

How old (or young) can a youth be to join Scouting?

The Scouting experience is divided into five programs according to age and activities.

Cub Scouting is for youth in kindergarten through fifth grade. *Youth can join **Scouts BSA** if they are at least 10 years old, currently in the fifth grade and register on or after March 1st; **OR** have earned the Arrow of Light Award and are at least 10 years old, **OR** are age 11 but have not reached age 18.* **Venturing** and **Sea Scouting** are for young men and women at least 13 years old who have completed the eighth grade, or are age 14 and not yet 21. **Exploring** clubs serve middle schoolers, aged 10 – 14, in sixth through eighth grades. Exploring posts serve older youth 14 – 20 years old.

Is there a Scouting unit in my area?

There are hundreds of thousands of units in the United States and its territories, as well as units that serve the families of U.S. citizens who live overseas.

In rare instances where there actually is no unit in your area—which generally occurs only in rural areas or overseas locations—a single youth can become a Lone Scout, working with an adult mentor to pursue the advancement program and participating in activities with nearby units when possible. To learn more, visit the [Council Locator](#) to find your local council. They will be able to tell you about the Lone Scout program.

Must I be a U.S. citizen to join Scouting?

Citizenship is not required of youth or adult members. If you live outside the United States and are not a U.S. citizen, it may be more beneficial to join the Scouting association in your own nation. The World Organization of the Scout Movement provides contact information for all national Scouting organizations on its Web site at www.scout.org.

Are Cub Scouts the same as Scouts BSA members? What about Venturers?

Cub Scouting, Scouts BSA, and Venturing are programs of the Boy Scouts of America — so in that sense, Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA members, and Venturers are all members of the same organization.

However, they are entirely different programs: Cub Scouting is a family-oriented program designed specifically to address the needs of younger boys and girls. Scouts BSA is designed to achieve the aims of Scouting through a vigorous outdoor program and peer group leadership with the counsel of an adult Scoutmaster.

Venturing provides positive experiences through exciting and meaningful youth-run activities that help members pursue their special interests, grow by teaching others, and develop leadership skills.

How often do Cub Scouts meet?

Cub Scouts meet in their dens once each week, and a pack meeting is held for all Cub Scouts and their families once a month.

Beyond that, it depends on the den and pack: A den may hold a special activity, such as a service project or visit to a local museum, in place of one of the weekly meetings or in addition to the weekly meetings.

Likewise, a pack may conduct a special event such as a blue and gold banquet as an additional event, rather than a substitute for its monthly pack meeting

May parents attend meetings?

Cub Scout den meetings are intended to be an activity for the individual boys and girls.

They are not a family activity, and the presence of parents can be a distraction.

However, parental involvement is not forbidden and all meetings should be open to your participation. If you would like to be present at a den meeting, ask the den leader in advance so that the leader can plan a way for you to observe or participate in an unobtrusive manner.

What supplies and equipment are needed to participate in Scouting?

At minimum, each Scout will need a uniform and a handbook. Additional supplies and equipment may be needed for certain activities such as camping trips or field days. What equipment is needed, as well as whether it will be provided by the unit, will vary. Unit leaders should provide parents with information about any supplies that will be required at the beginning of each program year.

Where can I purchase BSA literature, uniforms, and other program materials?

Our uniforms, literature, and other Scouting merchandise is available at your local council, Scout shops, and other licensed distributors. Visit the Supply Group Web site at ScoutShop.org to find a list of distributors in your area. If there aren't any suppliers near you, you can order directly from the Supply Group by telephone.

How can I save money on the cost of uniforms and equipment?

The unit may provide assistance to families. Some units operate a uniform exchange or uniform bank, or they may hold fund-raisers to enable the boys or girls to earn their uniforms. Also, some units will award boys or girls rank-specific uniform components (hat and neckerchief) and/or the program books that the Scout needs each year — so parents should inquire as to what the unit provides before purchasing the items themselves.

What are the Scout Oath and Scout Law?

Scout Oath

On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the Scout Law; to help other people at all times; to keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight.

Scout Law

The Scout Law has 12 points. Each is a goal for every Scout. A Scout tries to live up to the Law every day. It is not always easy to do, but a Scout always tries.

A Scout is:

TRUSTWORTHY. Tell the truth and keep promises. People can depend on you.

LOYAL. Show that you care about your family, friends, Scout leaders, school, and country.

HELPFUL. Volunteer to help others without expecting a reward.

FRIENDLY. Be a friend to everyone, even people who are very different from you.

COURTEOUS. Be polite to everyone and always use good manners.

KIND. Treat others as you want to be treated. Never harm or kill any living thing without good reason.

OBEDIENT. Follow the rules of your family, school, and pack. Obey the laws of your community and country.

CHEERFUL. Look for the bright side of life. Cheerfully do tasks that come your way. Try to help others be happy.

THRIFTY. Work to pay your own way. Try not to be wasteful. Use time, food, supplies, and natural resources wisely.

BRAVE. Face difficult situations even when you feel afraid. Do what you think is right despite what others might be doing or saying.

CLEAN. Keep your body and mind fit. Help keep your home and community clean.

REVERENT. Be reverent toward God. Be faithful in your religious duties. Respect the beliefs of others.

How do I know what to do with the Scouts?

Cub Scout Program Helps, available through your local Scout shop, provides a theme for each month and ideas for games, skits, crafts, experiments, and activities.

For Scouts BSA and Venturing, the leaders/Advisors guide and the handbooks provide activities and ideas. There are also other resources available through the local Scout shop.

Must individuals who are serving as a merit badge counselor register as a merit badge counselor with the Boy Scouts of America?

Yes, an Adult Application must be completed for each position in which the individual wants to serve. The application allows only one position per form. For instance, an individual who wants to serve only as a merit badge counselor will need to complete only one application. However, a Scoutmaster or assistant Scoutmaster who wants to serve as a merit badge counselor must complete two applications—one for the Scoutmaster position and one for the counselor position.

What Merit Badges are required for the Eagle Scout rank?

A total of 21 **merit badges** (10 more than required for the Life rank) must be earned for the Eagle Scout rank, including these 14 merit badges: (a) First Aid, (b) Citizenship in the Community, (c) Citizenship in the Nation, (d) Citizenship in Society, (e) Citizenship in the World, (f) Communication, (g) Cooking, (h) Personal Fitness, (i) Emergency Preparedness OR Lifesaving, (j) Environmental Science OR Sustainability, (k) Personal Management, (l) Swimming OR Hiking OR Cycling, (m) Camping, and (n) Family Life.

Scouts must choose only one of the merit badges listed in categories I, j, and l. Any additional merit badge(s) earned in those categories may be counted as one of the seven optional merit badges used to make a total of 21.

Refer to the latest [Scouts BSA Requirements book](#) for merit badge requirements updates.

How do we get started on the religious awards programs?

First, youth members must obtain the specific booklet for their religion. This booklet will contain information on all the lessons and service projects that they will need to complete. Each member needs to have his or her own booklet to document progress. Some religions also provide adult manuals for counselors and mentors. Check with your local council to see if it stocks these booklets in its store, or contact the religious organization directly.

Second, parents must review the specific guidelines for their particular program; age/grade requirements vary from program to program. Some programs require that the youth be an official “member” of the local religious institution, others may not. Each program determines who may serve as counselor (some require clergy, others allow parents or other family members). Be sure to look at specific eligibility guidelines!

Third, families should talk to their religious leaders and show them the booklet before beginning any program. Most of the religious emblems programs require that they be completed under the auspices of that religious organization, and many require the signature of the local religious leader. Again, check the specific eligibility requirements for your religious program.

Fourth, the member needs to complete the requirements, obtain the proper signatures, and follow the instructions to order the emblem/award. (These emblems are not available in your local council.) The emblem can be presented at any time of the year and should be presented in a meaningful ceremony, preferably in the member’s religious institution.

Once a volunteer is registered and approved as a merit badge counselor, is that registration for life?

Approvals for merit badge counselors and all other adult volunteer positions are valid for one year only and must be renewed annually.

What happens when the weather, locale, or some other circumstance makes meeting all of the conditions of the merit badge requirements impractical? Can substitute requirements be created for those stated?

No additions, deletions, or alterations are permitted. The requirements are to be completed exactly as written.

What fundraisers are available for Scouts?

Fundraising is an essential part of a Scout being thrifty, setting and accomplishing goals, and earning their way to participate in the benefits and adventure of Scouting. There are a variety of fundraisers units can participate in, including popcorn sales, camp cards, and so much more. [Contact your local council](#) to learn more about all of the fundraising opportunities in your area.

What is the Order of the Arrow (OA)?

For over 100 years, the Order of the Arrow (OA) has recognized Scouts and Scouters who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives. [Learn more about the Order of the Arrow.](#)

How can I become an adult volunteer?

Express your interest to the unit leaders—the Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, crew Advisor, chartered organization representative, or members of the unit committee. While there’s no guarantee that a specific role or position will be available—and there may be a selection process among several

candidates even if the position is currently vacant—there is usually some way in which you can contribute, and most units are glad for any offer of help.

Boy Scouts of America Membership Standards

[Rules and Regulations of the Boy Scouts of America, July 2023](#)

The Boy Scouts of America is the nation's foremost youth program of character development and values-based leadership training. Through our world-class programs, we bring together youth of every race, religion, ethnic background, and economic status in programs to develop character, citizenship, and fitness.

Prejudice, intolerance and unlawful discrimination are unacceptable within the ranks of the Boy Scouts of America.

Who Can Join?

It is the philosophy of Scouting to welcome all eligible youth, regardless of race, ethnic background, or orientation, who are willing to accept Scouting's values and meet any other requirements of membership.

We work to ensure every youth and adult member has the opportunity to join a local unit that aligns with his or her beliefs and with the experience he or she wants within the Scouting community.

No youth may be removed from any of our programs on the basis of his or her orientation, and we teach youth members to be helpful, friendly, courteous, and kind to all and to respect those whose beliefs differ from their own.

Who Can Volunteer?

To be eligible for registration, an adult leader must agree to: subscribe to the [Scout Oath](#); fulfill the obligations of his or her position; and perform his or her duties in accordance with the [Bylaws](#), [Rules and Regulations](#), policies, and guidelines of the Boy Scouts of America.

The Boy Scouts of America allows chartered organizations to select adult leaders without regard to sexual orientation, continuing Scouting's long-standing policy of chartered organizations selecting their leaders. This allows Scouting's members and parents to select local units, chartered to organizations with similar beliefs, that best meet the needs of their families. This change also respects the right of religious chartered organizations to continue to choose adult leaders whose beliefs are consistent with their own.

Scouting will continue to focus on reaching and serving youth to help them grow into good, strong citizens.

By focusing on the goals that unite us, we are able to accomplish incredible things for young people and the communities we serve.

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Starting in 2018, we serve boys and girls through single-gender dens in the Cub Scout program. In 2019, we will also introduce a program that will enable both older boys and older girls to join single-gender troops and earn the highest rank of Eagle Scout. We also offer co-ed programs, serving young men and young women, such as Venturing, STEM Scouts, Exploring and Learning for Life.

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