

Hey there, reader! I'm Cole, the guy behind ScoutSmarts. I earned my Eagle back in 2014, and along the way, learned how to be a dependable leader. Although I didn't realize it at the time, Scouting helped shape my life! While I can't tell my past self what I know now, I can teach you all the smart Scouting knowledge that I wish I'd known when just starting out. Start reading! Hopefully, you'll learn a few things along the way and make the best of your time in Scouting. :)

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Cole's Essential Camping Gear List

Scouting has a long and rich history in America. Millions of kids, teens, and young adults join every

All Eagle-Required Merit Badges:

year to have fun and learn useful skills along the way. In fact, I was one of them! Parents looking to  
Difficulty Rankings And Guides

sign their kids up as Scouts are quickly faced with an important question: how much does Scouting

Planning Your Eagle Scout Project

cost?

## The ScoutSmarts Master Post List

« 7Secrets for Scouting Success (44)

While I normally write articles to help Scouts succeed here at ScoutSmarts.com, this article will be a bit different. For any parents out there who are considering placing their children in Scouting, this one's for you! Keep reading for a breakdown of every cost involved in Scouting; Plus, an insider's perspective on everything you'll need to know to set your child up for success.

Joining Scouting can cost anywhere from \$110 to \$600+ per year based on the age of the child, the cost of activities, and the types of gear chosen.

Cub Scouts (ages 5-10) \$150 to \$200 per year  
Scouts BSA (ages 11-17) \$250 to \$600 per year  
Venturing (ages 14-20) \$250 to \$600 per year

Since there is such a wide variety among troop dues, activities, and camp fees, the actual cost of Scouting can depend on many factors. In this article, I'll be breaking those costs down for you and addressing many of the other questions you might have! @

How Much Does Scouting Cost?  
While joining Scouting can be a great opportunity for your kids, it's only natural to think about how much it's going to cost. Knowing what to expect ahead of time it easier to plan for future expenses associated with Scouting.

First though, if you're a parent who's unfamiliar with Scouting, here's an informative video (2:45) that does a great job of explaining many of the things to expect when joining a Scout troop:

Watch on 3 Youtube

Are Boy Scouts free?  
The Scouts BSA (formerly Boy Scouts Of America) are not free to join. To sign up for Scouting,

you'll have to pay an annual fee for each child and adult volunteer registered in a troop.

+ The annual BSA registration fee to be registered as a Scout is \$75 per year.

+ Adult volunteers are required to pay a \$45 annual fee, which includes the cost of a background check.

This fee is the same among all BSA programs. Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing Scouts, and Sea

Scouts all pay the same annual fee.

Since August 15<sup>th</sup>, 2020 new Scouts have also needed to to pay a one-time \$25 Joining fee.

However, that is just the membership fee for the Scouts. In my experience, there are other costs

associated with being a Scout which include:

Uniform fees

Scout Handbook costs

Dues required by your local troop

Special activity fees

Council fees

\* According to the BSA, local councils can choose to charge an annual fee that is up to, but no more than, the national membership fee. The council fee can include local insurance costs (ie., accident, property, etc.), as well as the cost to administer unique local programming.

We'll be covering each of these costs in depth later on in the article!

â€œWhy Do I Have to Pay a Membership Fee?â€

The Scouts BSA is a big organization that provides many services to its members. The fee helps them maintain all of their programs and pays the background expenses needed to keep the

Scouting running.

In addition, the fee also helps the Scouts BSA provide:

+ Extra programs

+ Community service events

- + Special trips to its members

- + Scholarship programs to provide uniforms and pay fees for low-income kids who might not have been able to join otherwise! @

#### Scouting Membership Price Increases

You may have seen that the annual fee for Scouting is \$33 or \$66, not \$75. This is because the

Scouts BSA recently had to increase their fees in order to cover costs. It was raised to help cover:

- + Nationwide liability insurance
- + Youth protection services

- + Increased program resources

Simply put, it seems like the cost of running the Scouting was getting so high that the previous

fees were raised to keep the national organization running!

The fee increase began on August 15', 2022 and made the annual fee for Scouts BSA youth members \$75 per child.

#### Scouts BSA Uniform Costs

All members of Scouts BSA (formerly Boy Scouts) are required to wear a class-A uniform while they attend troop meetings and activities. However, the cost of the uniform depends on the program as well as troop preferences. Some troops require a full uniform while others just ask you to buy a few of the most important pieces.

Compared to Cub Scout uniforms, Scouts BSA uniforms:

- + Have more required pieces
- + Are stricter about what type of uniform to wear, when.
- + Commonly have different styles of clothing that serve a similar function (i.e, a short sleeve and long sleeve shirt, for different occasions)

Because of this, Scouting uniform costs are a bit higher than Cub Scout uniforms. However, unlike Cub Scouts, BSA Scouts are not required to buy new pieces of a uniform every year. Instead, we

wear the same tan uniform and add patches and badges to it as we progress.

Here is another handy chart of uniform costs for Scouts, with information taken from the official catalog (costs may have changed from the time of this article's last update, so I'd suggest checking

them out for yourself Â® )

Scout Uniform Item: Cost:

Hat \$24.99

Shirt \$28.99 to \$49.99

Neckerchief \$9.99 to \$14.99

Neckerchief Slide \$5.99

Pants \$19.99 to \$54.99

Belt \$14.99 to \$19.99

Initial Patches \$13.00

Total Costs of a Uniform: \$108.00 to \$184.00

Again, remember that the only time you need to buy brand new pieces for your Scout's uniform

when they are damaged or outgrown. This is a one-time upfront cost to outfit a new Scout!

Pro-Tip: Another Scouting expense can come from patrol patches, Scouting

memorabilia, and customized troop shirts. However, the wonderful folks over at

ClassB (An official Scouting vendor) offered me a coupon code to share with

you all! Once you sign up for the ScoutSmarts newsletter, I'll send you an

exclusive coupon that'll get you a \$10 discount at ClassB's Scout Trading Post!

BTW, this is not an affiliate link. I personally used ClassB patches as a Scout

and can vouch for their outstanding quality!

Scouts BSA Handbook Costs

Scouts have a handbook, just the same as Cub Scouts, but it works a bit differently. In addition to their Scouts BSA handbook, there are also a few smaller books as well as pamphlets for each merit

badge a Scout earns.

Just like Cub Scout books, the Scouts BSA handbook costs \$24.99. Each merit badge pamphlet will run \$5.99 (digital ones are \$4.99), but those are bought on an as-needed basis and not upfront. Also, it isn't mandatory to buy the merit badge pamphlets. When I was a Scout, I just did my merit

badge research online and by using books.

The only time a Scout is likely to purchase a new handbook would be if theirs is damaged or if a

new edition is released (but it's typically optional to upgrade)

Scouts BSA Fees and Yearly Costs

Much like the Cub Scouts, yearly costs for being a part of the Scouts BSA consist of three to four

parts:

- + Troop dues
- + Special activity costs
- + Annual BSA fees

- + Local council fees

Unlike Cub Scouts, troop dues are usually higher and special activities are more common. Troop dues for Scouts BSA members will typically run between \$100 to \$150. Special activities that require fees are more common, so I'd recommend budgeting another \$100 to \$200 for these.

Special activities are, of course, optional. However, most Scouts will want to participate, as these

activities present opportunities to earn merit badges and learn useful skills.

Plan for:

- + \$100 in troop dues
- + \$100 in special activities
- + \$75 BSA registration fee
- + Up to \$75 in council fees

The average yearly cost of Scouts BSA fees is about \$275-\$350.

Summer Camps and Jamborees

Once your Scout hits the Tenderfoot or Second-class rank, Summer camp becomes a more.

integral part of their experience. Summer camps are totally optional, but it's an awesome

experience that almost every Scout will want to be a part of

On average, Summer camps can run about \$400 to \$500 for a weeklong camp. However, this is

just from personal experience. There are camps out there that are more or less expensive.

Jamborees are a different storyâ€”those are like a HUGE Summer camp. Jamborees, such as the National Jamboree, only happen once every four years and are amazing events for a Scout to

participate in. I unfortunately never made it to one, but I wish I had! Jamborees include things like:

- + Mountain biking
- + Rock climbing
- + Stadium shows
- + Water rafting

- + Rope courses

Jamborees are completely optional, just like summer camps. However, they are fun, educational, and full of adventure. If your child gets very involved in Scouting, I wouldn't be surprised if they ask

you to attend at least one.

The 24th World Scout Jamboree 2019 - North America - After...

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Because of their scale, Jamborees can cost anywhere from \$1500 to \$3000, including travel

costs. We'll talk about ways to offset that cost, and many other costs of Scouting, below.

Required Gear Costs

Gear plays a big part in Scouting, especially for older Scouts. Since Scouts participate in outdoor

activities like camping, hiking, and watersports, it's important to ensure that they're well-equipped

and prepared.

In order to be safe and comfortable on troop camping trips, there are some supplies that a Scout will absolutely need. Here is a list of absolute Scouting essentials, and about how much each item will cost you:

#### Camping Typical

##### Item Cost Notes

Bags made of goose down are much lighter and warmer but can't get wet without losing their warmth. Synthetic bags are heavier but and mat \$200 \_ stay warm even when wet. Choose the option that is right for your climate.

Having clean water is crucial. A filter system is necessary if your Water Bottle , .

Scout is wilderness camping, Make sure the filter system fits your and filter \$50 water bottle.

A flashlight can be used in a pinch, but a headlight is much better Headlamp ,

\$15 and not much more expensive

kif Scouts must have first earned a "totin" chip in order to carry camp

ne \$30 tools like knives, axes, and handsaws

Troop leaders will have a big first aid kit, but it's a good idea for a First Aid Kit 65 Scout to carry a few of his or her own painkillers, bandages, moleskin, and antibiotic

Avery useful survival tool, helps Scouts find each other if they get

Whistle \$5 lost

c A good compass and map set is important for safety and also useful jompass \$5 for helping Scouts earn merit badges!

Raingear \$20 to Ponchos ae cheap and work well, but anice rain jacket and pants

\$100, 2\* better if you can afford them,

Special \$10 to Your Scout might need certain clothes for the area they are camping

Clothes \$100.\_ it For example: anice fleece coat for cold nights, hiking boots, etc,

Mess Kit \$10 A durable plate, bowl, cup, and utensil set

Misc. oa

\$15 Sunscreen, bug repellent, fire tinder

Keep in mind, this will likely be a one-time upfront cost. Small



additional costs for repairs and replacements depend on the quality of your chosen items.

Total Cost of \$360 to  
Gear: \$520

Now, that's a significant amount of money and a fairly broad range. In reality, it just depends on what you already own and what your troop can provide for your Scout. I've gone into greater detail

on what gear is most useful for Scouts in my essential Scout camp packing list.

Here are some things that the vast majority of troops are likely to provide their Scouts:

- + Tents
- + Stoves and cooking dishes
- + Propane-powered lanterns
- + Cleaning supplies
- + Dining flys

The only things a Scout is expected to provide are personal items, like those listed above. We'll go over potential ways to save money on gear down below and remember, if you choose quality gear you'll only have to buy these items once!

Total Costs of Entering Scouting  
Overall, entering the Scouts BSA is a fair bit pricier than Cub Scouts. Here's a handy chart of how

much it costs to join Scouts BSA:

BSA registration fee \$75.00

Council Fee Up To \$75

Troop Dues \$100.00 to \$150.00

Uniform \$107.00 to 162.00

Special Activities (optional) \$100.00 to \$150.00

Gear \$350.00 to \$520.00

Total Overall Costs: \$632.00 to \$982.00

Total Cost with optional fees: \$732.00 to \$1,132.00

That looks like a lot, but don't worry! In the next section, I'll go over some ninja hacks to lower

those costs significantly if you can't immediately afford them! @

#### Ways of Reducing the Cost of Joining Scouts BSA

Putting it all on paper can make it seem more financially daunting than it has to be. Scouts BSA tries its best to make sure everyone who wants to join can have a chance, and there are always

ways to lower the cost.

#### Uniform Exchanges, Troop Libraries, and Camperships

Since there are a lot of Scouts who pass through troops, there are often plenty of hand-me-down

resources available to new members.

Uniform exchanges allow new Scouts to get second-hand uniforms at a much lower cost—maybe even free. Just make sure to repay the favor once your new Scout outgrows their uniform. If it's still in ok shape, send it back into the uniform exchange! Just ask your Scout's new troop leader

about where you can find the nearest exchange.

Troops almost always have spare used copies of:

• Handbooks

+ Merit badge pamphlets

+ Supplemental resources

Scouts who can't afford to buy them all can ask their leader to borrow them from the troop library.

Many troops fundraise year-round and look for sponsorships in order to raise money and grant

camperships to Scouts who otherwise couldn't afford to join.

Camperships can happen at the:

+ Troop level

+ Local Council level

+ National level

They can cover everything from registration fees to gear expenses. Once again, ask your local

troop leader on how to access available scholarships.

If your Scout cannot get a campership, then you can also try:

+ Having your Scout fundraise on their own

+ Asking family members, friends, and local community organizations to help sponsor them

+ Looking for a different troop. Maybe a troop in the next town over has more resources available, lower dues, or less strict uniform and gear requirements

### Long Term Scouting Costs

Scouting isn't just a single-year adventure. The Scouts BSA provides a framework for a Scout to continue advancing throughout their entire career, learning new life skills and earning new badges

along the way. Thankfully, there are no hidden costs in staying in Scouting for a long time.

### The Costs of Earning Eagle Scout

Almost everyone knows about the famed Eagle Scout rank, the highest rank in Scouting. Even people who aren't that familiar with Scouting have heard of it! Because of its notoriety, people tend to think it must cost more to get to that rank. How much does it cost to be an Eagle Scout,

exactly?

As an Eagle Scout myself, I can tell you that becoming an Eagle Scout doesn't have to cost any more than a normal Scouting membership! Earning the Eagle rank is about achievement, not paying more dues or buying fancier gear. Eagle Scouts are granted their rank after completing the Eagle-required merit badges, coordinating community service projects, and exhibiting exemplary leadership.

### How Long Do Most People Stay in Scouting?

It can be difficult to find exact data on how many kids stick with Cub Scouts and continue into Scouts BSA. This is mostly because troops can be incredibly different from one another. Each troop leader can run their troop how they think is best, and that means some troops are great at

encouraging their Scouts to stay around, while others lose members more often

A former leader on the SCOUTER forum said that his troop lost about 1 in 10 Scouts every year.

â€¦I think our loss rate is around 10% (1 in 10). If they go on a campout before the summer after crossing over, they stay. If they don't camp with us in the first three months (April, May and June) or go to summer camp, there is a 50% chance they drop out.â€¦

Many other leaders agree, and they all seem to come to the same conclusion: so long as the troop's leadership makes an effort to make a Scout feel at home and make new friends, that Scout will stick around for a long time.

So, make sure to sample a few troops before you settle on which one to have your new Scout join! Find the one that best suits their personality and encourage them to get involved. Personally, I'd recommend a troop that is more Scout-led, as that type of structure teaches great leadership and interpersonal skills.

Are the Scouts BSA Worth Joining?

After digesting all the info on the cost of Scouting, most people are left with a single question: is it worthwhile to join Scouting?

Using the numbers we calculated earlier, a reasonable figure for the lifetime cost of a Scout's career would be around \$4,000 to \$5,000, or about \$27/week. What else could \$4,000 buy?

- + 20% of an in-state public college's tuition, on average
- + 5% of a private college's tuition
- + A "pretty-ok" used car
- + Two or three weeks of an overnight summer camp

Compared to most other options, becoming a Scout is a steal. Scouting isn't just a cool club or hiking group, it's a smart investment in your child's future. In fact, Scouting isn't contained to just hiking, camping, and fire building â€”there are so many merit badges and skills your Scout could

learn, including:

- + Entrepreneurship
- + Farm Mechanics
- + Game Design

+ Graphic Arts

+ Journalism

+ Personal Financial Management

Why don't you check out a few of the many options available? Here are 7 incredibly interesting merit badges that I'd recommend every Scout seriously consider completing!

That's just the tip of the iceberg. Becoming a member of Scouting is an investment, not just a club. It provides a strong framework for a teenager to learn incredibly useful life skills, build self-confidence, and surround themselves with lifelong friends and mentors—and have tons of fun

while doing it!

To learn more about the value and benefits of Scouting (from real Scouts and

Scoutmasters!) make sure to check out my Scouting Highlights article.

Init, you'll learn why Scouting is such a great investment for millions of families

across America!

Costs of Joining the Scouts BSA

We covered a lot of information today, but here is a simple recap of what you should expect to pay,

per year, to be a part of the Cub Scouts or Scouts BSA.

Cub Scouts (ages 5-10) \$150 to \$200 per year  
Scouts BSA (ages 11-17) \$250 to \$600 per year  
Venturing (ages 14-20) \$250 to \$600 per year

Personally, Scouting was one of the best experiences of my adolescent life. Thinking back, I'm only

beginning to realize the many blessings I've gained from my time in Scouting! For instance:

It helped me to be admitted into the University of California, San Diego with a not-so-competitive GPA!

I listed Scouting on my resume and was able to land a competitive job.

| found some of my most beloved lifelong hobbies through Scouting.  
| became more resourceful, persistent, and | got in great shape.  
| gained confidence during puberty and learned to stand up for myself.  
| developed my leadership and public speaking skills tremendously.  
| built amazing friendships that | still carry to this day.

If you're on the fence about enrolling your child in Scouting, remember that there are a lot of ways to help manage the costs involved, and a worldwide Scouting community waiting to support you. In fact, I've even created this website, ScoutSmarts, specifically to help Scouts succeed and make

the most of their time in Scouting!

| highly encourage you to consider Scouting as a long-activity for your child. Scouting is an

investment that will continue to pay your son or daughter dividends throughout their entire life! ®

Recommended

Difficulty: A+!

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Everything To Know 7 Fun and Interesting All Eagle-Required

Before Joining Scouts Merit Badges To Earn Merit Badges:  
BSA (Boy Scouts) Â» At Home Or By... Difficulty Rankings i

Cole

I'm constantly writing new content because | believe in Scouts like you!  
Thanks so much for reading, and for making our world a better place.  
Until

next time, I'm wishing you all the best on your journey to Eagle and beyond!

The Importance of Scouting (And Its How To Plan An Eagle Scout Project:  
An Easy

Relevance Today) 5-Step Guide

Being a BSA Scout isn't just an extracurricular. A large-scale service project is one of the final

activity; it's an incredible journey that overcomes obstacles that you'll need to overcome to

transform young people into leaders, reach Scouting's highest rank:

Eagle Scout. If

adventurers, and compassionate citizens. For you're a Life Scout in the process of planning

some, Scouting is a... your own...

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