



Family Scouting Questions and Answers
Updated February 11, 2019

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General Questions

Q: What is different about Cub Scouts/Boy Scouts this year?

Families can now choose to sign up their sons and daughters for Cub Scouts, in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Chartered partner organizations may choose to have a Pack that is either all boy, all girl, or a family pack where there are boy dens and girl dens. Cub Scout dens are single gender — all boys or all girls.

On February 2019 the Boy Scout program name officially changed to Scouts BSA, using the same curriculum as before and enabling eligible youth ages 11-17, to earn the Eagle Scout rank. Scouts BSA is single gender – all girl troops or all boy troops. Chartered organizations may choose to have an all boy troop and all girl troop “linked” with a common adult volunteer troop committee. This unique approach allows the organization to maintain the integrity of the single-gender model while also meeting the needs of today’s families.

Q: Why did the organization decide to make Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts available to girls? Is it because of declining membership?

The BSA’s decision to welcome girls into the Cub Scout program and to offer a program for older girls comes from input we have received from our Scouting families, as well as prospective Scouting families. The research found that parents not involved with Scouting showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for programs like Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, with:

- 90 percent expressing interest in a program like Cub Scouts
- 87 percent expressing interest in a program like Boy Scouts.

The BSA also found that 90 percent of girls age 11-18 are interested in joining the BSA’s programs.

Surveys also found that convenience is more of a consideration for families than cost.

We understand that families today are busier and more diverse than ever. In fact:

- Most are dual-earners.
- There are more single-parent households than in previous decades.
- Many underserved communities, including fastest-growing Hispanic and Asian communities, prefer to participate in activities as a family.
- And, all families have less free time. More than one-third of parents feel they spend too little free time with their kids, and millennial parents are desperate to spend more time interacting with their kids.

The BSA believes we owe it to families to structure our program offerings in a way that fits into their busy lives to deliver character development and values-based leadership training that Scouting promises.

Q: Is this change a departure from the BSA’s core mission and values?

No, our mission continues to be to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. By opening up our iconic program to more young people, we’ve increased our ability to carry out that mission.

After all, the values of Scouting as detailed in the 12 points of the Scout Law – trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent – are relevant and important for both young men and women.

Q: Why is it necessary to include girls when there are other existing programs for girls?

We support all character-based youth-development programs and encourage families to choose the program, or programs, that best suits their needs.

The decision to expand our program offerings for girls came after years of requests from families who wanted the option of the BSA’s character- and leadership-development programs for their children – boys and girls. Last year, more than 77,000 girls and their families said “Scout Me In” and joined the Cub Scout program. And this year, we’re proud to be able to offer young women the opportunity to join Scouts BSA and earn the prestigious rank of Eagle Scout.

Q: Are all BSA programs now co-ed?

The Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA programs are not co-ed.

The leadership of the BSA determined that the best way to welcome girls to serve today’s families was to offer a unique model that builds on the proven benefits of our single-gender program, while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.

Q: Why is the BSA recommending single-gender dens and troops units instead of a co-ed model?

The leadership of the BSA determined that the best way to welcome girls to serve today’s families is to offer a unique model that builds on the proven benefits of our single-gender program, while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.

Q: What research did the BSA conduct that informed this decision?

To inform this decision, the Boy Scouts of America conducted extensive research. The BSA also evaluated input from thousands of volunteers who participated in the nationwide family listening sessions.

The results were overwhelmingly positive and supported the decision to welcome girls into Cub Scouts and provide a path to earn the Eagle Scout rank. The research found that parents not involved with Scouting showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for programs like Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, with:

- 90 percent expressing interest in a program like Cub Scouts
- 87 percent expressing interest in a program like Boy Scouts.

The BSA also found that 90 percent of girls age 11-18 are interested in joining the BSA’s programs. Education experts also evaluated the curriculum and content and confirmed the relevance of the program for young women.

Q: Is this for all levels of Scouting in all parts of the country?

BSA's programs are offered to youth nationwide and everywhere the BSA serves families. Of course, all our programs are dependent on quality volunteers.

Existing packs may choose to establish a new girl pack, establish a pack that consists of girl dens and boy dens, or remain an all-boy pack. Cub Scout dens will be single gender — all boys or all girls.

On February 2019 the Boy Scout program name officially changed to Scouts BSA, using the same curriculum as before and enabling eligible youth ages 11-17, to earn the Eagle Scout rank. Scouts BSA is single gender – all girl troops or all boy troops. This unique approach allows the organization to maintain the integrity of the single-gender model while also meeting the needs of today's families.

Q: Will the organization's name change?

No. The Boy Scouts of America, in name and as an organization, has stood for character development and values-based leadership training for nearly 109 years. It is, unequivocally, one of the most recognized, respected, and valuable brands on the planet. Therefore, while we have expanded the reach of our programs among today's youth and their families, our name remains the same, and our brand will continue to be a source of pride that we will protect and foster as we look to extend the reach of our promise to more families.

Q: How will the BSA respond to parents who don't want coeducational programs?

It is important to note that BSA did not decide to make the Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA programs co-ed; instead, the organization has introduced a unique model that builds on the benefits of a single-gender program while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls. Chartered organizations always have the option to select from the numerous BSA program offerings; no single program or format is mandatory – we are offering our communities more options.

Families can choose to sign up their sons and daughters for Cub Scouts. Chartered organizations may choose to establish a new girl pack, establish a pack that consists of girl dens and boy dens or remain an all-boy pack. Dens will be single gender — all boys or all girls.

On February 2019 the Boy Scout program name officially changed to Scouts BSA, using the same curriculum as before and enabling eligible youth ages 11-17, to earn the Eagle Scout rank. Scouts BSA will be single gender – all-girl troops or all-boy troops. This unique approach allows the organization to maintain the integrity of the single-gender model while also meeting the needs of today's families.

Additionally, Venturing crews and Sea Scout ships can be established as all-girl or all-boy units, in addition to the option of being coeducational units.

Q: What are you hearing from BSA leaders around the country about this announcement?

The decision was informed by members of the BSA at all levels of the organization and from all parts of the country, so we are seeing support for the decision reflect that input. This is an exciting time for the BSA. After introducing Cub Scouts to girls through the Early Adopter program that was activated in response to immediate demand, over 77,000 girls have now registered in Cub Scouts throughout the country at the end of 2018.

Q: Do you think current youth members or adult volunteers will withdraw?

This programming is in response to what we've heard from our Scouting families in addition to those who are not involved in the BSA. A majority of parents surveyed said they are interested in having their daughters involved in a program like the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. What's more, many of our current families, Scouts, donors, volunteers and professional staff are in support of this decision, and in a number of cases, we have heard that more parents have started volunteering since their entire family could now be involved.

More than 77,000 girls and their families have joined Cub Scouts since we opened the program to welcome families last year.

Q: Are BSA programs relevant for girls?

Yes. On average, more than 90 percent of Scouting families and leaders believe the BSA programs are relevant to both boys and girls. What's more, education experts also evaluated the curriculum and content and confirmed that the programs are both relevant and empowering for both young men and young women.

Q: Why didn't the BSA partner with the Girl Scouts or another organization to serve girls?

The BSA has been providing programs to young girls since 1971 when we extended our Exploring program to young women. Even before the decision to welcome girls in to Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA, girls were participating in BSA programs, including Venturing, Sea Scouts, STEM Scouts and Exploring programs.

Although we had several conversations with other youth-serving organizations, extensive research and conversations with parents indicated that there is a need and an interest to welcome girls to our existing programs.

We celebrate all youth-serving organizations that build character and feel the most important thing is to allow parents the ability to choose the program that is best for their family.

Q: Does the BSA have a policy that BSA units cannot participate with Girl Scouts in their community?

As has been our tradition, we applaud the efforts of all organizations and encourage families to participate in character- and leadership-development programs of their choice. The BSA wants boys and girls to have an opportunity to join one or more of these organizations. While we all use different delivery models, our distinct missions have one thing in common – to serve youth.

Over the years, youth members and volunteers of the Girl Scouts of the USA and Boy Scouts of America have participated in joint programs, shared facilities and performed service work together in communities across the country. The BSA will continue to support those efforts and encourage families to participate in these programs, regardless of the organization.

Q: How are the BSA programs different from what girls would experience with Girl Scouts?

BSA programs provide character- and leadership-building experiences that give young people a solid foundation for their futures. We celebrate all youth-serving organizations that build character and feel the most important thing is to allow parents the ability to choose what programs are best for their family.

Q: At what age can girls join Scouting?

Families can now choose Cub Scouts for their sons and daughters, starting at age five, up through age 20 in Venturing and Sea Scouts. Starting in February 2019, girls ages 11-17 can also register for Scouts BSA.

Q: Will there be new curriculum for girl participants? Will you change the program to accommodate girls?

No. Our existing programs are relevant for young men and women. After all, the values of Scouting as outlined in the Scout Law – trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent – are relevant and important values for both young men and women.

Q: Can a unit that cannot meet the five-girl minimum offer the Lone Scout program?

Councils will determine the viability of the Lone Scout program, just as they do now with boys.

Q: How will BeAScout help identify which units are welcoming girls?

For Cub Scout packs, unit pins have an indicator set through the organization manager settings that shows if the unit is accepting just girls, just boys, or if it's a family pack with single-gender dens. Soon-to-be Scouts BSA leaders can work with their council registrar to create a "coming soon" pin to indicate where the troop will be located and whether it will be an all-boy troop or an all-girl troop.

Q: Will BSA offer different uniforms for boys and girls?

All uniforms continue to be reviewed and adjusted to meet participant needs. While the fit and styling may be a bit different, the uniforms will remain fundamentally the same.

Chartered Organizations

Q: Were chartered organizations consulted before the BSA decided to welcome girls into the Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs?

Chartered organizations were consulted throughout the research and evaluation process. Since the decision we have received supportive feedback from a number of our partners.

Q: Do chartered organizations have a choice whether or not to offer the program to both boys and girls?

Yes. Chartered organizations always have the option to select from the numerous BSA program offerings. They can select all or one of the BSA programs that they feel best meet the needs of their members and the communities around them.

Q: How should we approach a chartered organization that does not want to offer Family Scouting?

Chartered organizations can choose which programs to offer and whether they want to offer Family Scouting or remain focused on single-gender programs. If the chartered organization has made a well-informed decision to focus on single-gender programs, we recommend working with your district or council membership teams to identify new unit development opportunities.

Cub Scouts

Q: How are packs and dens structured?

Cub Scout dens are single gender — all boys or all girls. Cub Scout packs, meanwhile, can include any combination of all-boy or all-girl dens. The choice is left to individual leaders in consultation with their chartered organization. This hybrid model builds on the benefit of a single-gender program while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.



Q: Should dens for girls and dens for boys meet at the same time and place?

It is up to the chartered organization and the pack or the den to decide meeting times and places.

Q: Can separate boy and girl dens work on the same activity at the same time together?

There is no set rule or guideline on this. If appropriate, this can be treated the same as two dens of the same gender working together. It will be up to the good judgement of leaders to decide what is best for their units.

Q: Will girls who entered in the fall of 2018 as Arrow of Light have a troop ready to accept them at crossover time in 2019?

Though we cannot guarantee a troop will be ready where you are, the Scouting program for older girls is scheduled to be ready to accept participants February 1, 2019, to coincide with timing for many crossovers across the nation.

Q: If I have a question about how to incorporate girls into the pack, who should I talk to?

There are thousands of volunteers leading more than 77,000 new girl Cub Scouts who are equipped and eager to help others looking to welcome girls into a pack. Your unit commissioner and district executive are also great resources.

Q: Can packs share unit numbers? If so, how do we tell them apart?

A: Yes, they can share pack numbers. You will be able to tell them apart in the system because there is a unit designation in ScoutNET that IDs each unit. Starting in February, this feature will enable councils to designate and identify which units are all-boy, all-girl, or family packs with boy and girl dens. This feature will also help councils differentiate between boy troops and girl troops that are chartered to the same organization and have the same unit number. In addition, the unit search feature in ScoutNET and the District Totals Report will be enhanced to include the unit designation.

Q: What if I only have one or two girls who are interested in joining?

Keep recruiting – have the girls invite their friends. Packs will continue to have the option to combine grade levels to form a den as long as they are working on their respective ranks. For example, if you have two third-grade girls and two fourth-grade girls, you may combine into one single-gender den as long as they are working on their Bear and Webelos, respectively.

Q: Can the Lion badge be worn on the blue Cub Scout uniform?

Yes. The Lion badge can be worn on the blue Cub Scout uniform. The proper badge configuration for the Cub Scouting badges from Lion through Bear is depicted here.



Q: Are Webelos required to wear the tan uniform or can they wear the Cub Scout blue?

The Webelos uniform is the tan uniform.

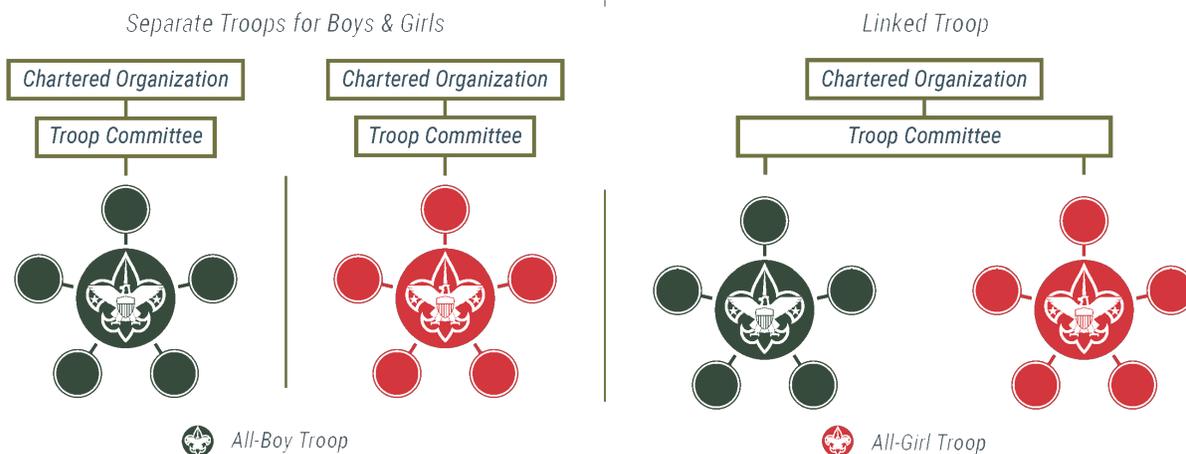
Note: The diamond Webelos badge is being phased out. Below is the proper Webelos/Arrow of Light badge configuration.



Scouts BSA

Q: How are Scouts BSA troops structured?

You can form a linked troop or create a separate troop. In both options, troops will remain single-gender.



Q: What is the name of the program for older youth?

The name of the program serving youth 11-17 years old is Scouts BSA, which perfectly represents the new, inclusive program for older Scouts that the Boy Scouts of America is proud to offer. The name change is effective February 2019, when Scouts BSA will begin welcoming girls and boys.

Scouts BSA builds on the legacy of the Scout name, the Scout handbook, Scouts themselves – we have nearly 109 years of heritage and tradition built on the Scout name. Scouts BSA is the same iconic program with a name that welcomes young men and women to the adventure of Scouting.

The BSA will continue to build the future of Scouting with Scouts BSA, as we deliver character and leadership and offer a path to the rank of Eagle Scout for boys and girls.

Q: What will the members of the program be called?

Just as today, they will be called Scouts. For example, "I'm in Scouts BSA, so I am a Scout."

Q: Why did the BSA not keep the Boy Scout program name and introduce a separate name for the program for girls?

Since all single-gender troops will run the same Scouting program, earn the same merit badges and achieve the same ranks, it became clear that there should be one program name.

Q: Will the Boy Scout Handbook be updated to reflect the new name?

Yes.

Q: Why are there two handbooks if the program is the same?

It was important to the organization to underscore the single-gender nature of the program, while also making sure that Scouts could see themselves in the Scouting through the images and content in the handbooks.

Q: Will Scouts BSA be rolled out like a pilot, or implemented all at one time?

The Boy Scouts of America's Board of Directors unanimously approved to welcome girls into its iconic Scouting programs and to deliver a Scouting program for older girls that will enable them to advance and earn the highest rank of Eagle Scout. This will not be handled as a pilot. For Scouts BSA, there will be no soft launch; the program is available to boys and girls starting February 2019.

Q: Can linked troops share troop numbers? If so, how do we tell them apart?

Yes, they can share troop numbers. Starting in February, the unit designation feature will enable councils to designate and identify which units are all-boy, all-girl, or family packs with boy and girl dens. This feature will also help councils differentiate between boy troops and girl troops that are chartered to the same organization and have the same unit number. In addition, the unit search feature in ScoutNET and the District Totals Report will be enhanced to include the unit designation.

Q: Will girls be able to earn the same merit badges?

Yes. All members of Scouts BSA will be eligible to earn merit badges.

Q: Will girls have to meet the same requirement to achieve Eagle Scout?

Yes, young women will have the opportunity to earn the Eagle Scout rank by meeting the same criteria and achievements as young men.

Order of the Arrow

Q: Will girls be able to be members of the Order of the Arrow?

As of February 1, 2019, unit elections are permitted in Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scout units.

Q: Will camping be counted retroactively for those currently in Venturing and Sea Scouts?

Yes. Camping that has taken place within the two years immediately prior to the election will be counted beginning February 1, 2019. This camping must have taken place while an individual was registered with the BSA as a program participant and must be while participating with a BSA Venturing Crew or Sea Scout Ship.

Q: Can I be elected into the OA if I am over the age of 18?

Yes! As long as you are under the age of 21 at the time the election is held. If you are over 21, you will need to go through the adult selection process.

Q: Have there been any opportunities for Venturers to learn more about the OA and Venturing?

Yes. High-level information was provided, and the opportunity to gather feedback from youth Venturing participants was completed at VenturingFest 2018, which was held July 1-6, 2018.

Q: When will the OA literature be updated to reflect these changes?

We are planning that all literature will be updated by Summer of 2019.

Q: Will we still be able to wear lodge flaps on any female uniforms that may be created?

Yes. We continue to work with BSA National Supply to help ensure that the current OA lodge flap shape and size will be accommodated.

Youth Protection and Adult Supervision

Q: May an adult male lead an all-girl unit?

Yes, an adult male can lead an all-girl unit, just as we already have adult females leading all-boy programs. Youth protection requirements still apply to both male and female participants.

Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings. There must be a registered female adult leader over 21 in every unit that is serving females. A registered female adult leader over 21 must be present for any activity involving female youth. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided.

Eligible volunteers need to be:

- 1) 21 and over
- 2) Registered as a volunteer with the BSA
- 3) Have gone through a background check, and
- 4) Be up to date on Youth Protection training

This is a change from our previous policy where one leader could be 21 years of age or older with a second leader who could be 18 years of age or older.

Q: Are there going to be changes in the requirements for adult leadership?

As always, we will maintain our continuous improvement model to ensure the safety of all youth. Effective, October 1, 2018, two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings. There must be a registered female adult leader over 21 in every unit that is serving females. A registered female adult leader over 21 must be present for any activity involving female youth. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirements, age- and program-appropriate supervision must always be provided.

Eligible volunteers would need to be:

- 5) 21 and over
- 6) Registered as volunteers with the BSA
- 7) Have gone through a background check, and
- 8) Be up to date on Youth Protection training

This is a change from our previous policy where one volunteer could be 21 years of age or older with a second volunteer who could be 18 years of age or older.

Examples of approved leadership

Boy dens, troops, crews, or ships

Volunteers may be all male, all female, or a combination of male and female, but at least two volunteers must be 21 years of age or over.

Girl dens, troops, crews, or ships

Volunteers may be all female or a combination of male and female, but at least two volunteers must be 21 years of age or over and at least one must be female.

Family packs

Volunteers may be all female or a combination of male and female, but at least two volunteers must be 21 years of age or over and at least one must be female.

Overnight activities

A change from the previous policy where only one of the adults was required to be registered, we are now requiring two 21 years old or over leaders for all activities, including overnights; if girls are present, at least one of the volunteers must be female (to be a volunteer, you must be registered).

Additional leadership

As one example of additional leadership, camp standards require not only the minimum adult leadership, but also require certain ratios (e.g., aquatics (PS-201-1) and COPE (SQ-409-3)).

All adults accompanying a Scouting unit who are present at the activity for 72 total hours or more must be registered as leaders. The 72 hours need not be consecutive.

Q: What facility changes will need to happen at our camps?

The Boy Scouts of America has been serving young women for decades, so many camps already accommodate women. Each council will evaluate their facilities and make any needed changes.

Q: What is the policy for restroom and showering facilities?

Separate shower and latrine facilities should be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth. If separate facilities are not available, separate times should be scheduled and posted. This is not a change.

Q: What are the policies for sleeping accommodations?

Separate accommodations for adult males and females and youth males and females are required.

- Separate tenting arrangements must be provided for male and female adults as well as for male and female youth.
- Youth sharing tents must be no more than two years apart in age.
- In Cub Scouting, parents and guardians may share a tent with their family.
- In all other programs, youth and adults tent separately.
- Spouses may share tents.

Q: What training will be taken by camp staff?

Camp director and camp staff training includes "Understanding and Preventing Youth-on-Youth Abuse," which addresses key issues that apply to all youth: bullying, harassment, inappropriate behavior, privacy, and other important subjects.

Q: What will happen at Day Camp if we only have a few girls, and they are not the same rank?

Maintaining the all-boy den and all-girl den is an overall Cub Scouting program requirement that extends into all activities; however, Day Camps can offer joint activities that are available to multiple dens.

BSA's Financial Future

Q: Will the news of a potential restructuring change plans to welcome girls?

No. In fact, we are excited about what the future holds for the BSA and Scouting.

Our decision to welcome both girls and boys into our programs has increased our ability to meet the needs of today's families AND to fulfill our mission. With over 77,000 new girls in the program in just one year, we are energized by the response from families who are thrilled that their daughters can now take part in Cub Scouts and, soon, in Scouts BSA.

Q: Has the BSA declared bankruptcy?

No, the BSA has not declared bankruptcy. We are working with internal and external experts to explore all available options of a restructuring. All potential paths under consideration will ensure that the BSA has a long and bright future and that all local and national programming, as well as our efforts to bring Scouting to even more youth and families, will continue uninterrupted.

Q: How will any potential action impact Scouts and leaders?

Scouts and leaders will not be impacted by any option under consideration. Every possibility being explored will ensure that the local and national programming of the Boy Scouts of America continues uninterrupted.