Family Program Questions and Answers

DECISION AND RATIONALE

Q. What decision did the BSA make regarding girls' involvement in the organization?

The Boy Scouts of America's Board of Directors unanimously approved to welcome girls into its iconic Cub Scout program and to deliver a Scouting program for older girls that will enable them to advance and earn the highest rank of Eagle Scout.

It is important to note that the BSA did not decide to make the Cub Scouting and Boy Scouting programs co-ed; instead, the organization has introduced a unique model that builds on the benefits of a single-gender program while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.

Starting in 2018 (exact start date yet to be confirmed), families can choose to sign up their sons and daughters for Cub Scouts. Chartered partner organizations may choose to establish a new girl pack, establish a pack that consists of girl dens and boy dens or remain an all-boy pack. Cub Scout dens will be single gender — all boys or all girls.

Using the same curriculum as the Boy Scouts program, the organization will also deliver a new program for older girls, which will be announced in 2018 and projected to be available in 2019 (with a more specific start date to be determined soon), that will enable them to earn the Eagle Scout rank. This unique approach allows the organization to maintain the integrity of the single-gender model while also meeting the needs of today's families.

Q. What do we know about the changing needs of today's families?

The BSA is not only listening to our Scouting families, but also to those that haven't joined the program. We understand that families today are busier and more diverse than ever.

- Most are dual-earners.
- There are more single-parent households than in previous decades.
- Many underserved communities, including fastest-growing Hispanic and Asian communities, prefer to participate in activities as a family.
- And, all families have less free time. More than one-third of parents feel they spend too little free time with their kids, and millennial parents are desperate to spend more time interacting with their kids.

Q. Is this change a result of the BSA's declining membership numbers?

No. The BSA has experienced renewed interest in Scouting, and we believe that is largely in response to program innovation and a more thorough understanding of what families want and need when it comes to extracurricular activities. In fact, recent surveys of parents not involved with Scouting showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for programs like Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, with 90 percent expressing interest in a program like Cub Scouts and 87 percent expressing interest in a program like Boy Scouts.

Following an evaluation of what families and young people want and need when it comes to extracurricular activities and Scouting, the BSA welcomes girls into expanded programs from Cub Scouts to the highest rank of Eagle Scout.

Q. Is this change a departure from the BSA's core mission and values?

No. In fact, this aligns with our mission and values. After all, the values of Scouting as detailed in the 12 points of the Scout Law – trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent – are relevant and important for both young men and women.

Our mission is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. To achieve our mission, we create innovative programs and evolve existing ones that respond to the needs of today's families and deliver them through dedicated volunteers in communities across the nation.

Q. What research did the BSA conduct that informed this decision?

To inform this decision, the Boy Scouts of America conducted extensive research. The BSA also evaluated input from thousands of volunteers who participated in the nationwide family listening sessions.

The results were overwhelmingly positive and supported the decision to welcome girls into Cub Scouts and provide a path to earn the Eagle Scout rank. The research found that parents not involved with Scouting showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for programs like Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, with 90 percent expressing interest in a program like Cub Scouts and 87 percent expressing interest in a program like Boy Scouts.

The BSA also surveyed young girls and found that 90 percent of girls age 11-18 are interested in joining the BSA's programs.

Education experts also evaluated the curriculum and content and confirmed the relevance of the program for young women.

Q. Are BSA programs relevant for girls?

Yes. On average, more than 90 percent of Scouting families and leaders believe the BSA programs are relevant to both boys and girls. What's more, education experts also evaluated the curriculum and content and confirmed the relevance of the program for young women.

Q. Why didn't the BSA partner with the Girl Scouts or another organization to serve girls?

The BSA had several conversations with other youth-serving organizations, but found through extensive research and conversations with parents that there is a need and an interest to welcome girls to our existing programs. We celebrate all youth-serving organizations that build character and feel the most important thing is to allow parents the ability to choose the program that is best for their family.

What's more, the BSA has been providing programs to girls since 1971 when we extended our Exploring program to young women. Girls also participate in our Venturing, Sea Scouts and STEM Scouts programs.

Q. How are the BSA programs different from what girls would experience with Girl Scouts?

BSA programs provide character- and leadership-building experiences that give young people a solid foundation for their futures. We celebrate all youth-serving organizations that build character and feel the most important thing is to allow parents the ability to choose what program is best for their family.

Q. Why are you just now allowing girls into the Boy Scouts?

The BSA's decision to welcome girls into the Cub Scout program and to offer a program for older girls comes from input we have received from our Scouting families, as well as prospective Scouting families. We understand that families today are busier and more diverse than ever. The BSA believes we owe it to families to structure our program offerings in a way that fits into their busy lives to deliver character development and values-based leadership training that Scouting promises.

It is important to underscore that the BSA has provided programming to young women and young men for many years through Sea Scouts, STEM Scouts, Exploring and Venturing.

STEM Scouts: 45% of participants are girls/young women, 55% are boys/young men

Exploring: 39% of participants are girls/young women, 61% are boys/young men

Venturing: 23% of participants are girls/young women, 77% are boys/young men

Sea Scouts: 40% of participants are girls/young women, 60% are boys/young men

Q. Why is the BSA recommending single-gender units instead of a co-ed model?

The leadership of the BSA determined that the best way to welcome girls to serve today's families was to offer a unique model that builds on the proven benefits of our single-gender program, while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

Q. What are you hearing from BSA leaders around the country about this announcement?

The decision was informed by members of the BSA at all levels of the organization and from all parts of the country, so we are seeing support for the decision reflect that input. This is an exciting time for the BSA. We value the partnership with BSA leaders across the country as we continue to innovate and evolve our proven programs to meet the needs of today's families and provide the types of experiences that parents and their children want most.

Q. Do you think current youth members or adult volunteers will withdraw?

The decision to welcome girls into expanded programs from Cub Scouts to Eagle Scout rank presents several opportunities for families to get their youth involved in a program that has been proven to deliver character and leadership traits that parents say they desire for their children. A Tufts University study found that youth who participate in Scouting for even a short period of time exhibit strong moral values and positive character attributes, allowing them to embrace new opportunities, overcome obstacles and become better prepared for future success.

This programming is in response to what we've heard from our Scouting families in addition to those who are not involved in the BSA. A majority of parents surveyed said they are interested in having their daughters involved in a program like the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. What's more, many of our current families, Scouts, donors, volunteers and professional staff are in support of this decision. We are confident that this change will meet the needs of today's families.

Q. How do you know parents will sign their daughters up for Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts?

The BSA originally began discussions about young girls in Scouting based on numerous requests from families. We recognized a need and worked to understand how we could meet it.

In addition to conversations with parents, recent surveys of parents not involved with Scouting showed high interest in getting their daughters signed up for programs like Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts, with 90 percent expressing interest in a program like Cub Scouts and 87 percent expressing interest in a program like Boy Scouts.

We made this change so we could bring the benefits of Scouting to the greatest number of youth possible, all while staying true to our mission and core values outlined in the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

Q. What are the Girl Scouts saying about this expanded program for girls?

The BSA had several conversations with other youth-serving organizations, but found through extensive research and conversations with parents that there is a need and an interest to welcome girls to our existing programs. We celebrate all youth-serving organizations that build character and feel the most important thing is to allow parents the ability to choose what program is best for their family.

What's more, the BSA has been providing programs to girls since 1971 when we extended our Exploring program to young women. Girls also participate in our Venturing, Sea Scouts and STEM Scouts.

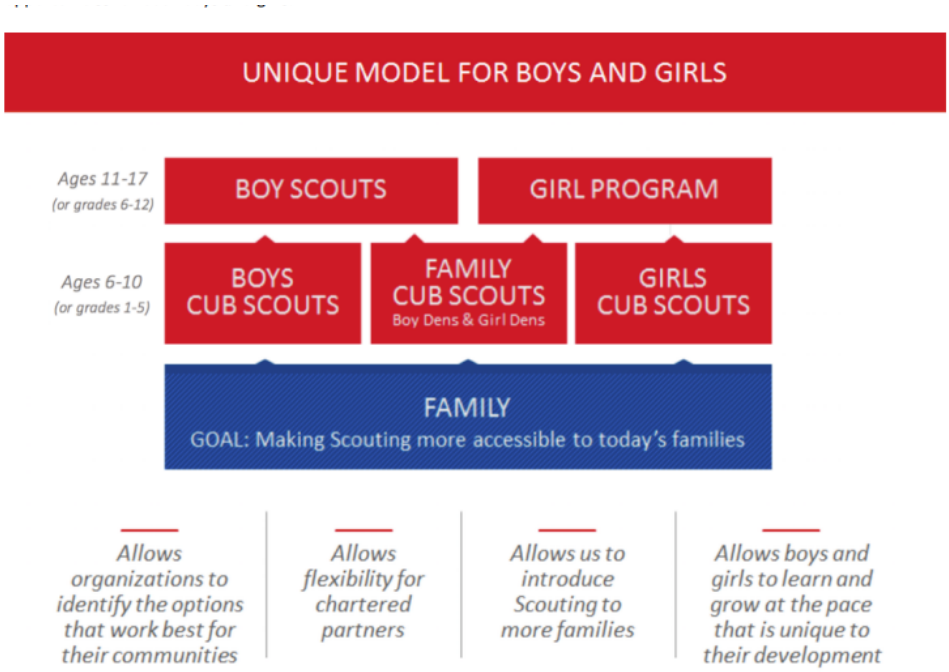
OPERATIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION

Q. Is this for all levels of Scouting?

Starting in 2018 (exact start date yet to be confirmed), families can choose to sign up their sons and daughters for Cub Scouts. Existing packs may choose to establish a new girl pack, establish a pack that consists of girl dens and boy dens or remain an all-boy pack. Cub Scout dens will be single gender — all boys or all girls. Using the same curriculum as the Boy Scouts program, the organization will also deliver a program for older girls, which will be announced in 2018 and projected to be available in 2019 (with a more specific start date to be determined soon), that will enable them to earn the Eagle Scout rank. This unique approach allows the organization to maintain the integrity of the single-gender model while also meeting the needs of today's families.

Q. How will the BSA respond to parents who don't want coeducational programs?

It is important to note that BSA did not decide to make the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts programs co-ed; instead, the organization has introduced a unique model that builds on the benefits of a single-gender program while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.



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Q. How soon can we integrate girls into packs? Can we have a "soft" roll out?

The implementation team has not yet finalized an official start date. Scout executives will receive notification as soon as timing is confirmed by the BSA National Executive Committee. Until then, it is recommended that all units that receive interest in the program from their community develop a list with contact information so that they can reach out to those interested when the details are finalized.

Q. At what age can girls join Scouting?

In 2018, families can choose Cub Scouts for their sons and daughters, starting at age six. A chartered partner may also decide to invite Kindergarten-age girls to a den participating in the Lion program.

Q. Will you change the organization's name?

The Boy Scouts of America, in name and as an organization, has stood for character development and values-based leadership training for more than 107 years. It is, unequivocally, one of the most recognized, respected and valuable brands on the planet. Therefore, while we have expanded the reach of our programs among today's youth and their families, our name remains the same, and our brand will continue to be a source of pride that we will protect and foster as we look to extend the reach of our promise to more families.

Q. In what cities/states will this program be available?

BSA's programs are offered to youth nationwide.

Q. Will girls be able to earn the same merit badges?

Yes. Since merit badges are currently earned in the Boy Scout program, girls will be able to earn merit badges through the Scouting program for older girls that will be announced in 2018 and is projected to be implemented in 2019, with a more specific start date to be determined soon.

Q. Do chartered organizations have a choice whether or not to adopt the expanded program?

Yes. Chartered organizations always have the option to select from the numerous BSA program offerings. They can select all or one of the BSA programs that they feel best meet the needs of their members and the communities around them.

Q. Will there be new curriculum for girl participants? Will you change the program to accommodate girls?

No. Our existing programs are relevant for young men and women. After all, the values of Scouting as outlined in the Scout Law – trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean and reverent – are relevant and important values for both young men and women.

Q. Will girls have to meet the same requirement to achieve Eagle Scout?

Yes. Our goal is for young women to aspire to and achieve the Eagle Scout rank by meeting the same criteria and achievements as young men.

Q. How will packs and dens be structured? Can a chartered organization choose not to include girls?

An existing chartering organization may choose to serve girls or remain an all-boy pack. When creating a new pack, a chartered organization may form an all-boy pack, an all-girl pack, multiple packs or a pack of girl dens and boy dens.

Cub Scout dens will be single gender — all boys or all girls. Cub Scout packs, meanwhile, can include any combination of all-boy or all-girl dens. The choice is left to individual leaders in consultation with their chartered organization.

This hybrid model builds on the benefit of a single-gender program while also providing character and leadership opportunities for both boys and girls.

Q. If I have a question about how to incorporate girls into the pack, who should I talk to?

In an overwhelming number of existing packs across the country, girls have already informally been participating in activities, including pack meetings and family camping, so the BSA doesn't foresee major issues in welcoming girls officially to packs. Because the program itself is not changing, your unit commissioner would be the most knowledgeable person to talk to about the Scouting program. Your district executive is also a resource.

Q. What updates to youth protection will be implemented to ensure the safety of boys and girls?

Youth protection and safety is paramount in all of the BSA's programs. We invest resources and time to continuously strengthen our youth protection program.

At the Cub Scout level, the program is already designed for the family, and we've had sisters of Cub Scouts participating in activities for many years – that was one of the reasons we were moved to consider this decision.

Young women have been part of Venturing for two decades, and the current youth protection requirements already apply to both male and female participants. Two-deep leadership is required at all meetings, events and outings. This is a minimum requirement and additional supervision may be necessary, depending on the nature of the activities and the size of the group. As we deliver this additional program for older girls, we will be evaluating any changes needed to ensure the safety of all youth.

Q. What about camping with girls?

Since camping in the Cub Scout program includes the entire family, the Cub Scout outdoor family camping guidelines are still in place regardless of a pack's composition.

Camping guidelines for older girl participants will be confirmed when the organization announces the Scouting program for older girls in 2018, for implementation in 2019.

As a point of reference, young women have been part of Venturing for two decades, and the current youth protection requirements already apply to both male and female participants. Two-deep leadership is required at all meetings, events and outings. This is a minimum requirement and additional supervision may be necessary, depending on the nature of the activities and the size of the group. As always, the BSA continues to evaluate and improve our youth protection training across all programs.

In Venturing, when an activity includes both boys and girls, at least one adult male and one adult female must be present at the activity, one of whom must be registered as an adult member of the BSA.

Q. Will girls be allowed into the Order of the Arrow?

Youth members that join the Scouting program for older girls (11 to 18) will be eligible to join a Scouting honor society. Details about a Scouting honor society for girls will be shared when plans for an older girl program are announced in 2018 for implementation in 2019.

Q. May an adult male lead an all-girl unit?

Yes, an adult male can lead an all-girl unit, just as we already have adult females leading all boy programs. Youth protection requirements still apply to both male and female participants. Two-deep leadership is required at all meetings, events and outings. This is a minimum requirement and additional supervision may be necessary, depending on the nature of the activities and the size of the group.

Q. Should dens for girls and dens for boys meet at the same time and place?

It is up to the pack or the den to decide meeting times and places.

Q. Can separate boy and girl dens work on the same activity at the same time together?

There is no set rule or guideline on this. If appropriate, this can be treated the same as two dens of the same gender working together. It will be up to the good judgement of leaders to decide what is best for their units.

Q. Will we have different uniforms for boys and girls?

All uniforms continue to be reviewed and adjusted to meet participant needs. While the fit and styling may be a bit different, the uniforms will remain fundamentally the same.

Q. Will the basic training courses be modified to include some specifics on working with girls and addressing their specific developmental needs?

Yes, we will evaluate our training and update materials as needed.

Q. What facility changes will need to happen at our camps?

The Boy Scouts of America has been serving young women for decades. Councils will evaluate their program facilities and make any needed changes.

Q. Will current Venturers get credit for their crew leadership roles if the girls join a troop and need leadership experience for advancement?

Advancement guidelines for older girl participants will be confirmed when the organization announces the Scouting program for older girls in 2018.

Q. Will the expansion be rolled out like a pilot, or implemented all at one time?

The Boy Scouts of America's Board of Directors unanimously approved to welcome girls into its iconic Cub Scout program and to deliver a Scouting program for older girls that will enable them to advance and earn the highest rank of Eagle Scout. This will not be handled as a pilot.

Q. How do units respond to girls who want to join BSA programs immediately?

We are excited to welcome girls who are interested in joining the Cub Scouting program in 2018. The implementation team has not yet finalized an official start date. Scout executives will receive notification as soon as timing is confirmed by the Executive Committee. Until then, it is recommended that all units that receive interest in the program from their community develop a list with contact information so they can reach out to those interested when the details are finalized.

Q. Have major chartered partners met and weighed in on this change?

Chartered partners were consulted throughout the research and evaluation process. Since the decision we have received supportive feedback from a number of our partners.

Q. What is being done to help us with diversity?

Diversity continues to be important to the Boy Scouts of America. We are dedicated to creating an environment that welcomes diversity and inclusion at all levels of the organization in order to best meet the needs of today's youth, families, and communities. Our focus goes beyond ethnicity to include gender and generational diversity, which we believe add to the richness of the BSA through the exchange of ideas from people with various backgrounds and experiences.

Q. Will girls who enter in 2018 as Arrow of Light have a troop ready to accept them at crossover time in 2019?

Yes, we expect that the Scouting program for older girls will be ready to accept participants in 2019. A specific start date has yet to be confirmed.