

# Planning Your Troop's Annual Program Budget

What is the "Ideal Year of Scouting" plan? It is implementing the elements of a **complete annual Scouting program** for youth, committing as a unit to incorporate these elements, and then providing adequate funding for them. Even more, it is committing to the only proven fund-raising program that has consistently demonstrated its ability to raise enough dollars to fund the Ideal Year of Scouting.

If you like to raise money every month, plan your program as you go, limit your activities based on the unit's income, or not involve the youth members in the planning process, **then this format may not be for you! Those leaders who want a meaningful, exciting, and comprehensive youth program that achieves the objectives of the Scouting program will find this format the ideal way to go.**

The result is a well-managed, well-financed unit. Recognizing this, the BSA recommends the following recipe:

1. Plan your complete annual program.
2. Develop a budget that includes enough income to achieve the program.
3. Identify the amount of product (popcorn) that will need to be sold per youth member to reach the income goal.
4. Get commitments from parents and youth.

## Basic Expenses

**1] Registration Fees.** Registration fees are paid to the National Council. These fees are only transmitted through your council and do not support the council at all! Instead, they pay for program research and development to improve Scouting programs.

Units are required to pay an annual charter fee of \$20. Here are the recommended basic expense items per boy member:

Registration      \$10.00\*

*Boys' Life*            12.00\*

Accident and Liability Insurance\*\*

\*The same rate applies for registered adult Scouters.

**2] Registration.** When a boy joins, normally the unit asks him to pay the full \$10 national registration fee regardless of the number of months remaining in the unit's charter year. The unit sends to the council the prorated amount for those remaining months. Note that fees are figured on a monthly basis: one month, 85¢; two months, \$1.70; three months, \$2.55; four months, \$3.40; five months, \$4.25; six months, \$5.10; seven months, \$5.95; eight months, \$6.80; nine months, \$7.65; 10 months, \$8.50; 11 months, \$9.35; 12 months, \$10.

\*\*Contact your local council.

The balance of the boy's fee is kept in the unit treasury to supplement his dues in paying the next full year's fee. This procedure ensures prompt registration at charter renewal.

**3] *Boys' Life.*** *Boys' Life* magazine, the official publication of the Boy Scouts of America, is available to all members at \$10.80, which is half the newsstand rate. (Prorated fees are available for youth who join a unit during the year.) Every boy should subscribe to *Boys' Life* because of the quality reading and the articles related to your unit's monthly program. It is part of a boy's growth in Scouting, and research proves he will stay in longer and advance farther if he reads *Boys' Life*.

**4] Unit Accident and Liability Insurance.** Protecting the leadership and parents from financial hardship due to high medical bills from an unfortunate accident is a must for all involved in Scouting. Specific details on these programs are available at the council service center. (Prorated fees are available for youth who join a unit during the year.)

**5] Advancement and Recognition.** Every youth member should advance a rank each year. (Boy Scouts can do even more.) The Boy Scout advancement program has a number of options that include achievements, rank advancement, and merit badges.

**6] Reserve Fund.** The reserve fund might be established by a gift or loan from the chartered organization, members of the committee, or by a unit money-earning project. The reserve fund should meet unexpected expenses. A new member's initial expenses may be met from the fund.

**7] Full Uniforms.** Traditionally the individual pays for these expenses. We suggest that they become part of the total cost of the Scouting year. Using "individual youth accounts," units can determine a fund-raising goal for new Scouts who need uniforms, etc. The full Scouting program includes the full uniform!

**8] Training Expenses.** Trained leaders are the key to delivering a quality and safe program. Both adult and youth leader training should be considered as an integral annual expense.

**9] Program Materials.** Each unit needs to provide a certain amount of program materials. Depending on the type of unit program, these could include craft tools and supplies, camping equipment, videos and books, or ceremonial props. (Note: Units may not hold title to property; only chartered organizations or the local council legally own property.)

**10] Summer Camp.** Central to a complete Scouting year is a summer camp experience. Local and national opportunities abound for Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venturers to have an exciting, program-rich summer experience.

**11]** **Activities.** Critical to the successful Ideal Year of Scouting is a complete program. Traditionally, such activities as Boy Scout hikes, camping, or high-adventure trips are financed by the boy and his family over and above the dues programs. It is suggested that the complete cost of these outings be built into the unit's budget.

**12]** **Other Expenses.** These include meeting refreshments and contingency funds.

## Sources of Income

"One fund-raiser per year" is a central theme of the Ideal Year of Scouting. Rather than "nickel and dime" families every week, we suggest that the total cost for the complete year be figured upfront. Ideally, all income would come from one fund-raising program at the beginning of the program year each fall. A spring fund-raiser could be included but with the proceeds being dedicated to each youth member's individual camping account.

### Some Important Points:

**Paying your own way.** This is a fundamental principle of the Boy Scout of America. It is one of the reasons no solicitations (requests for contributions) are permitted by units. Young people in Scouting are taught early on that if they want something in life they need to earn it. It is among the reasons that adults who were Scouts are found to have higher incomes. *The unit's entire budget must be provided for by the families through either fund-raising or other means such as dues or fees.*

**Individual youth accounts.** Units using this method have traditionally had stronger programs with less turnover of youth. Individual Scout accounts, whereby the unit keeps track of how much a youth member or his family has raised toward his Ideal Year of Scouting goal, are critical to the success of this program.

Except for the council-sponsored popcorn sale, all other fund-raising projects require the submission of the Unit Money-Earning Application, No. 34427A, to the council service center. To ensure conformity with all Scouting standards on earning money, leaders should be familiar with the 10 guides listed on the back of the application and in the financial record books.

## Other Helps

Additional information concerning unit budget plans, the treasurer's job, camp savings, forms, and records can be found in these publications: *Troop/Team Record Book*, No. 34508B; and *Varsity Scout Leaders Guidebook*, No. 34827. It is recommended that units use one of the commercial software programs developed for Scouting units, such as Troopmaster. These tools are great for keeping track of individual youth accounts. They are usually advertised in the back of *Scouting* magazine.

There is also a budget and program planner available on your council's Web site, along with sample materials for creating calendar and budget materials to share with families.

## Budget Worksheet

To develop your unit budget, complete the attached worksheet with the unit leader and committee, then share it with the Scouts' parents. In the case of Boy Scout troops, the patrol leaders' council reviews the budget and puts it in final form prior to study and adoption by the troop committee. Be sure to keep parents involved and informed. Program calendar and budget information needs to be communicated regularly to families, and especially at the start of the program year.

