

IDEAL YEAR OF *Cub Scouts*

2026 - 2027 Pack Planning Guidebook

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Every great project starts with a **GREAT PLAN**. The same goes for Scouting. By following our proven Ideal Year of Scouting plan, you can expect to see:

- A stronger program for your Cubs at less personal cost to you
- Greater family involvement
- More Cubs camping and outdoor experiences
- Improved retention
- More pack funds with less time spent fundraising
- A simpler, easier and more enjoyable Scouting program!



Scouting  **America**[™]
National Capital Area Council



PROGRAM PLANNING

PLANNING & BUDGET

The first step on the Ideal Year of Scouting path helps you develop an annual program plan, a budget to go along with that plan, and a fundraising plan to reach your program goals. The result is a well-managed, well-financed Scouting pack that spends time Scouting and not raising money.

START HERE



DEVELOPING YOUR PROGRAM:

Brainstorm: Hold a brainstorming session with youth and make a list of activities. Include a wide range of activities like field trips and service-projects. We recommend that all registered leaders and engaged families attend a planning session in late Spring to create the list.

Evaluate: The unit committee evaluates each suggestion and goes back to the unit with an “approved” list.

Vote: From that “approved” list, have youth vote on their first, second, and third choices. The activities receiving the most votes should be put into your program plan.

Finalize: Put the program plan to paper and into your unit calendar. Be sure to be transparent and share your plan with all families in the pack.

FUNDING YOUR PROGRAM:

You have a great program plan in place but now how are you going to pay for it? Get started [download the Pack Budget Planner](#) at:



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or_Packs.xlsx

4 STEPS FOR A FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN

1. Establish an annual plan and budget using the Pack Budget Planner.
2. Determine the expenses from all activities, advancements, camping and training your pack wants to do per Scout, then decide how much popcorn and camp cards your pack must sell to cover those expenses.
3. Set a pack fundraising sales goal and break down to a per-Scout- goal based on your budget.
4. Hold exciting camp cards and popcorn kickoffs. The Scouting America National Capital Area Council Camp Card Program will take place February- late April, and the Popcorn starts early August – late November. Communicate sales goals and share prize program details. Offer additional incentives for Scouts to sell.

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PAY YOUR WAY

ANNUAL PRODUCT SALES

Hard work is a value that Scouting teaches and selling popcorn and Camp Cards are great opportunities for Scouts to learn the importance of earning their own way.

POPCORN SALE

Selling popcorn helps pay for Scouting expenses like going to Day Camp. But it's not just about selling, it's also about promoting Scouting and teaching valuable skills! We're excited to partner with Trail's End Popcorn to deliver an unbeatable sale opportunity for our Scouts, where the average Scout sells is \$650.

From the Trail's End app you can manage every transaction digitally to a robust Rewards program. We have the resources to make your sale better than ever!

THE TRAIL'S END APP

Save time managing your popcorn sale with the Trail's End app.

- Report real-time storefront and Online sales
- Track inventory by Scout
- Cash and credit card friendly

Get the latest popcorn resources, including sales guides and best practices at: <https://ncacscouting.org/popcorn/>

CAMP CARDS

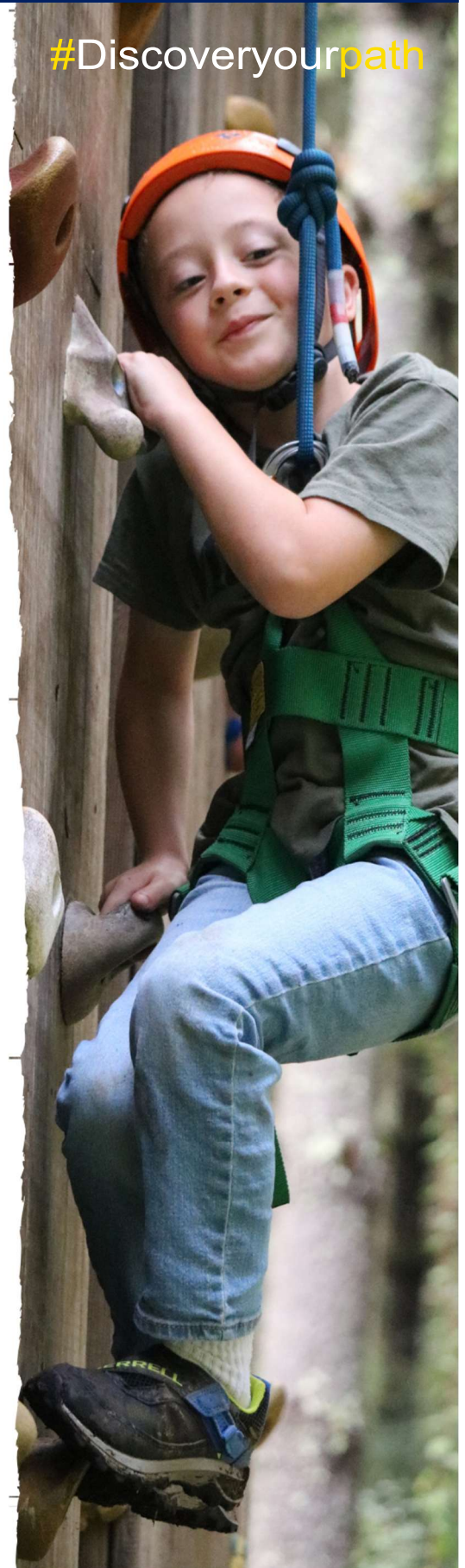
Fund your Scouting adventures and beyond with our Camp Card fundraiser. Our new and improved Camp Card fundraiser is a great way to quickly and easily offset Scouting costs like paying for camp and yearly membership dues.

<https://ncacscouting.org/activities/camp-cards/>

A Camp Card costs only \$10. Scouts/units have an opportunity to earn 50% Commission through consignment or 70% Commission through the pre-purchase option! Selling Camp Cards is easy and Scouts earn commission from every card they sell! **Get the latest Camp Card resources, including leaders guide and calendar at:**

<https://ncacscouting.org/activities/camp-cards/>

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MEMBERSHIP

GROW CUB SCOUTING

The next step on your path to the Ideal Year of Scouting is recruitment. Recruiting new families is essential to ensure the longevity of any Cub Scout Pack.

All packs should strive for an increase in Cub Scout membership annually should follow the Council plan located at:

[2026 NCAC Membership Plan Executive Summary](#)

<https://ncacscouting.org/resources/>

RETENTION BEST PRACTICES

While recruiting new youth is essential, it is just as critical to retain current Scouts. The Scouting program transforms lives and the longer a Scout is in the program, the more impact it will have on their life. Most high performing packs renew +80% of eligible families each year.

Use the following tips to strengthen your retention efforts.

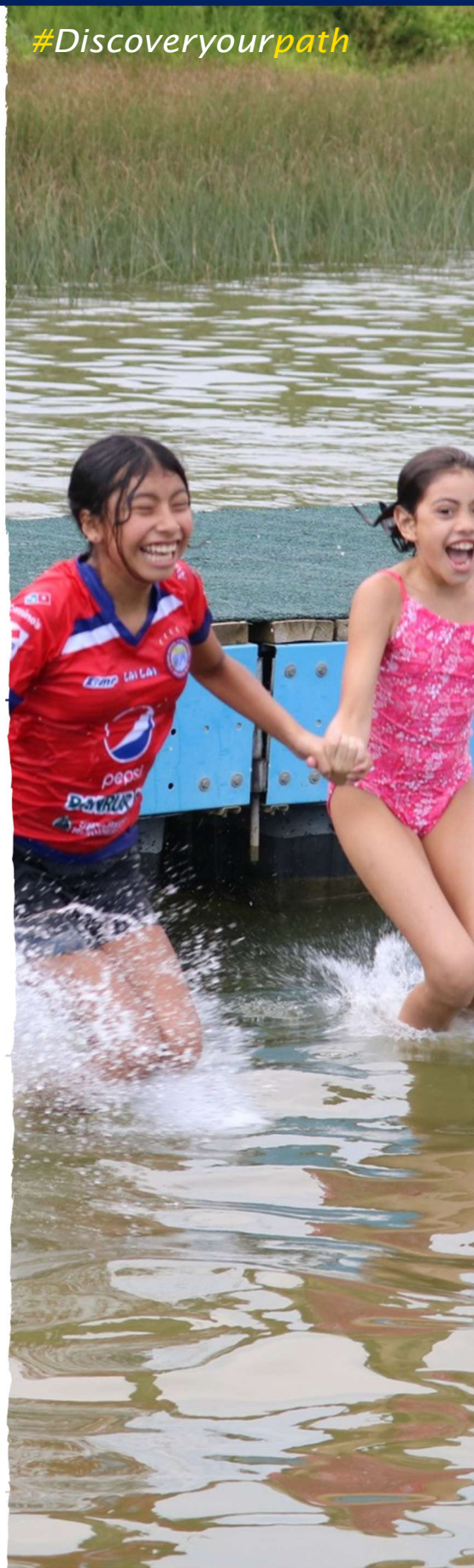
- Attend a Scouting America National Capital Area Council Day Camp. Studies show Scouts that attend camp are more likely to stay involved in the program.
- Every new Scout should advance in rank, earning at least Bobcat within their first 30 days of joining.
- Adult leadership in your pack should build an active relationship with the family of each Scout. Have conversations on a regular basis to discuss a Cub's Scouting journey.
- Host a Back to Pack: The "Back to the Pack" concept is an effort to get all returning Cub Scouts and their parents reengaged before member renewal and recruitment begins, filling both dens and leadership vacancies.

WEBELOS TO SCOUT TRANSITION

The Scouting journey doesn't end for a Scout after earning their Arrow of Light; it's just beginning! It should be the goal of every pack to graduate every Webelos Scout into a Troop. Here are four tips to help this goal become a reality.

1. Develop a working relationship with the leadership of a Scout troop or troops in the community.
2. Work with troop leaders to secure den chiefs for each Webelos den and Cub Scout den so they can serve all of next academic year.
3. Work with troop leaders to plan and conduct Webelos overnight activities.
4. Work with troop leaders to plan visits to troop meetings.

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PROGRAM

CUB SCOUT PROGRAMMING

Program is everything from the outdoors to advancement. Exciting programs are why youth join and stay in Scouting! It's our job as leaders to make sure there's adventure at every turn of their Scouting journey.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Cub Scout Packs should aim to hold five outdoor activities a year. Some examples can include rockets or even your own Pinewood Derby. Be creative with your outdoor activities.

ADVANCEMENT

Recognition is important to Cub Scouts! The Cub Scout advancement plan provides fun for Scouts, gives them a sense of personal achievement as they earn badges, and strengthens family understanding as adult family members work with Scouts on advancement projects. Advancement also keeps Cubs in Scouting longer. Make sure every new Scout earns Bobcat within their first 30 days of joining.

CAMPING

Camping is an integral part of the Cub Scout program. Whether it's a weekend overnight or a week-long Day Camp, Cub Scouts who go camping stay in Scouting longer. Packs should encourage all their Scouts to participate in Day Camp and/or Cub Scout Resident Camp each summer.

DAY CAMPS

Cub Scout Day Camp and Resident Camp is a summer program for Cub Scouts and their families to enjoy themselves together as they explore a range of activities in Scouting and enjoy the outdoors! Either at Camp William B. Snyder or at a local District Day Camp, you should get ready for lots of fun. Food and programs are provided at Camp William B. Snyder, families only need to bring their clothes and tent. Cubs may attend with a parent/guardian, their whole family, as a den, or with the whole pack!

Day Camp is the introduction to summer camp. Cub Scouts from rising Tigers to rising Arrow of Light Scouts (AOLs) can attend Day Camp. It's especially good for rising Tigers and rising Wolves – the first and second year campers. Cub Scouts attend with their Den Walkers during the day and return home for the evening after participating in a host of fun activities.

- Day Camps are offered at locations throughout the Council with a variety of weeks to choose from.
- Camp William B. Snyder's Day Camp utilizes the facilities and staff at the 350-acre camp located in Haymarket, VA, Prince William County, with a waterslide pool, air-conditioned dining hall, and outdoor program areas for fishing and boating.

Bear Camp at Camp William B. Snyder is a 4-day, 3-night overnight experience especially for rising Bears focused on fun and Adventures for the Bear rank.

<https://www.gotosnyder.org/summer-camp/day-camp/>

RESIDENT OVERNIGHT CAMPING

- Camp William B. Snyder offers Resident Weekends for rising Tigers to rising AOLs. Resident Weekends is the next step for those who are ready for an overnight experience. Camp details, including dates, location, and fees can be found at:

<https://www.gotosnyder.org/summer-camp/resident-weekends/>

- Camp Ross at Goshen Scout Reservation provides a week-long camp just for rising Webelos and rising Arrow of Light Scouts. With lots of fun activities – including swimming, boating, fishing, archery, BB shooting, hiking, crafting, and outdoor skills – an amazing opportunity for your den to learn, grow, and get ready for an awesome upcoming year of adventure in their new rank as well as prepare them for the next step of the program – Scouts BSA. Camp details, including dates, location, and fees can be found at: <https://www.gotogoshen.org/camps-programs/camp-ross/>

LEADERSHIP

Ensuring adequate volunteer support is an important step in the Ideal Year of Scouting.

Scouting relies on its dedicated volunteers to promote its mission of preparing young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetime by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

TRAINED LEADERSHIP

Every Scout deserves a trained leader. A trained leader is knowledgeable and more confident in the role being performed. Trained leaders exhibit knowledge and confidence that is picked up by people around them.

Trained leaders impact the quality of programs, leader tenure, youth tenure, safety, and a whole lot more. A trained leader is better prepared to make the Scouting program all it can be!

Position Trained Requirements can be found at:

<https://www.scouting.org/training/position-trained-requirements/>

LEADERSHIP RECRUITMENT

Your pack could always use more volunteer help, right? But before you recruit a new leader, it's important to know what you need. Use the Pack Succession Planning Worksheet to find out what volunteer positions are vacant. You should also plan your succession strategy to make sure you identify future leaders now instead of later.

New recruits will also want to know their responsibilities and your expectations for them. Ask your pack families what volunteer positions they would like to fill. Use the New Parent Survey to help identify potential volunteers. Download New-Parent Survey at:

<https://ncacscouting.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/Cub-Scout-Family-Talent-Survey-NCAC-2025-pdf-1.pdf>



PACK & DEN MEETINGS

IMPORTANCE OF MEETINGS

Cub Scouts meet weekly, and Den Meetings are like stepping-stones: each week a Cub progresses a little further toward the next rank, learning skills as they go.

Monthly pack meetings are like milestones that mark achievements along the Cub Scout trail and celebrate accomplishments along the way.

Boring or unorganized meetings are the number one reason Cub Scouts drop out of Scouting! Don't fall into the trap of the same old routine.

DEN LEADER RESOURCES

So, You're A new Den Leader. Welcome to the fun and adventure of Cub Scouts. Your time volunteering as a Den Leader will be both rewarding and fun.

Now, you may be asking yourself. "What Did I Get Myself into?!?" Don't worry, you're not alone and we're here to help! In fact, hundreds of thousands of adults just like you have done this before. So, we're going to use their knowledge and some tips and tricks so you don't have to "re-invent the wheel" as you plan for your den meetings.

Leaders are encouraged to attend Roundtable meeting monthly to enhance their program. Roundtable provides unit leaders with the skills and information they need.

Visit: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/den-meeting-resources/> to help you get started!

TIPS TO MAKE MEETINGS WORK

Plan Your Meetings in Advance: Plan your meetings ahead of time with emphasis on the flow of activities.

Code of Conduct: Establish rules that each meeting will follow.

Ceremonies: Ceremonies are important for marking the beginning and end of each meeting. They are also a time for reinforcing the aims and purposes of Scouting and bringing them together.

Immediate Recognition: Using immediate recognition is a method of encouragement along the advancement trail. Congratulate them on their efforts.

Treats: Youth love goodies! Simple nutritious refreshments add a finishing touch.

BACK TO PACK

The "Back to the Pack" concept is an effort to get all returning Cub Scouts and their parents reengaged, filling both dens and leadership vacancies.

In order to make sure that every Scout knows that the new year of Scouting is about to start and that every family is expected to play an active role, it is recommended that each Pack hold a "Back to Pack" event.

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SERVICE PROJECTS

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Giving back is an essential part of the Scouting experience. Nothing your Scout unit can do raises more goodwill and community awareness more than a service project. These “good turns” are some of our best marketing tools and they send the message that Scouts are here and they’re making life better for others.

Service is one of the most important values we have in Scouting. The Scout Oath calls on us all to “help other people at all times.” The Scout Law says a Scout is Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, and Kind. These may be the most important ideals a young person takes away from their time in our program, no matter how long they stay in Scouting.

SCOUTING FOR FOOD

As Scouts, most of us know how fortunate we are to have a warm meal every night — whether around the campfire or at the kitchen table. And we know that not everyone is so lucky. That’s what “Scouting for Food,” the annual food-collection drive, is all about.

Be on the lookout for sign-ups, collection details and more.

SAMPLE SERVICE PROJECTS

- Place American flags on graves for Memorial Day
- Participate in Scouting for Food
- Send cards to service men and women
- Plant trees
- Organize a “clean-up day”

RECORDING SERVICE HOURS

Tracking service hours is now easier than ever! Simply enter service hours in the Activities module in Scoutbook.



PACK BUDGET PLANNING



Program Expenses		Annual Cost per Scout/Unit	Number of Scouts / Adults	Total Unit Cost
Scouting America Registration Fee	# youth	\$85.00*		\$0.00
Scouting America Registration Fee	# Adults	\$65.00*		\$0.00
Council Participation Fee	# youth	\$80.00		\$0.00
Unit Charter Fee	Yearly flat fee	\$100.00		\$0.00
Scout Life Subscription	1/household	\$15.00		\$0.00
Advancement	Ideally 100% of youth to earn belt loops, pins, activity badges, etc. x	\$18.00		\$0.00
Recognition	1 or each youth (Thank you's, Veteran Awards, etc.)	\$10.00		\$0.00
Special Events	Blue and Gold Dinner			\$0.00
	Pinewood Derby/Raingutter Regatta, etc.			\$0.00
	AOL Crossover to Scouts BSA			\$0.00
	Other			\$0.00
Special Activities	<u>Location</u>			
	Field Trip A			\$0.00
	Field Trip B			\$0.00
	Field Trip C			\$0.00
	Field Trip D			\$0.00
Camp				
	Cub Scout Day Camp	Per youth		\$0.00
	Rising Bear Camp	Per youth		\$0.00
	Rising Webelos/AOL Camp	Per youth		\$0.00
	Spring & Fall Cub Family Camping	For Cub and Parent		\$0.00
	Leader's fees			\$0.00
Program Materials	Ceremony supplies, den projects, camping items, etc.			\$0.00
Leader Basic Training				\$0.00
Reserve Fund	Registration Scholarships			\$0.00
Other Expenses	Contingency Funds			\$0.00
Total Budgeted Program Expenses				\$60.00
Recruitment				\$0.00
Income				
Annual Dues	(Monthly x's 9 to 12)			\$0.00
Surplus from prior year	(Beginning fund balance)			\$0.00
Other Income	(Parent payments, etc)			\$0.00
Income subtotal				\$0.00
Fundraising needed				(\$0.00)

*Scouting America fee as of 2/1/2026

SUCCESSION PLANNING WORKSHEET



POSITION	CURRENT	NEXT	NEXT	COMMENT
CUBMASTER				
ASSISTANT CUBMASTER				
COMMITTEE CHAIR				
SECRETARY				
TREASURER				
ADVANCEMENT				
MEMBERSHIP/ RECRUITING				
ACTIVITIES				
BLUE AND GOLD				
CAMPING				
PINEWOOD DERBY				
POPCORN				

My Planning Notes



**Scouting
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National Capital Area Council

**Marriott Scout Service Center (MSSC)
9190 Rockville Pike
Bethesda, MD 20814
301-530-9360**

Council Website for information, events, activities, trainings,
recruitment resources, and much more:

www.NCACScouting.org

Up-to-date Council Calendar for yearly planning and
registration:

<https://ncacscouting.org/calendar/>

Submit your stories of adventures, achievements, service
projects, life-saving actions, and community involvement on our
Council blog:

www.WeOwnAdventure.com/submit/

Sign up for family and leader newsletters at:

www.WeOwnAdventure.com/newsletters/