

APRIL – Building the Budget

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BRYAN: Hey Scouters! I'm *Scouting* magazine blogger, Bryan Wendell, and welcome to the April ScoutCast. With me, as always, Lee Shaw, Team Lead of National Alliance. Hey, Lee.

LEE: Hello, Bryan. Okay, listeners, let's talk budgets. Sure, the best things in are free, but everything else costs money and practically every entity runs on a budget: the government, businesses, households.

BRYAN: And even your troop needs to budget all those fun activities and trips.

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BRYAN: So we got some help on that for you. We've got Charlie Garwood on the line. He's back for another discussion. You might remember his in-depth analysis about working with your Troop Committee back in September. That was a great episode. His past volunteer positions include, but of course are not limited to, Scoutmaster, Scouting Coordinator, and District and Council Commissioner. So, Charlie, after that long introduction, I want to welcome you back to ScoutCast.

CHARLIE: Hey, it's great to be back. Thank you for the invitation.

BRYAN: Okay. First, let's talk about program planning. When is the best time or the usual time for program planning?

CHARLIE: There really just is not a bad time for program planning or budgeting. The optimum time for programming is most likely immediately, within two weeks, say, upon the election and selection of your troop positions of responsibility. Usually there are two separate events. First is the Introduction to Leadership Skills for Troops, sometimes abbreviated ILST, and then followed by the annual Program Planning Meeting. The first event defines youth job responsibilities, a very important step that they understand what their responsibilities are. The second event outlines a Proposed Annual Troop Program Plan. And both events are youth-led by the Senior Patrol Leader with assistance from his Scoutmaster and involve all the other youth of a troop, like-minded adults including some invited parents are included in this event too. Selection of adults is important as youth leadership can be quickly overpowered.

In a well-run Scout Troop, an annual program calendar will likely be available from prior years and will serve as a starting point. If not, don't panic; just start one. I'd like to suggest that you can find a really good PowerPoint presentation about the Annual Troop Program Planning and Calendarization on [Scouting.org/ScoutSource](https://www.scouting.org/ScoutSource). Go to the Boy Scout tab, Program Planning Tools, and you'll find it there. It's a zipped file so you'll need to download the zipped file and then extract the contents. And on the same site you can find a sample troop budget and a two-page how-to instruction.

LEE: Boy, that's a lot of information right there, Charlie, and we appreciate the insight. Tell me this. Is budgeting done at the same time?

CHARLIE: It depends on how much advance planning is accomplished. Large trips activities require more planning than quote/unquote "the usual." You may

need to research difficult things like airfares, rental cars, special camping fees, camping sites, etc. The idea is to manage this quickly and do not allow it to drag along. So some of the information can be gathered after the calendar is planned but it's really best to have all of this information in hand once you plan the calendar. Also, be prepared to alter your plans so if you've got a diverse group here and everyone may not agree, particularly if the cost is too high.

BRYAN: Yeah, absolutely. Speaking of costs, I want to talk a little bit more about the budget. Now, when you see the government's budget it's like four inches thick when it's printed out but what goes into a Scout Troop's budget? Hopefully we're not talking about reams and reams of paper, but what all should be in there?

CHARLIE: Typically it'll be about a one-page activity.

BRYAN: That's much better. (Laughs)

CHARLIE: I like to describe a budget as a vision. Vision is often defined as what future success looks like. A budget then is a vision of what your Scout Troop – its Scouts, its leaders, committee, parents, and even the sponsoring organization – want to accomplish in the next cycle, whether that cycle be six months, 12 months, 18, etc. It's just a plan. It's a vision. If you close your eyes you can see exactly what it will look like, knowing that you want something to be successful.

The calendar is also a vision. It's a vision of activities, camp sites, summer camp, books, patches, etc. The budget is then a financial roadmap of how

to pay it all forward, therefore everything is included in the budget. Some basic expense items would include your registration fees, your unit accident and liability insurance, *Boys' Life*, advancements and recognitions, activities, summer camp, program materials, training expenses, full uniforms, maybe a little bit of reserve and other expenses such as World Friendship Funds, refreshments, charitable contribution, and even perhaps a tithe back to your sponsoring organization. Special expenses are bigger events and may include High Adventure costs such as Philmont, Sea Base, Northern Tier Summit, a Jamboree, either a National or a World Jamboree, and even specialty Merit Badge Trips. For example, I can see a vision where your troop would go to Washington, DC for Citizenship in the Nation Merit Badge,

LEE: As I listen to you and as our listeners are following along, in terms of the vision, I guess that is really the key component in terms of why we need to plan and how we go about building that budget, keeping that vision in mind as we go through that process. Is that accurate?

CHARLIE: That is very accurate, yes, it is.

BRYAN: So who is involved in the process? I know you said we want to involve the Scouts but are they busting out the calculators too or is the Treasurer handling that? Talk me through the who of this now that we know the what and the why.

CHARLIE: The current thinking is that you basically get everybody in the same room at the same time and that is your Patrol Leaders Council, which is led by the Senior Patrol Leader, your Troop Adult Leadership, your Troop

Committee, your Chartered Organization Rep, and if you think he can add value, your Unit Commissioner and anyone else that you may think can add to the process. Maybe a travel agent or some representative of a national or state park could even be joined in on a conference call.

BRYAN: Are you worried about there being too many cooks with all those people there how can we make sure that everybody's voice is heard without making this a five-hour session?

CHARLIE: In the beginning stages of ILST, your Patrol Leader Council would talk about to introduce them to the concept of program planning and get them to identify what they would like to do over the course of the next six, 12 or 18 months. Some of that may be a repeat. It's never wrong to repeat something that's fun, but a lot of it needs to be some creative programming ideas, and this is where particularly the Scout leaders come into play. Because oftentimes a young person just doesn't realize what the possibilities are until somebody helps them work through the process.

LEE: Well, now that you've answered the who and what and why, Charlie, I have a million-dollar question for you, (Bryan laughs) and that is where does the money come from?

CHARLIE: (Laughs) Oh, this is the fun part, guys. This is really fun. It can come from just about anywhere that's mutually agreed upon. It can come from popcorn sales, candy sales, donut sales, camp card, pancake suppers, pinto beans suppers, fish fries, barbecue, chicken sales, project sales, even yard sales. Some of it will certainly come from dues, some of it will come from monthly campout fees, and some of it is a Jamboree fee.

Now, I like to tell the story about particularly United Methodist Men. I served as the Conference Scouting Coordinator for the Western North Carolina Conference of United Methodist Church for seven years and the activities that did the very best were the ones that had some small child that had a special need. Maybe it's a health need or a clothing need, and the men's group would get behind it and they'd do fish fries, pinto bean suppers and pancake breakfasts, and they'd collect all this money and out of the warmth of their heart, just give it to the family. And they did a great job with that but, it really did not come to fruition unless they had a purpose or need, and it was that typically small child that gave them purpose.

And you know what? The same thing can happen in your Scout Troop. The more parents that you get involved, the bigger the project is, the more energy that has to go into it. This is a prime opportunity to recruit people to serve in a specific way to help meet that vision. Likewise, if we have a purpose, a vision, if you will, for your Scout Troop, and that purpose may be to raise money for a Scout trailer or go to Philmont or the Sea Base, and if people understand that and buy into it, now you have a reason for asking lots and lots of people to come in and help with these various events, and it builds camaraderie.

BRYAN: Yeah, and if you've outlined a vision that they can believe in then they're even more motivated to do it. That's great. I like that. Now, once the budget is created and you've got this document with the expenses and income through all those great fundraisers, who gets to see this document? Is it just posted up on the website for anybody to see or who is seeing the actual budget, Charlie?

CHARLIE: There's no reason not to post it for everybody to see. The goal is to

provide enough information so that all participants will have a well-defined program, a description of what, where, when, and even how much it costs, so that would be fine. I've often said that the best recruitment tool a unit has is an eight-and-a-half by eleven sheet of paper. And on that piece of paper you list all the activities that you are going to encounter for the next time period. Send it home, make a hard copy of it, give it to your Scouts, email it, snail-mail it. The ultimate objective is to have something that's posted on your refrigerator door so that everybody knows what, when, where, and on the back of it you can even print the budget and tell everyone how much it's going to cost and where we expect the money to come from.

LEE: I think with that kind of transparency you'll just really empower those individuals that are involved just to do a little bit more because they can, not only see the vision but they can see the practicality of exactly what's going on, so that's outstanding. You had mentioned earlier a particular place in which you could find out exactly how to build budgets and templates of the Program Planning Process. Can you share with the audience once again where that information can be located?

CHARLIE: It's on [Scouting.org/ScoutSource](https://www.scouting.org/ScoutSource). That's one word, slash BoyScouts. That's all one word. And then Program Planning Tools.

LEE: Okay, all right. I appreciate that. I'm sure all our listeners do as well.

BRYAN: Yeah, I was writing that down: [Scouting.org/ScoutSource/BoyScouts](https://www.scouting.org/ScoutSource/BoyScouts), is that right?

CHARLIE: And then – yes. Program Planning Tools.

BRYAN: Perfect, okay, that's great. Now, before we let you go here, Charlie, is there anything else about the program plan or budgeting or building a perfect troop budget that you wanted to share with our listeners?

CHARLIE: Yeah, there's a couple of things that I want to share. Number one, programs and budgets are as unique as the individuals and the troops that prepare them. There is really no such thing as Scout standard, so don't think that you're trying to come up with some minimum level of performance. However, as per the Scout Law, a Scout is thrifty. A Scout works to pay his own way and to help others. He saves for the future. He protects and conserves natural resources. He is careful in his use of time, money and resources, a most important process in this endeavor. We just cannot emphasize the concept of thriftiness near enough, and this is an excellent way to make that happen.

The other thing that I want to emphasize is that I mentioned the concept of charitable giving. Sometimes we would call that tithing if we have a religious sponsor, but it basically boils down to helping somebody else who has a need. Each budget, therefore, should have some money to be shared with others in some way, some form, no matter what we call it. It's just the right thing to do and a real proper example for Scouts to see in action.

BRYAN: That's just terrific. We really appreciate you enlightening us about this and letting us know that a budget isn't about having restrictions, it's not about following some sort of template. It's about having that vision, it's about

being prepared and that's our motto, right, Be Prepared. So, Charlie, thank you so much for coming back on ScoutCast with us. It's really been a pleasure.

CHARLIE: My joy. Thank you very much.

LEE Stayed tuned for our new segment, Safety Moment, then we'll be back with Reminder and Tips.

(SAFETY MOMENT – [RISK ASSESSMENT](#))

LEE: And now, Reminders and Tips. April is Youth Protection Month and the Boy Scouts of America takes that very seriously. Now would be a good time to review all the materials and resources for our Youth Protection Website. Just go to Scouting.org/training/youthprotection.

BRYAN: This is also a good time to have a family meeting to watch the DVD called *A Time to Tell*. Now, it's specifically designed for boys ages nine to 14 to help give them a heads-up on ways they can keep themselves protected. That's important. *Personal Safety Awareness* is the DVD designed for the older Scouts and Venturers in your troop or crew. You should also go to my.Scouting.org and be sure your Youth Protection Training is up-to-date.

LEE: Now, Bryan, what would Reminders and Tips be without a plug for *Scouting* magazine?

BRYAN: That's one of my favorite parts. (Laughs)

LEE: Mine too. So the March/April issue has some really great methods for supporting and uplifting Scouts with special needs. After all, there's a place in Scouting for everyone, including young people with physical and mental challenges.

BRYAN: On a lighter note, professional fisherman Tom Reddington shares his best fishing tips in this month's *Boys' Life* magazine, so find the April issue before you head down unto the water. And then follow along as we join some Scouts who go offshore fishing in Southern California. Wish I was on that trip. (Laughs)

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BRYAN: That's it for April ScoutCast. A special thanks to our guest, Charlie Garwood, for joining us.

LEE: So, was that discussion useful? Let us know by sending an email to ScoutCast@Scouting.org, or tweet @bsaScoutcast. With that, I'm Lee Shaw.

BRYAN: And I'm Bryan Wendell. Thanks for listening and we'll see you next month.

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