

ORGANIZING A UNIT AT AN

AMERICAN LEGION POST



New-Unit Resource Kit



AMERICAN LEGION

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

P.O. Box 1055
 Indianapolis, IN 46206
 317-630-1200

MAJOR PUBLICATION

American Legion Magazine

FOUNDED

1919—Paris, France

FOUNDER

Group of U.S. Army Officers

PURPOSE

- Rehabilitate and care for veterans—mutual helpfulness.
- Foster and perpetuate Americanism.
- Inculcate sense of individual obligation.
- Combat autocracy.
- Promote peace and goodwill.
- Safeguard and transmit to posterity principles of justice.

FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW

Special Interest. Youth, Americanism, help to veterans.

Special Interest in Scouting. Agreement to support Scouting was voted approved at the First National Convention of the American Legion held at Minneapolis, Minn., 1919.

Methods of Supporting Scouting. Operation of units, administrative leadership, project help.

Scouting-Related Materials. *The American Legion and Scouting* (brochure), No. 3-174, and *The American Legion and Scouting* videotape.

Structure. National organization is administered through State departments.

National commander is top lay executive officer. National adjutant is top professional executive officer. The state department commander is top lay executive officer. State department adjutant is top professional executive officer. Local organizations are called posts; top executive officer is post commander. He is a lay leader. Post adjutant is also a lay leader, but very influential in local operation. He handles most details, etc. New post commanders take office during April through June annually.

Local Contact. Post commander.

AMERICAN LEGION POSTS IN MY DISTRICT

Name of Post	Location	Name of Commander	Phone	Units

STEPS TO SUCCESS

Organizing a Unit at an American Legion Post

Target Date

1. Review the American Legion Scouting brochure, Duty to God and Country (03-174), prior to making an appointment.

2. Contact the post commander for an appointment.

3. Make a sales call on the post commander.

4. The post adopts Scouting and the post commander appoints a chartered organization representative.

5. The chartered organization representative appoints an organizing committee of parents and interested post members. They meet to discuss the next step and complete the New-Unit Application.

6. The organizing committee selects and recruits key leaders and committee members.

7. Train leaders in program planning (Fast Start).

8. Plan program for at least the first six months.

9. Recruit youth members and orient parents.

10. Complete the paperwork and submit it to the council office.

11. Start unit meetings.

12. Install the unit and formally present the charter at a meeting of the American Legion post.



★ NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS ★ P. O. BOX 1055 ★ INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA 46206 ★
(317) 630-1200 ★ FAX (317) 630-1223 ★



OFFICE OF THE
NATIONAL ADJUTANT

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

The American Legion, at its First Convention on Armistice Day/Veterans Day, November 11, 1919, adopted a resolution in support of Boy Scouts of America (BSA). That resolution, adopted by men and women who had returned from World War I the previous year, encouraged Posts of The American Legion to sponsor the BSA.

Every year since 1919, The American Legion has reaffirmed its support of the BSA. The affiliation between The American Legion and the BSA is built on the solid foundation of God and country.

Many things are shared in common within the BSA Oath and The American Legion Preamble/oath that every Legionnaire recites at the beginning of each official meeting of The American Legion. Both our organizations believe in a strong nation, strong families, strong communities, and service to others.

Some in our nation speak of values, but the affiliates of the BSA and The American Legion practice them.

We encourage all Legion Posts and all Americans to support Boy Scouts of America and help make our nation always "morally strong and physically fit".

ROBERT W. SPANOGLA
National Adjutant

RESOLUTION NO: 334

SUBJECT: SUPPORT OF BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

COMMISSION: AMERICANISM

Consolidated with Resolution 297 (NV) 2000 NC

WHEREAS, The Boy Scouts of America is an organization that was incorporated in 1910 and recognized by Federal charter in 1916 to provide an educational program for boys and young men to build character, train in the responsibilities of participatory citizenship, and develop personal fitness; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion voiced its support of the Boy Scouts of America at its first national convention in 1919, making it the first recognized national youth activity of The American Legion; and

WHEREAS, The Boy Scouts of America teaches the core values of duty to God and country, personal honor, respect for the beliefs of others, volunteerism, and interdependence with the environment, principles which are conducive to good character, citizenship, and health; and

WHEREAS, The American Legion encourages its Posts to continue their support for Scouting as a primary part of their service to God and country, their community, their state and their nation; and

WHEREAS, The Supreme Court of the United States has ruled that the Boy Scouts of America, as a private, voluntary, nonbusiness organization, has the right to set its own standards for membership and leadership; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, By The American Legion in National Convention assembled in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, September 5, 6, 7, 2000, That The American Legion does hereby support the Boy Scouts of America in its efforts to maintain and practice traditional family values with regard to their membership and their leadership standards.

Overcoming Objections To Organizing a New Unit

1. **We already have a youth program.**

It's great that your organization cares about its youth (and the youth of the community). Scouting is ideal to work hand in hand with existing programs to enhance what you currently offer. Not only are our goals/values compatible, but our methods can/will work well with what you do. Scouting can bring programs and facilities to you to make a good program even better.

2. **We tried Scouting once and it didn't work.**

What do you feel was the reason? (Explore – look for the biggies – lack of organization/commitment, uncommitted or poor leaders, lack of training, lack of vision, poor support from district/council/BSA.)

Address each issue:

Organizational Commitment – Starts at the top – the strong commitment of your (head, board, etc.) will be contagious.

Leaders – Use selection, not recruiting – get often and get the very best in organization (after all, it's your program), train them and then support them!

Vision – Be creative about how to serve the youth of the organization; have a community dream and then implement the dream.

BSA Issues – Assume it won't happen again – promise and **deliver**.

3. **We don't have any youth in our organization.**

Scouting provides a means for your organization to become known in the community, especially among families with children of Scout age. It's **great** advertising and community goodwill. In addition, the Scouting program is a tremendous tool to outreach into the community and give people an opportunity to become a part of your organization.

4. **We cannot afford Scouting.**

The ninth point of the Scout Law states: A Scout is thrifty – he learns to pay his own way. We teach that Scouts and units should pay their own way. We provide the opportunities for troops to raise money for their use. The only cost to the chartered organizations is a charter fee of \$20.

5. **We don't have any space in our building for them to meet.**

I understand how you feel; others have also felt that way. We have found that many are able to identify classroom meeting areas as possible meeting places for the Scouting program. Additionally, several organizations have used the resources of their members or employees to provide meeting space for meetings. The other potential solution is that of a joint chartered organization to charter the Scouting program.

6. No one knows anything about the Scouting program.

Many of our very best leaders have started out knowing little or nothing about the Scouting program. Our council provides various training courses throughout the year, roundtables and self-study materials. Subjects include outdoor skills and other topics. We also provide volunteer support for leaders to help them provide a high-quality program.

7. We don't agree with several of the Boy Scout stands on membership.

We feel that as a private organization we have a right to establish our membership requirements. I thank you for your time, but I feel that there's nothing further we can do at this time to help you.

8. We cannot charter a Scouting program because we have no leaders.

The BSA has a process to help you choose leaders. The process involves listing the characteristics required for a leadership position and then identifying individuals who fit those characteristics.

9. We cannot charter a Scouting program because our youth are mostly from single-parent families.

One of the strengths of the Scouting program is its ability to include and serve a variety of family configurations. In fact, Scouting is particularly helpful to youth from single-parent families.

10. No one has time to be a leader.

It's important that you find the time; if you don't, there are people on the streets who will find the time to spend with your child, and they may not be the type or kind of people you want your child to be around. Scouting has a program that brings families together, consisting of family camping, religious awards, etc.

11. Liability is a major concern of our organization.

The general liability policy issued to the Boy Scouts of America provides primary liability insurance coverage for all chartered organizations and participating organizations for liability arising out of their chartering of a traditional Scouting unit. Your \$20 charter fee covers your organization with the liability insurance provided by the BSA.

NEW-UNIT ORGANIZATION PROCESS

1. **Identify the prospect.** District leaders identify a community organization prospect with the potential to operate a unit after researching the youth market and considering the most promising community organizations.
2. **Approach the prospect.** An influential Scouter or the district executive makes an appointment to meet with the head of the community organization or top leadership group in the organization after researching the organization and determining how Scouting can help meet its needs.
3. **Make the sales call.** The district executive and the unit organizer or other influential Scouter meet with the head or top leaders of the community organization to sell them on how Scouting can help meet the needs of the organization and to obtain the willingness of the organization's leaders to establish a unit.
4. **Organization adopts the program.** The organization formally adopts the Scouting program, confirms the appointment of a chartered organization representative, and appoints an organizing committee.
5. **Organizing committee meets.** The organizing committee and the new-unit organizer meet to plan the next steps for establishing the unit and complete the new-unit application. A commissioner is assigned by the district to assist the unit.
6. **Select and recruit key leaders.** Using BSA selection procedures, the organizing committee selects and recruits unit leaders and confirms unit committee members, and the community organization approves all unit adults.
7. **Train the leaders.** Unit leaders complete Fast Start training and are invited to the next basic training course and the next district roundtable.
8. **Plan and organize the program.** New unit leaders are trained in program planning and the first month's program is developed.
9. **Recruit youth members and orient parents.** Recruit youth members, hold an orientation meeting for parents and youth, and select/recruit additional adults as needed.
10. **Complete the paperwork.** Complete all adult and youth applications, collect necessary fees, and submit with new-unit application to the council service center.
11. **Conduct first unit meeting.** Unit leaders begin youth meetings with the coaching of their unit commissioner.
12. **Follow up.** The unit is installed with a presentation of the charter to the chartered organization.

Note: Do not delete any steps, although some steps may be accomplished at the same time without regard to suggested sequence.