



Boy Scouts of America – Fact Sheet

The following information has been assembled by the National Scouting and Youth Services Committee to assist chapters with their interaction with the Boy Scouts of America.

The Boy Scouts of America programs include nearly 2.9 million young men and women, served by over a million adult volunteers and professionals. The organization was founded February 8, 1910 and is headquartered in Irving, Texas. The primary guidelines for the Boy Scout program are the Scout Oath and the Scout Law.

The Boy Scout program is structured into six different groups, based upon age and for older participants, areas of interest. The levels of the program include:

Tiger Cubs	1 st Grade (or 7 years old)
Cub Scouts	2 nd through 5 th Grade (8 – 10 years old)
Webelos Scouts	4 th and 5 th Grade (10 years old)
Boy Scouting	Completed 5 th Grade (11 – 17 years old)
Varsity Scouting	14 – 17 years old
Venturing	Completed 8 th Grade (14 – 20 years old)

Activities vary by age level but remain focused around youth development. The Cub Scout levels are structured to incorporate family involvement while participants learn the basics of leadership; community involvement; and character development. Within Boy Scouting participants develop the ideals of the program through a vigorous outdoor program and peer group leadership. Varsity Scouting is built around five program fields of emphasis: advancement, high adventure, personal development, service, and special programs and events. The Venturing program provides the opportunity to pursue special interests in an environment that promotes personal growth and leadership development. Each of the programs is open exclusively to boys and young men except for Venturing which is open to both young men and young women. Venturing also contains a division known as Sea Scouts where members focus their activities around boating and the nation's maritime heritage.

The organizational structure within Boy Scouts is similar across the various levels but varies by name. Cub Scouts are organized into “dens” that are grouped into “packs”. Boy Scouts are grouped into “patrols” that comprise a “troop”. Within Varsity Scouting participants are considered to be in a “team”. Those in Venturing are grouped into “crews”, or if the Venturing unit is a Sea Scout group they are considered a “ship”. All groups are referred to collectively as “units”, and are led by volunteers. A group of units in a geographic area is called a District, and one or more districts are organized into a Council. There are more than 300 Boy Scout Councils in the United States. Each has a professional staff which supports the local units (District Executives), program staff, and a Council Executive. The Commissioner Staff is a group of volunteer leaders who provide service to units, by providing guidance and training for unit leaders.

Cub Scout packs, Boy Scout troops and Varsity Scouting teams are chartered or sponsored by community organizations with interests similar to those of the BSA. This organization, which might be a church, school, community organization, or group of interested citizens, is chartered by the local BSA council to use the Scouting program. The chartered organization provides a suitable meeting place, adult leadership, supervision, and opportunities for a healthy Scouting life for the boys under its sponsorship.

Advancement programs vary across the levels within Boy Scouts. Cub Scouts earn badges. Boy Scouts earn merit badges and advance within the program through a series of ranks. Within the Venturing program advancement is designated through the Bronze, Ranger, Gold, Silver and Quest Awards. Sea Scouting utilizes the Quartermaster Award. The highest youth award in Boy Scouting is known as the Eagle Scout Rank. To earn it, a Boy Scout must fulfill requirements in the areas of leadership, service, and outdoor skills.

Other groups present within Boy Scouting including the Order of the Arrow organized as a national camping honor society and the National Eagle Scout Association for boys who have obtained the rank of Eagle.

For more information on BSA visit the national organization website: <http://www.scouting.org/>

For assistance in locating your local BSA council visit: <http://www.scouting.org/Applications/LCLFull.aspx>

For a series of program and informational fact sheets visit: <http://www.scouting.org/media/factsheets.aspx>