

Planning Your “Ideal Year of Scouting” Program Budget

A Cub Scout Pack’s Annual Budget Plan

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 implementing the plan with the entire pack, Cub Scouts, leaders, and families, by raising enough dollars to fund the “Ideal Year of Scouting.” The result is a well-managed, well-financed unit.

The steps to an “Ideal Year of Scouting” are:

1. Plan the pack’s complete annual program.
2. Develop a budget that includes enough income to achieve the program.
3. Identify all sources of income (den dues and any traditional pack activities), and then determine the amount of product sale and the sales goal per youth member that will be needed to reach the income goal.
4. Gain commitments from parents, leaders, and all Cub Scouts.

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 might not be for you! Those leaders who want a meaningful, exciting, and comprehensive youth program that achieves the objectives of Scouting will find this format the ideal way to go.

BASIC EXPENSES

1] Registration Fees. 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:

1 month 85¢; 2 months \$1.70; 3 months \$2.55; 4 months \$3.40; 5 months \$4.25; 6 months \$5.10; 7 months \$5.95; 8 months \$6.80; 9 months \$7.65; 10 months \$8.50; 11 months \$9.35; 12 months \$10.

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.

2] Unit Charter Fee. Units are required to pay an annual charter fee of \$20. This fee is submitted with the pack’s annual charter application and helps to defray the expenses for their general liability insurance.

3] Boys’ Life. *Boys’ Life* magazine, the official publication of the Boy Scouts of America, is available to all members at \$12, 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 Insurance. Protecting leaders 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 insurance programs are available from the local council.

5] Advancement and Recognition. Every Cub Scout should earn and advance a rank and receive the patch for that rank each year. Active Webelos Scouts will earn multiple activity badges in addition to their rank advancements. The Cub Scout advancement program has many elements that include Arrow Points, immediate recognition patches, outdoor awards, and Academics and Sports belt loops and pins.

6] Activities. Critical to the successful “Ideal Year of Scouting” is a complete program. Traditionally, such activities as Cub Scout pinewood derbies, field trips, and district or council activities 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.

7] Cub Scout Day Camp, Cub Scout Resident Camp, Family Camp. Central to a complete Scouting year are summer camping experiences. Local council opportunities abound for Cub Scouts and their families to have exciting, program-rich summer experiences.

8] Program Materials. Each pack needs to provide certain program materials. Depending on the type of unit program, these could include den meeting supplies, Den Meeting in a Box kits, craft tools and supplies, U.S. flag, pack and den flags, 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.)

9] Training Expenses. Trained leaders are key to delivering a quality and safe program. Adult and youth leader training should be considered an integral annual pack expense.

* The same rate applies for registered adult Scouters.

10] Full Uniforms. Traditionally, the individual pays for the uniform. We suggest that these expenses 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!

11] Reserve Fund. The reserve fund might be established by a gift or loan from the chartered organization, by 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.

12] Other Expenses. These could include a gift to the World Friendship Fund, meeting refreshments, and/or 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, it is better to figure the total cost for the complete year up front. Ideally, all income would come from den dues and one fund-raising program at the beginning of the program year each fall. A spring fund-raiser could be included, but with the proceeds dedicated to each youth member’s individual camping account.

Some Important Points:

Paying your own way. This is a fundamental principle of the Boy Scouts of America. It is one of the reasons why no solicitations (requests for contributions from individuals or the community) are permitted by Cub Scout packs. 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 finance plan of any pack should include participation by a Cub Scout in a regular dues plan.

An annual pack participation fee, too often completely contributed by parents, does little to teach a boy responsibility. The unit’s entire budget must be provided for by the families through either fundraising or other means such as dues or fees.

Individual youth accounts. Packs using this method have traditionally had stronger programs with less turnover of youth (Cub Scouts are retained). Individual Cub Scout accounts, whereby the pack keeps track of how much a Cub Scout or his family has raised toward his “Ideal Year of Scouting” goal, are critical to the success of this program. When individual Cub Scouts are credited for their efforts, they develop a sense of personal responsibility and participation.

Except for council-sponsored product sales, all other money-earning projects require the submission of the Unit Money-Earning Application, No. 34427A, to the local council. To ensure conformity with all Scouting standards on money earning, 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 the *Pack Record Book*, No. 33819, and the *Cub Scout Leader Book*, No. 33221. It is recommended that Cub Scout packs use one of the commercial software programs developed for Scouting units. These tools are great for keeping track of individual youth accounts. They are usually advertised in the back of *Scouting* magazine.

“Ideal Year of Scouting” Budget Worksheet

To develop the pack budget, complete the worksheet with the unit leader and committee at the pack’s annual program planning conference, and then share it with the Cub Scouts’ parents. Be sure to keep parents involved and informed. The pack’s program calendar and budget information needs to be communicated regularly to families, especially at the start of the program year. By sharing the pack’s program plans and budgetary needs, you can help newly recruited Cub Scouts and their parents gain a greater understanding of just what fun is waiting for them during the pack’s entire program year.



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13-273
2007 Printing