, provide actionable strategies to address key challenges, empower them to advocate effectively for Scouting in their communities, and enhance their understanding of board responsibilities and best practices.

## Alumni Newsletter

Here are the articles in the November Scouting Alumni Newsletter. Find it [here](#) and subscribe [here](#).

- Staff is Still Needed for 2026 Jamboree
- Scout Awarded Two of Scouting America's Highest Honors
- Police Chief Gives Back to Scouting
- Eagle Scout Completes Remarkable Solo Expedition
- Legendary Coach Lou Holtz Invites Scouting Alum on Podcast
- Over 140 Merit Badges Available to Today's Scouts

## National Eagle Scout Association Webinar

Join us on *December 7<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm Central* for an engaging session where Maya Kamen and Mike Buras will discuss "Keeping the Flame Alive: Retaining Older Scouts in Scouting." They will share practical strategies for encouraging Scouts to remain active after completing their core Scout programs. While the discussion will focus primarily on Eagle Scouts, the insights will be valuable for leaders and volunteers in any Scouting program with participants approaching the age-out stage. Register [here](#).

## Bring Your Team to Philmont

Philmont would love to host you and your staff, board, and/or leadership team in January or *February 2026* at the Philmont Training Center. Enjoy affordable lodging, dining and select activities – plus, complimentary meeting space, coffee, and snacks. Why settle for a stuffy conference room when you can get your planning juices flowing while taking in the views of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains? Contact the training center right away to plan your trip at [Philmont.TrainingCenter@scouting.org](mailto:Philmont.TrainingCenter@scouting.org) or give us a call at 575.376.1135.

## The Latest from Aaron on Scouting

Check out these informative articles from *Scouting* magazine, and more, [here](#).

Eagle Scout project memorializes 14,000 soldiers who fought in the Battle of Okinawa  
buildOn Treks allow Scouts to develop character and serve others brick by brick  
Scouting America pays tribute to veterans, plus other news this week  
Register now to join the USA contingent at the 2027 World Scout Jamboree in Poland

## Back Issues of the Volunteer Leadership Newsletter

We have created a repository of the most recent back issues of the *Newsletter*. Find them [here](#). Be sure to check them out if you are new to this newsletter and/or to review earlier issues.

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## Reminders from Previous Newsletters

**2026 Silver Antelope Nomination Deadline – November 30 - [here](#)**

Giving Tuesday Toolkit - *December 2* - [here](#)

National Cub Scout Program Update Conference – *December 12-15* – register [here](#)

Alumni and National Eagle Scout Association Award Deadlines - [here](#) and [here](#)

2026 National Annual Meeting - *May 10–16, 2026* – Dallas

Exploring New Unit Trainings - Sign up for the trainings [here](#)

Trained to Make a Difference - [here](#)

## Program Livestreams

Cub Chat Live (every Friday at 3 pm Eastern) - [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

Troop Talk Live (second Wednesday of each month at 2 pm Central) - [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

Leading our Adventures (every other Friday at 4 pm Mountain) - [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

Trek on Tuesday (Tuesdays at Noon Pacific) - [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#)

National Exploring Live Hour (Monthly) - Dates and information [here](#)

## Webinars

Alumni Webinars - 3:30 PM Pacific – Read more [here](#)

Keeping the Flame Alive: Retaining Older Scouts in Scouting - *December 7* – Register [here](#)

A Discussion with the National Eagle Scout Association President - *January 11*

Earning Your Scouting Alumni Award - *February 8*

**Monthly Membership Rally - November 20 - Register in advance [here](#)**

Scouts BSA Advancement – *First Wednesday of each month* - Register [here](#) (Recording may be found [here](#))

Scouts BSA Membership Webinar – Find recording [here](#)

Monthly Fundraising Webinar – *Third Wednesday* at 2:00 pm Central - [here](#) and see recordings [here](#)

National Jamboree - Register for upcoming and view past webinars [here](#)

## Newsletters/Blogs/Podcasts

Scouting Safety - [here](#)

Aaron on Scouting - [here](#)

Marketing – Subscribe [here](#)

Scouting in the Boardroom - [here](#)

Commissioner Newsletter - [here](#)

Trail To Adventure - [here](#)

Scouting Alumni - [here](#)

Training Times - [here](#)

Abilities Digest - [here](#)

Scouting Wire - [here](#)

### Important Links

Youth Safety - [here](#)

Health and Safety - [here](#)

Safety Moments - [here](#)

Scouting America Brand Guidelines and Materials - [here](#)

Language of Scouting - [here](#)

Merit Badges - [here](#)

Online Registration Information - [here](#)

National Council Videos - [here](#)

High Adventure Bases - [here](#)

National Jamboree - [here](#)

2027 World Scout Jamboree - [here](#)

Council Support - [here](#)

National Eagle Scout Association - [here](#)

National Camping Schools - [here](#)

Scouting Forums - [here](#)

Order of the Arrow - [here](#)

Commissioners - [here](#)

Program Updates - [here](#)

Summer Camp Staff Jobs - [here](#)

Awards Central - [here](#)

Training Resources - [here](#)

Marketing and Recruitment Resources - [here](#)

Scouting Newsroom - [here](#)

Scouting Emergency Assistance Fund - [here](#)

Brand Center - [here](#)





## **RULES GOVERNING RAFFLES AND OTHER GAMES OF CHANCE FOR COUNCILS AND UNITS**

**Effective Date:** November 7, 2025

**Issued By:** Boy Scouts of America d/b/a Scouting America – National Council (“National”),  
Office of the Chief Scout Executive/President & CEO

**Applicable To:** All chartered local councils (“Councils”) and their authorized Scouting units  
 (“Units”)

### **1. PURPOSE AND AUTHORITY**

These Rules Governing Raffles and Other Games of Chance for Councils and Units (“Rules”) are promulgated by National for the purpose of establishing minimum standards governing the conduct of raffles and other games of chance (“Games” and, to the extent multiple Games are conducted in proximate time and place, “Events”) by Councils and Units. These Rules are intended to ensure compliance with all applicable laws, uphold the integrity of fundraising activities benefiting Scouting, and protect Scouting’s reputation.

### **2. GENERAL AUTHORIZATION**

Subject to Sections 3, 4, 5, and 6 of the Rules, Councils and Units are authorized to organize and/or conduct Games for charitable fundraising purposes.

### **3. COMPLIANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAWS**

- a. **Mandatory Compliance.** All Games and Events organized and/or conducted by Councils or Units must comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, ordinances, and regulations, including but not limited to licensing, registration, reporting, and taxation requirements (“Applicable Laws”).
- b. **Responsibility for Compliance.** Each Council or Unit shall be responsible for determining the legality of any proposed Game or Event, obtaining all necessary governmental approvals, and ensuring compliance with all Applicable Laws. National recommends that each Council or Unit familiarize itself with relevant Applicable Laws, regulatory guidance, and industry standards by consulting publicly accessible resources, including government websites and professional publications.
- c. **Legal Counsel.** National *highly* recommends that each Council or Unit engage or consult with a local attorney to ensure compliance with Applicable Laws.

#### 4. LIMITATIONS & RESTRICTIONS

- a. **Types.** Permissible Games and Events are limited to:
  - i. Raffles/drawings (and similar), including “50:50” raffles;
  - ii. Bingo (and similar);
  - iii. “Wheels” of chance (and similar); and
  - iv. Casino-style Events (including poker, blackjack, baccarat, roulette, and similar), so long as all monies/winnings remain with the Council/Unit.
- b. **Prizes.** Prizes offered in connection with any Game or Event:
  - i. Shall be consistent with Scouting values, including the Scout Oath and Scout Law;
  - ii. Shall be procured or received from reputable persons/organization by means consistent with Scouting values, including the Scout Oath and Scout Law;
  - iii. May include cash/cash equivalents;
  - iv. Shall not include any tobacco or tobacco products or vaping devices;
  - v. With respect to Units (but not Councils), shall not include alcohol; and
  - vi. With respect to Units (but not Councils), shall not include firearms.
- c. **Frequency.** No Council or Unit shall organize and/or conduct more than four (4) Games or Events within any calendar year.
- d. **Locations.** All Games and Events must be conducted at a venue that (i) is within the prescribed geographic area of the Council or is owned/operated by the Council (e.g., camp located outside the Council’s geographic area) and (ii) is otherwise consistent with Scouting values, including the Scout Oath and Scout Law.
- e. **Remote/Virtual.** Notwithstanding subsection (d), raffles/drawings, including “50:50” raffles, may be conducted by remote, electronic, or virtual means. No other Games or Events may be conducted in such manner.
- f. **Scout/Youth Presence & Involvement.** No Council or Unit shall utilize or permit any Scout or other youth/child to attend, advertise, promote, sell tickets to, or otherwise be associated with any of the following:
  - i. An Event containing casino-style Games;
  - ii. An Event containing Bingo;
  - iii. An Event or Game in which any prize will be alcohol; or
  - iv. An Event or Game in which any prize will be a firearm.
- g. **Beneficiary Designation.** All advertisements, tickets, and other materials or communications promoting a Game or Event, whether printed, electronic, or otherwise, must clearly and prominently indicate the specific Council or Unit that is the intended

beneficiary of the proceeds of the Game or Event. References to “Scouting”, “Scouting America”, “Cub Scouts”, “Scouts BSA”, etc. are insufficient to meet this requirement.

- h. **Supplemental Council-Imposed Limitations & Restrictions.** Each Council may impose such additional restrictions, limitations, conditions, and requirements on itself and/or its Units as the Council deems prudent and reasonable, up to and including a wholesale ban of Games and Events within its prescribed geographic area, which may include, but is not limited to any subject matter addressed in subsections (a)-(g) above.

## 5. UNIT PRE-AUTHORIZATION

In advance of a Unit advertising, marketing, selling tickets to, or organizing/conducting a Game or an Event, the Unit must apply for and obtain written approval from the Council. The application shall be in the form promulgated by or otherwise acceptable to the Council and shall contain at least the following information regarding the proposal:

- a. Date(s) and Locations(s) of Game/Event;
- b. Type(s) of Games;
- c. Type(s) of prizes; and
- d. Name of Responsible Person (as defined below).

## 6. RESPONSIBLE PERSON; RECORDKEEPING; REPORTING

- a. **Responsible Person.** Each Council or Unit desiring to organize and/or conduct Games and Events shall designate an individual (“Responsible Person”) who will oversee the planning, execution, and monitoring of all Games and Events. The Responsible Person shall:
  - i. Ensure that all Games and Events are conducted in compliance with (A) Applicable Laws, (B) these Rules, and (C) any additional restrictions, limitations, conditions, and requirements imposed by a Council;
  - ii. Coordinate with the legal counsel, regulatory authorities, and the Council (if applicable) as appropriate and required;
  - iii. Maintain appropriate documentation and records;
  - iv. Serve as the primary point of contact for compliance-related inquiries and oversight.

The Responsible Person may be a professional Scouter or a registered Scouting America adult member.

- b. **Required Records.** Each Council or Unit shall maintain accurate and complete records of all Games and Events conducted, including:
  - i. Date(s) and location(s) of Games/Event;
  - ii. Type(s) of Games and Events
  - iii. Types of prize(s) awarded;

- iv. Gross receipts and net proceeds; and
  - v. Licenses, permits, and governmental filings.
- c. **Reporting to National.** Each Council shall submit such reports to National as may be requested from time to time, including annual summaries of fundraising activities involving Games and Events. If requested, Councils will be required to obtain such figures and information from its Units.

## **7. PASSIVE BENEFICIARIES**

Councils (but not Units) are authorized to accept monies from and otherwise be passive beneficiaries of Games and/or Events that are organized and conducted by third parties (e.g., state-wide lottery-style raffles). Such Games and/or Events generally will not solely (or even primarily) benefit Scouting but rather a host of charitable organizations. The foregoing authorization is subject to the following: (A) the third-party organizer(s) and the Games and/or Events being consistent with Scouting values, including the Scout Oath and Scout Law; (B) the Council complying with the terms of Section 3, to the extent applicable, (C) the types of Games and/or Events being consistent with Section 4.a, (D) the prizes offered and awarded being consistent with Section 4.b, (E) the Games/Event being organized and conducted in a state in which the Council has prescribed geographic area; and (F) the Council complying with the terms of Section 6 herein, to the extent applicable.

## **8. VIOLATIONS**

Any violation of Applicable Laws, these Rules, or, in the case of Units, any additional restrictions, limitations, conditions, or requirements imposed by a Council may result in suspension, reduction, or termination of the Council or Unit's privileges set forth herein.

## **9. AMENDMENTS**

These Rules may be amended, modified, or repealed by National at any time. Notice of any such changes shall be provided to all Councils in a timely manner.



## SUMMARY OF SELECT RULES

	Council	Unit
<b>Games:</b>		
Raffle/Drawing (Pooled)	Authorized	Authorized
“Casino” Games	Authorized; no Scouts or youth/children to be associated	Authorized; no Scouts or youth/children to be associated allowed
Bingo	Authorized; no Scouts or youth/children to be associated	Authorized; no Scouts or youth/children to be associated
“Wheels” of Chance	Authorized	Authorized
<b>Prizes:</b>		
Cash (e.g., 50/50)	Authorized	Authorized
Alcohol	Authorized; no Scouts or youth/children to be associated	Unauthorized
Firearms	Authorized; no Scouts or youth/children to be associated	Unauthorized
<b>Organizing/Conducting Games &amp; Events:</b>		
Frequency	Maximum of four (4) per calendar year	Maximum of four (4) per calendar year
Location	Within Council boundaries or Council owned/operated property	Within Council boundaries or Council owned/operated property
Remote/Online	Authorized only for raffles	Authorized only for raffles
Scout/Youth/Child Participation (e.g., selling tickets)	Authorized except where for Events with casino games, Bingo, and/or prizes of alcohol or firearms.	Authorized except where for Events with casino games, Bingo, and/or prizes of alcohol or firearms.
Scout/Youth/Child Attendance	Authorized except where for Events with casino games, Bingo, and/or prizes of alcohol or firearms.	Authorized except where for Events with casino games, Bingo, and/or prizes of alcohol or firearms.
<b>Third-Party Organized and Conducted Games &amp; Events:</b>		
Passive Beneficiary	Authorized	Unauthorized

# Family Troop Decision Guide

## Decision-Making

Scouts BSA offers chartered organizations three models when organizing a troop:

- Girl troops, serving eligible female Scouts
- Boy troops, serving eligible male Scouts
- Family troops, called combined troops during the pilot phase, serving any eligible Scout

If you are considering the family troop option, this guide is designed to help you facilitate important discussions on this topic with your chartering organization(s), Scouts, their families, and your troop adult volunteers.

**On average, boys and girls tend to have different rates of physical, emotional, and cognitive maturity during adolescence. These developmental differences may make separate troops for boys and troops for girls a more effective option for many families, providing a setting where youth can grow, lead, and challenge themselves alongside their peers developing at a similar pace. These environments can also help young people build confidence, take on responsibility, and try new things without additional social pressures.**

**We also recognize there's substantial variability in maturity rate and temperament among individuals, and some families may prefer a troop model where boys and girls learn to collaborate with and understand one another as they develop. In all troops, adult volunteers and youth should be mindful that all Scouts have meaningful opportunities to practice leadership skills, hold positions of responsibility, and gain confidence.**

**Ultimately, each young person is unique, and our local councils, chartering organizations, and troop leadership are best able to determine which of the approved Scouts BSA delivery models best meets their needs. Parents are encouraged to carefully consider their adolescent's individual readiness, temperament, and comfort level when choosing whether a troop for boys, a troop for girls, or a family troop will best support their growth and help them thrive as developing leaders and responsible citizens.**

A Scouts BSA troop, with the support of their chartering organization(s), may choose the option that best meets their local needs. This decision should involve all stakeholders:

- **Chartered Organization — The chartered organization(s) MUST be a part of the discussion and MUST approve the decision to change the model.**

- Adult Volunteers — All Scouts BSA troops depend upon our adult volunteers to operate successfully. Adult volunteers, including the Scoutmaster(s), committee chair(s), and committee members, should broadly support a change.
- Parents — The parents of the Scouts also should broadly support a change.
- Scouts — Scouts BSA is youth-led, and the Scouts should also be a part of the decision-making process.

We all care deeply about Scouting and want the best for our children. We must remember to live the Scout Oath and Law in our discussions about changing troop models. All stakeholders should enter this discussion with the understanding that once a general agreement is reached (for or against), everyone will commit to that decision and work constructively to help implement it. If broad support cannot be achieved, the troop should not continue to pursue changing troop models. If a small number of Scouts and families are unable to commit to the group's collective decision, it is the responsibility of adult volunteers of the troop to help these Scouts find an alternative troop. Contact your district executive or unit commissioner for assistance.

## Considerations

Deciding whether to adopt the family troop **option** is an important matter that will impact Scouts, adult volunteers, parents, and legal guardians. We recommend everyone carefully explore the following discussion points:

## Discussion Questions

- Does our charter organization support a family troop? If the chartering organization(s) does/do not approve, you must abide by their decision and may not move forward with this model.
- Is our current troop structure meeting our needs? Why or why not?
- Do our Scouts want a family troop? Why or why not?
- Do the parents and adult volunteers want a family troop? Why or why not?
- Has every member of our troop Key 3 been a part of these discussions?
- If we are merging with another troop to become a family troop, has every stakeholder in both troops been part of these discussions and reached general agreement?
- If we agree to become a family troop, are all our families willing to be supportive of that decision?

- Are there alternative local troop options available?
- Does our troop have any personality conflicts that might be a barrier to success?
- Is our troop open and willing to potentially change practices and traditions or to merge with the practices and traditions of another troop?
- How will we ensure all Barriers to Abuse are met in our family troop?

Remember, the family troop model is just one of three options. Your troop does not need to make a change. If stakeholders cannot come to a general agreement during these discussions, your troop should not become a family troop.

## Family Troop Option Implementation

If the decision is reached to form a family troop, there are still a number of important implementation discussion questions and steps that should involve all stakeholders.

### Further Discussion Questions

- Troop Number
  - If two troops merge, will the family troop have a new troop number or a combination of troop numbers, or will it inherit the number of one of the existing troops?
  - If a girl troop or boy troop is becoming a family troop, will the troop number change or stay the same?
- Adult Volunteers
  - Who will be the Scoutmaster and assistant Scoutmasters of the family troop?
  - Who will take on important troop committee roles (chair, treasurer, secretary, etc.) for the family troop?
  - How will this decision be made fairly and openly?
  - Do we have a plan to make sure both boys and girls have men and women adult volunteers in direct contact roles as role models?
  - How will we ensure all Barriers to Abuse are met, including having a registered female adult leader 21 years of age or over present for any activity involving female youth?
- If Combining With Another Troop
  - How will the assets of the troops be merged (bank accounts, funds, trailers, equipment, etc.)?
  - What troop practices and traditions will be maintained?

- Please see the *Family Troop Best Practices Guide* for more implementation guidance.

## Next Steps to Convert to a Family Troop

- For a single boy or girl troop converting to a family troop, complete the Intent to Convert form and submit it to your council registrar for processing.
- For two troops combining to form a family troop:
  - Complete the Intent to Convert form and submit it to your council registrar for processing, indicating which troop will become the family troop and which troop will be expired.
  - If both troops belong to the same chartering organization, the council registrar does not need applications from youth or adult volunteers to move everyone into the family troop.
  - If the two merging troops have different chartering organizations, adult volunteers of the expiring troop must complete adult applications (paper or digital — follow your council's procedures from your council registrar) to be moved into the family troop.
  - Your council registrar can move youth from the expiring troop into the family troop without an application. Online or paper youth applications for each Scout or other methods as preferred by your local council registrar may also be acceptable.
  - Safeguarding Youth Training must be current for all adult volunteers. We also strongly encourage all adult volunteers to have completed position-specific training.
  - Confirm meeting times and meeting locations. What dates and times will the family troop meet, and where will meetings occur?
  - Patrol Method Implementation — As with any troop, the new family troop should hold elections for senior patrol leader. Please see the *Family Troop Best Practices Guide* for more guidance on patrol formation.
  - Each Scout's advancement status in Scoutbook should be double-checked with the Scout, advancement chair, and the Scoutmaster to ensure up-to-date records are transferred to the family troop. Advancement records in Scoutbook will automatically appear for each Scout in the family troop as they are registered into the family troop.
  - Troop Activity Calendar/Schedule — The newly formed family troop should create and publish a troop activity calendar so that all Scouts, families, and adult volunteers can plan to participate.

- Scoutbook must be updated (patrol assignments, account balances, etc.) once all Scouts are transferred into the family troop.
  - A troop flag, troop neckerchief, troop activity T-shirt, etc., should be designed, and, as funds are available, ordered for the new troop.
- Please see the *Family Troop Best Practices* Guide for more implementation guidance.

The decision to create a family troop requires honest and open communication and much careful thought for all families involved. Remembering the Scout Oath and Law at all times during this process benefits everyone, but most importantly, it benefits our Scouts. It is our top priority to give our youth the immense benefits that Scouting offers in a safe and welcoming environment.

# Family Troop Best Practices

Scouting America troops across the nation participated in a family troop pilot (called a combined troop during the pilot) between September 2024 and July 2025. This guide is a summary of family troop best practices discovered during the pilot as reported by participating troops from across the nation.

## Making the Decision

**On average, boys and girls tend to have different rates of physical, emotional, and cognitive maturity during adolescence. These developmental differences may make separate troops for boys and troops for girls a more effective option for many families, providing a setting where youth can grow, lead, and challenge themselves alongside their peers developing at a similar pace. These environments can also help young people build confidence, take on responsibility, and try new things without additional social pressures.**

**We also recognize there's substantial variability in maturity rate and temperament among individuals, and some families may prefer a troop model where boys and girls learn to collaborate with and understand one another as they develop. In all troops, adult volunteers and youth should be mindful that all Scouts have meaningful opportunities to practice leadership skills, hold positions of responsibility, and gain confidence.**

**Ultimately, each young person is unique, and our local councils, chartering organizations, and troop leadership are best able to determine which of the approved Scouts BSA delivery models best meets their needs. Parents are encouraged to carefully consider their adolescent's individual readiness, temperament, and comfort level when choosing whether a troop for boys, a troop for girls, or a family troop will best support their growth and help them thrive as developing leaders and responsible citizens.**

Please refer to the *Family Troop Decision Guide* for more important considerations for forming a family troop.

## Troop Formation (Adult Volunteers)

### Best Practices for All Troops

- **Adult volunteers should work together with a shared vision to serve all youth well. Clear communication among volunteers regarding goals and values is critical, as is practicing the Scout Law by being friendly, courteous, and kind. Ensuring alignment on major**

decisions between youth, adult volunteers, parents, and the chartered organization(s) creates a positive culture and enables the troop to thrive.

- Adult volunteers should familiarize themselves with the Safeguarding Youth policies of Scouting America. They should note the adult volunteer requirements for troops and the requirements for separate restrooms, shower houses, tenting, and sleeping arrangements, including barriers between boys and girls.
- Consistent with Scouting America policy, the chartered organization selects the Scoutmaster. The Scoutmaster should be chosen carefully to meet the needs of the youth in the troop. They should also complete both Scoutmaster Leader-Specific Training and Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills (IOLS).
- Assistant Scoutmasters and the committee chair should also complete the appropriate leader-specific training.
- Many adults can serve the troop. Consider having multiple assistant Scoutmasters to support the program, provide two-deep adult volunteer supervision, and support the required registered adult female requirement when girls are present.
- Successful troops recognize the importance of excellent volunteers for each Scout's experience. If essential volunteers face barriers to participation, troop leadership should work to actively overcome these challenges. Our pilot troops have suggested paying for adult volunteer registration fees, loaning camping gear, funding childcare, and offering transportation support.
- Build an adult volunteer culture that is welcoming to all adults for whom outdoor experience is new. Encourage adult volunteers to attend Introduction to Outdoor Leader Skills training, as well as other Scout or community workshops that can help build outdoor confidence. Just as we bring along new Scouts to learn those skills, so should we for the adults. A Scout is friendly and helpful!

## Best Practices for Family Troops

- If a boy troop and girl troop have merged into a family troop, do not assume one troop will be absorbed by the other troop. Scoutmasters from each troop should be considered for the role in the family troop, or a new Scoutmaster may be chosen. It should be an open discussion with the chartered organization.
- Traditions and activities from both troops should be honored, or new traditions and activities should be built together, according to the Scouts' preferences.
- In a family troop, it is important to give both male and female adult volunteers similar opportunities to work with the youth, be role models, and lead by example. Only one adult registered leader may serve as a Scoutmaster at any given time. However, our



pilot troops noted that when the Scoutmaster is female, it's often helpful for the main assistant Scoutmaster to be male — and *vice versa*.

- We should ensure no Scouts are excluded from events due to lack of appropriate adult volunteer leadership. If, despite best efforts, an event or outing lacks appropriate adult volunteer leadership, it should be canceled rather than excluding any youth.

## Troop Formation (Youth)

### Best Practices for All Troops

- In Wood Badge, we learn to “Train them, trust them, let them lead.” Leadership training for our youth is key to their success. Troops that hold annual or biannual Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops (ILST) training and send their youth leaders to National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) found it helps their youth leadership thrive.
- Scouts BSA uses the patrol method and patrol leaders’ council as a primary methodology for youth leadership. The senior patrol leader should be elected from the full troop. The troop committee, in consultation with the Scoutmaster and possibly the patrol leaders’ council, sets the specific rules for the election, such as the term length and whether a majority vote is required.
- Adult volunteers and youth should be mindful that all Scouts have meaningful opportunities to practice leadership skills, serve in youth positions of responsibility, and gain confidence.
- The senior patrol leader, with guidance from the Scoutmaster following the directive of the chartering organization and feedback of the Scouts, assigns Scouts to patrols. No Scout should be assigned to a patrol they or their parents are uncomfortable with.
- It is important that youth leadership respects every Scout and allows all voices to be heard. Remind your Scouts that a key part of our programs is to treat everyone respectfully and in alignment with the Scout Oath and Law.
- **Every Scout is a friend to every other Scout. Emphasize the Scout Oath and Law in how the troop, youth leadership, adult volunteers, and committee operate. This is the No. 1 most cited success factor in the pilot.**

### Best Practices for Family Troops

- On average, boys and girls tend to have different rates of physical, emotional, and cognitive maturity during adolescence. Because of these differences, boys and girls have distinct developmental needs during adolescence that may benefit from patrols serving only boys or only girls. Separate patrols for boys and girls can provide a setting where youth can grow, lead, and challenge themselves alongside their peers developing at a

similar pace. However, we also recognize there's substantial variability in maturity rate and temperament among individuals, and unique situations can occur that make boy-only or girl-only patrols impractical or impossible. Chartering organizations should carefully choose a patrol structure that meets the values of their organization and the needs of their families.

- Our pilot troops recommended that family troops avoid a competitive boys vs. girls dynamic and instead foster an atmosphere of cooperation.

## Troop Growth

- Troops that actively recruit all year thrive. Informing friends and neighbors that Scouting America is for both boys and girls is also a key success factor. Recruitment methods are varied but include much more than waiting for Arrow of Light Scouts to arrive in the spring. School events, bring-a-friend activities, parent networks, and other methods have proven successful. The best recruiting tool can be an exciting, youth-led program that gets Scouts talking about their adventures to other youth. This is called peer-to-peer recruitment, and it's particularly effective in Scouts BSA.
- Establish onboarding procedures for new families to better understand your troop and the Barriers to Abuse. We recommend all parents take Youth Safeguarding Training. This is particularly important in a family troop, where people may not be familiar with this new option.

## Troop Operations

- Troops found success by creating specific guidelines with and for youth on behavior expectations, including topics such as dating and bullying. The patrol leaders' council works in collaboration with adult volunteers to create a troop code of conduct that specifically addresses potential areas of concern, sets clear expectations, and is signed yearly by youth and their parents. Frequent reminders on Scout-like behavior are helpful at events and outings.
- Consistent with the national Scouts BSA clothing guidelines released in 2025, create a [Troop Clothing Guideline](#) using the template provided. Setting clear and fair expectations for all youth reduces opportunities for conflict over clothing.
- Scouts BSA is youth-led, with adult guidance and supervision. The patrol leaders' council should take the lead on proposing the troop activity calendar, the code of conduct, meeting plans, and outing plans.

- While all Barriers to Abuse must be met, a family troop is one unified troop. There should not be separate programming or activities for boys and girls. Our pilot troops also noted that boys vs. girls activities do not support a collaborative troop atmosphere.

## Troop Outings and Events

- Active and engaged adult supervision is critical. Adults should keep an eye and ear on what youth are doing, especially during less structured downtime. See <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safe/> for more safety expectations.
- [The Guide to Safe Scouting](#) and [Barriers to Abuse](#) **must** be followed for tenting, **including providing separate tenting arrangements for male and female youth.**
- As in every troop, patrol cooking and gathering areas must always be actively supervised by adult volunteers. Our pilot troops also recommended having a large, communal, and adult-supervised gathering space on campouts for boys and girls to gather socially out of the elements. Tenting areas for boys and girls should be clearly separated from these spaces and one another and reserved only for sleeping and changing clothing.
- The buddy system, as defined in the [Barriers to Abuse](#), must be followed. A single girl and a single boy may never be a buddy pair; however, a third scout may be added to create a buddy group of three.

## Staying the course ...

- Should you find the family model not working for your troop, please consult the *Converting From a Family Troop* guide for assistance.

# Converting From a Family Troop to Boy Troops and Girl Troops

## Decision-Making

There are several situations where it may be necessary or desired to convert a family troop into one or more boy-only or girl-only troops. Those include:

1. A pilot troop decides not to become a family troop
2. A family troop decides to separate into a boy troop and a girl troop
3. A family troop decides to become either a boy troop or a girl troop

This guide will help you determine how to make this switch. In any situation, the decision to convert the troop as noted should involve all stakeholders:

- **Chartered Organization — The chartered organization(s) MUST be a part of the discussion and MUST approve the decision to change the model.**
- **Adult Volunteers —** All Scouts BSA troops depend upon our adult volunteers to operate successfully. Adult volunteers, including the Scoutmaster(s), committee chair(s), and committee members, should broadly support a change.
- **Parents —** The parents of the Scouts also should broadly support a change.
- **Scouts —** Scouts BSA is youth-led, and the Scouts should also be a part of the decision-making process.

We all care deeply about Scouting and want the best for our children. We must remember to live the Scout Oath and Law in our discussions about changing troop models. All stakeholders should enter this discussion with the understanding that once a general agreement is reached (for or against), everyone will commit to that decision and work constructively to help implement it. If broad support cannot be achieved, the troop should not continue to pursue changing troop models. If a small number of Scouts and families are unable to commit to the group's collective decision, it is the responsibility of adult volunteers of the troop to help these Scouts find an alternative troop. Contact your district executive or unit commissioner to start this process.

## Considerations

For the first two situations discussed above, the troop will become two separate troops at the conclusion of the separation. Consider the following:

- Are the chartering organizations in support of this decision? If a chartering organization does not approve, you must abide by their decision.
- Will the two troops operate under an existing chartering organization? If a different chartering organization is desired or required, a new troop charter may be needed before moving forward. Consult with your district executive and unit commissioner before proceeding.
- Who will fill the adult roles of each separate troop?
- Will the troops share a committee?
- How will the assets of the family troop be divided between the two new troops? Assets include:
  - Bank account and all funds
  - Camping equipment
  - Troop trailer
  - Court of honor materials, flags, etc.
  - All other troop materials and assets
- Troop Number — Will the existing troop number be reserved for one of the new troops, or will both new troops have new troop numbers?
- Meeting Time(s) and Meeting Locations — What dates and times will each new troop meet and at what location(s)?

For the third situation, a family troop becoming one single boy troop or one single girl troop, it is the responsibility of the troop adult volunteers to help all Scouts have opportunities to continue Scouting after this separation occurs. For example, if the family troop has eight boys and one girl and chooses to become solely a boy troop, the troop adult volunteers have a duty to help the one girl find a new troop before the family troop converts to a boy troop. Contact your district executive or unit commissioner for assistance.

## Notifications and Implementation

Once a decision is finalized to separate a family troop into a boy troop and a girl troop, the implementation should be thoughtfully planned. This includes the following steps:

- Consult your district executive and unit commissioner before proceeding.
- Work with your council registrar to determine if new troop applications and charter agreements need be completed for either troop.
- Adult Volunteers — Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmasters, and troop committee members moving to new troops or other troops must complete and sign adult applications and submit them to the council registrar.
- Safeguarding Youth Training must be current for all adult volunteers. We also strongly encourage all adult volunteers to have completed position-specific training.

- Your council registrar can move youth from the former family troop into another troop without an application. Online or paper youth applications for each Scout or other methods as preferred by your local council registrar may also be acceptable.
- Patrol Method Implementation — Each troop holds elections for senior patrol leader. The senior patrol leader chooses their patrol leaders' council and works collaboratively with the patrol leaders' council, Scouts, and adult volunteers in the troop to form patrols. Patrols elect their patrol leaders and assistant patrol leaders.
- All youth leadership should participate in a self-administered [Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops](#) after elections, and adult volunteers should recommend appropriate youth to participate in the next available council-sponsored National Youth Leadership Training.
- Each Scout's advancement status in Scoutbook should be double-checked with the Scout, advancement chair, and the Scoutmaster to ensure that up-to-date records are transferred to the new troop. Advancement records in Scoutbook will automatically appear for each troop once the new unit and membership transfers are processed.
- Troop Activity Calendar — Each new troop should create and publish their troop activity calendar so that all Scouts, families, and adult volunteers can plan to participate.
- Scoutbook must be updated (patrol assignments, account balances, calendars, etc.) for each new troop once all Scouts are transferred into their respective troops.
- A troop flag, troop neckerchief, troop activity T-shirt, etc., should be designed, and, as funds are available, and ordered for the new troop(s).

The decision to change troop models requires honest and open communication and much careful thought for all parents involved. Remembering the Scout Oath and Law at all times during this process benefits everyone, but most importantly, it benefits our Scouts. It is our top priority to give our youth the immense benefits that Scouting offers in a safe and welcoming environment.