



Scouting America
Southwest Florida Council

2026 – 2027

Program Planning Guide



Southwest Florida Council, Scouting America

1801 Boy Scout Drive, Fort Myers, FL 33907 • (239) 936-8072 • swflcouncilbsa.org

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SCOUTING SAFELY

Scouting America’s Commitment to Safety

We want you to know that the safety of our youth, volunteers, staff, and employees is an important part of the Scouting experience. Youth develop traits of citizenship, character, fitness, and leadership during age-appropriate events when challenged to move beyond their normal comfort level and discover their abilities. This is appropriate when risks are identified and mitigated.

Safeguarding Youth

True youth protection can be achieved only through the focused commitment of everyone in Scouting. It is the mission of Scouting America, through its volunteers and professionals, to maintain a culture of Safeguarding Youth awareness and safety at the national, council, district, and unit levels.

Scouting America places the greatest importance on creating the most secure environment possible for our youth members. To maintain such an environment, Scouting America has developed numerous procedural and leadership selection policies and provides parents and leaders with resources across all programs.

Safeguarding Youth Training (SYT) – Required for All Registered Volunteers

Safeguarding Youth Training (formerly Youth Protection Training) is required for all Scouting America registered volunteers and is a joining requirement for all new adult members. Training must be completed every year. If a volunteer’s Safeguarding Youth Training is not current at the time of annual registration renewal, the volunteer will not be re-registered.

To take the training, log in to My.Scouting.org and click the Safeguarding Youth Training logo on the home page. The initial course takes approximately 90 minutes and does not have to be completed in one sitting. Annual renewal requires a 10–15-minute refresher video and test (80% or better to pass).



Safeguarding Youth Reporting Procedures for Volunteers

There are two types of Safeguarding Youth-related reporting procedures all volunteers must follow:

When you witness or suspect any child has been abused or neglected:

1. Ensure the child is in a safe environment.
2. In cases of child abuse or medical emergencies, call 911 immediately. If the suspected abuse involves the Scout’s home or family, contact the local child abuse hotline for your county.
3. Notify the Scout Executive.

When you witness a violation of Scouting America’s Youth Protection policies, including those described within Scouting’s Barriers to Abuse, you must notify your local council Scout Executive so appropriate action can be taken for the safety of our Scouts.

Scouting America also maintains a 24-hour Scouts First Helpline to receive reports of known or suspected abuse or behavior that might put a youth at risk. Both adults and youth can call or text anonymously.

Guide to Safe Scouting

The Guide to Safe Scouting is an overview of Scouting policies and procedures. Unit leaders are expected to review the additional reference material cited prior to conducting activities.

Access the Guide to Safe Scouting, Safe Scouting Forms, and Health & Safety FAQs at www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/.

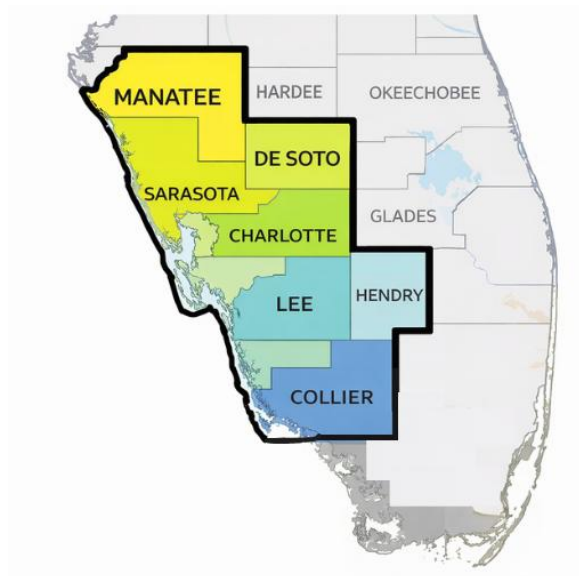


Council and District Information

The Southwest Florida Council is organized into four districts:

Manatee District	Serving Manatee County
Two Rivers District	Serving Charlotte, DeSoto, and Sarasota Counties
Panther District	Serving Lee and Hendry Counties
Alligator District	Serving Collier County

Find your District information and Council Staff Directory at www.swflcouncilbsa.org or by calling (239) 936-8072.



ADVANCEMENT

Advancement and recognition are a core part of the Scouting experience across all programs—Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, and Venturing. As one of the methods that delivers the Aims of Scouting, advancement helps youth build confidence, develop responsibility, and work toward meaningful goals.

From earning ranks and adventure loops in Cub Scouts to progressing toward Eagle Scout, each step is designed to encourage growth and achievement. Advancement is a journey that benefits from both planning and support, and there are many resources available to help guide youth and unit leaders along the way.

The *Guide to Advancement* is the primary resource for policies and procedures. It can be downloaded at www.scouting.org/resources/guide-to-advancement/.



Scoutbook

Scoutbook is the primary online platform for tracking a Scout's progress across all programs. It allows leaders and families to record advancement, log service hours, track camping, and communicate within the unit.

Scoutbook is best accessed through the website at scoutbook.scouting.org, which provides the most complete and reliable experience. A companion mobile app is also available, though the full website offers the most robust features for managing advancement and unit records.

For help getting started with Scoutbook and help aids visit <https://help.scoutbook.scouting.org/article-categories/advancement-quick-entry-internet-advancement-update/>.



HOW & WHY TO USE THIS GUIDE

Units that plan, promote, and execute their Ideal Year in Scouting offer unparalleled experiences that retain their Scouts and families for years to come.

What Are Your Goals?

- A stronger program for Scouts at less personal cost to you
- More parental involvement
- More of your Scouts camping
- Increased retention
- More funding with less time spent on fundraising
- Eliminate out-of-pocket expenses for your parents
- Enough money to do all the activities
- Scouting to be simpler, easier, and more fun

The Steps of the Ideal Year of Scouting

1. Plan – Work your way through this guide and map out the advancements, activities, camping, training, and parent involvement you'll need for your Ideal Year of Scouting.
2. Fund – Determine the expenses from all activities, advancements, camping, and training your unit wants to do, then decide how much fundraising your unit must do to cover those expenses.
3. Grow – When you have a good plan, communicate it to current and potential Scouts to engage more youth in the Scouting program, along with their parents to help make it all happen.
4. Train – Promote trainings to your current and new leaders. Attend your monthly district Roundtable! Every Scout deserves a trained leader.

Get Started

1. Use the Den & Pack Meeting Resource Guide / Troop Program Features to make planning easier.
2. Determine what advancements each Scout will need for next rank.
3. Decide what activities the Scouts will do. What activities went well last year? What could be dropped and replaced with something new?
4. Make sure your unit takes advantage of council events – Cub Scout Spooktacular, Winterfest, Winter Camp, Day Camp, and more!

Resources: Den Leader Resources – www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/resources/ | Troop Program Features – <https://troopleader.scouting.org/program-features/>

Den Leader Resources



Troop Program Features



GROWING ADULT LEADERSHIP & DEVELOPING A SUCCESSION PLAN

Recruiting Adults

Along with recruiting youth, we often don't put enough emphasis into recruiting adult volunteers year-round and having a succession plan within your unit. The most common challenge Scout units face is not finding enough adult volunteers. Below are some helpful pointers to ensure your unit's health remains strong for years to come.

- Have every parent fill out a Parent Talent Survey.
- Have an assistant leader for each key position: Cubmaster, Den Leaders, Scoutmaster, Patrol Advisors, and Committee Chairs.
- Make sure key leadership positions are filled before summer starts.
- Ask every parent to volunteer for a role, even a small one like a parent helper for a single event. Involving each family brings greater buy-in to the program.

Key Leader Positions Needed for the 2026–2027 Year:

1) _____
 Prospect 1: _____
 Prospect 2: _____

2) _____
 Prospect 1: _____
 Prospect 2: _____

3) _____
 Prospect 1: _____
 Prospect 2: _____

4) _____
 Prospect 1: _____
 Prospect 2: _____

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

Leadership Training

Great Scouting programs are built on trained leaders. Scouting America offers a variety of training opportunities to ensure every leader has the skills and knowledge to deliver the best possible program to the youth they serve.

Monthly District Roundtables

The Southwest Florida Council encourages all adult leaders to attend their monthly district Roundtable. Roundtables are the best place to receive current training, share ideas, stay informed on council and district events, and network with other leaders in your area. Roundtables are held monthly in each of our four districts – check the council calendar at www.swflcouncilbsa.org for dates and locations.

Online Training – My.Scouting.org

The Scouting America Training Center at My.Scouting.org provides online leader training that can be completed at your own pace from any computer or device. This includes required training such as Safeguarding Youth Training, as well as position-specific training for Cubmasters, Den Leaders, Scoutmasters, and more.

Access the Learn Library for additional resources at <https://www.scouting.org/training/position-specific-courses/>.



Wood Badge

Wood Badge is the premier adult leadership training program for Scouting America. It delivers the latest in leadership skills – skills you will use not just in Scouting, but in every area of your life. The course challenges you to grow as a leader through teamwork, self-discovery, and applying Scouting's methods in practical, real-world ways.

Southwest Florida Council offers Wood Badge courses annually. For current course dates, registration, and information, visit www.swflcouncilbsa.org/training/wood-badge/.



National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT)

National Youth Leadership Training (NYLT) is an exciting and powerful program designed to provide Scouting America youth members with leadership skills and experience they can use to lead themselves and others. This two weekend outdoor experience represents a month in the model life of a typical Scout unit.

For current NYLT course dates and registration, visit www.swflcouncilbsa.org/training/national-youth-leadership-training-nylt.



PLANNING YOUR YEAR

Planning Your Program

A good program for your Scouts takes planning and preparation. History shows that a common element of strong programs is a good annual program planned at least a year in advance, shared with all families as a calendar. Make sure Scouts know they will have fun and learn new things – that’s what keeps them coming back.

The Adventure Plan (TAP)

Every adventure starts with an idea. The Adventure Plan (TAP) provides a one-stop set of tools to help adult and youth leaders envision, plan, prepare, and conduct safe, exciting, and successful outdoor adventures – from a simple overnight backpacking trip to a week-long expedition. More information can be found at tap.scouting.org



Council Camps

The Southwest Florida Council operates two exceptional camp properties, both available for year-round unit camping. We strongly encourage every unit to get outdoors and take advantage of these world-class facilities throughout the year!

Camp Flying Eagle

16009 Upper Manatee River Rd, Bradenton, FL 34212

Located on the Manatee River, Camp Flying Eagle consists of 185 acres of natural beauty surrounded by mossy oaks and large hardwoods. Founded in 1929, this camp provides a memorable year-round camping experience.

Facilities include campsites, shelters, dining hall, swimming pool, archery, rifle/shotgun/BB ranges, climbing wall, canoes, kayaks, and hiking trails.



Price-Sanders Scout Reservation (Camp Miles & Cub Family Camp)

38751 Bermont Rd, Punta Gorda, FL 33982

Located within the Cecil M. Webb Wildlife Management Area, Price-Sanders Scout Reservation consists of 1,280 acres of natural preserve. Camp Miles is the primary developed camp on the reservation.

Facilities include a central dining hall, troop campsites, health lodge, trading post, archery, rifle and shotgun ranges, swimming pool, boating island, C.O.P.E course, and climbing wall.



Both camps can be reserved year-round for unit camping. Make reservations well in advance due to high demand. For reservations, visit www.swflcouncilbsa.org/camping.

Year-Round Camping

Camping is the cornerstone of the Scouting program, and Florida’s climate makes Southwest Florida one of the best places in the country to scout year-round. We encourage every unit to plan regular camping trips throughout the full program year – not just in the fall. Whether it’s a weekend campout, an outdoor skill-builder, or a multi-night adventure at one of our council camps, getting Scouts outside is what Scouting is all about.

Year-round camping at our council properties also allows units to take full advantage of specialty program areas like the COPE course, shooting ranges, and aquatics.

CUB SCOUT ZONE

Pack and Den Leader Resources

There are several Pack resources and forms to assist you in your planning – Pack calendar planning templates, campfire program planners, family talent surveys, and more. We want to make sure you are armed with all the information and resources you need to make the program easy, exciting, and fun for both you and the Scouts.

Download resources including Pack Committee Resources, Blue and Gold Banquet Resources, New Den Leader Information, Den Meeting Plans, and more at www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/resources/.



Cub Scout Advancement

Advancement is one of the methods used to achieve Scouting's aims: character development, citizenship training, and personal fitness. The advancement program is designed to help the Cub Scout achieve these aims and aid in his or her personal growth.

Learn all about Cub Scout advancement at www.scouting.org/programs/cub-scouts/. Resources include the Guide to Advancement, Cub Leader Resource Library, Unit Resource and Form Library, and more.



Cub Scout Council Events

Southwest Florida Council hosts several exciting Cub Scout-specific events throughout the program year that every Pack should plan to attend. These events are highlights of the Scouting year for Cubs and their families!

Cub Scout Day Camp

Day Camp offers the fun of camp right in your own backyard! It is the perfect place for Cub Scouts to experience the best of the outdoors close to home. Scouts explore nature and develop skills through games, crafts, and challenges. Activities include archery, BB guns, fishing, hiking, STEM, and more.

Day camps are held across our council's districts throughout the summer. Watch the council calendar at www.swflcouncilbsa.org for dates and locations in your district.

Cub Scout Spooktacular

The Cub Scout Spooktacular is our exciting Halloween-themed event for Cub Scouts and their families, held each fall at Price-Sanders Scout Reservation in Punta Gorda! Join hundreds of families for a spooky, fun-filled outdoor adventure in a safe and family-friendly environment.

The Spooktacular is packed with Halloween fun including themed activities, games, hayrides, campfire programs, and more. Come as a Pack, a den, or as a family! For more information and registration, visit www.swflcouncilbsa.org.

Cub Scout Winterfest

Winterfest is a fun-filled camping weekend for Cub Scouts and their families, held each December at Camp Flying Eagle in Bradenton! Curl up under the stars with hot cocoa while watching an outdoor movie, enjoy BB shooting, archery, games, craft projects, and a special visit from Santa on Sunday.

Winterfest fills up quickly – register early at www.swflcouncilbsa.org to secure your spot!

National Summertime Pack Award

Prepare now for your Cub Scouts to earn the new Summertime Fun Adventure!

The National Summertime Pack Award has been reimagined into an elective Adventure named Summertime Fun. This new Adventure may be one of the simplest Adventures, it has one requirement and that is: anytime during May through August participate in a total of three Cub Scout activities.

As the National Summertime Pack Award was evaluated it was deemed a valuable method to promote summer activities such as Cub Scout Day Camp. It was also determined that requiring a percentage of participation for the National Summertime Pack award was unfair to those who attended when the percentage of participation was not achieved.

The new Summertime Fun elective Adventure is available for Tiger through Arrow of Light. Lions do not begin Cub Scouting until they are attending Kindergarten in the fall so there are no summertime activities for Lions.

For more information, visit www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/national-summertime.



SCOUTS BSA ZONE

Troop Leader Resources

Troop Program Resources is designed to serve as a planning tool for troop leaders. Its aim is to provide resources that make troop meetings more meaningful, engaging, and fun. Resources are available for every level of troop leadership:

- Troop Meeting Activities – A large compilation for the Patrol Leaders' Council to plan activities that fit current themes.
- Troop Meeting Ceremonies – Ideas and examples for the Scoutmaster, Senior Patrol Leader, and individual patrols.
- Leader's Minutes Library – An extensive library of thought-provoking closing minutes for Scoutmaster and Adult Leaders.
- Campcraft Skill Videos – A reference library for Scoutmaster, Assistant Scoutmasters, and Junior Leaders.

Visit www.programresources.org for lots more and encourage troop leaders to apply and adapt materials to best meet their troop's individual needs.



National Outdoor Awards Program

Do you enjoy camping under the stars, rafting on a whitewater river, or hitting the trail afoot, on a bike, or even on a horse? If so, the National Outdoor Awards are for you. There is nothing virtual about these awards – you can earn them only by demonstrating real knowledge and experience in the outdoors.

Scouts BSA members, Sea Scouts, and Venturers who hike the miles, camp the nights, run the rivers, or do the work to conserve the land should explore the National Outdoor badges and the National Medal for Outdoor Achievement. Visit www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/national-outdoor-awards/ to learn more.



Annual Troop Program Planning Conference

This is where your troop program comes alive. The success of this conference begins when the Scoutmaster prepares the senior patrol leader in advance. Be alert throughout to support the senior patrol leader – don't wait for them to fail, but don't take over either. Careful, non-intrusive coaching builds confidence and leadership skills.

Who Attends the Conference?

The troop's annual planning conference is attended by the Scoutmaster, assistant Scoutmasters, senior patrol leader, assistant senior patrol leader, patrol leaders, and troop guide.

Physical Arrangements

Careful planning ensures this conference is a first-class experience for your youth leaders. Pick a location that would be special to your Scouts – possibly one offering opportunities for other activities. You can make it a weekend experience, although the conference is easily completed in a day.

Don't involve the youth leaders in housekeeping chores that distract from planning. Consider using other troop adults to cook and clean up; let your patrol leaders' council concentrate on the task at hand.

Conference Ground Rules

1. The Senior Patrol Leader presides.
2. Every event and program are voted on.
3. The majority rules. (Working sessions should last no longer than 45 minutes without a break.)

Scouts BSA Winter Camp – Price-Sanders Scout Reservation

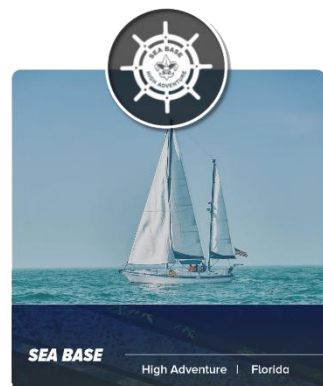
Southwest Florida Council is proud to offer our world-class Winter Camp at Price-Sanders Scout Reservation (Camp Miles) in Punta Gorda. For 5 days and 4 nights each December 26-30, Scouts BSA troops have the opportunity to camp and program at one of Southwest Florida's premier camp facilities.

Winter Camp offers a full merit badge program, exciting unit activity periods, camp wide activities and outstanding facilities. It is the council's signature Scouts BSA resident camp experience and fills up every year – register early!

High Adventure Bases

Scouting America's national High Adventure Bases offer world-class experiences for older Scouts across the country:

<p>Florida Sea Base Sailing, Kayaking, Snorkeling, Scuba, Fishing www.seabaseha.org</p>	<p>Northern Tier Wilderness Canoeing, Fishing, Winter Expeditions www.ntier.org</p>
<p>The Summit Bechtel Reserve High Adventure, Rock Climbing, Zip Lining, Shooting www.summitbsa.org</p>	<p>Philmont Scout Ranch Backpacking, Rock Climbing, Horseback Riding www.philmontscoutranch.org</p>



VENTURING & SEA SCOUT ZONE

Venturing Program Resources

Venturing is a co-educational program of Scouting America for young men and women ages 14 through 20 (or 13 and have completed the eighth grade). Venturing is designed to provide positive experiences that help young people mature and prepare for adulthood through challenging high-adventure activities, service, and leadership experiences. Venturing Crews are chartered to organizations in the community and are led by adult Advisors who share the crew's interests and passions — whether that's hiking, scuba diving, photography, or any other pursuit the youth choose to explore. One of the key elements of all successful crews is the annual program plan and planning conference. Research shows that a common element of strong units is having a good annual program planned a year in advance, shared with all families as a calendar — this attracts more families and keeps Venturers involved longer.

A month or two before the scheduled conference, the crew Advisor, committee chair, and crew leader should meet to begin preparation. Visit www.scouting.org/programs/venturing/ for all preparation steps, including:

- Activity Interest Survey – Use this to help develop the crew's annual program plan of activities.
- Activity Planner Sheet – A tool for planning a well-organized activity.
- Program Capability Inventory – Helps get more adult volunteers involved and existing volunteers more engaged.
- Annual Budget Planning – Fillable electronic forms to make Crew budgeting straightforward.

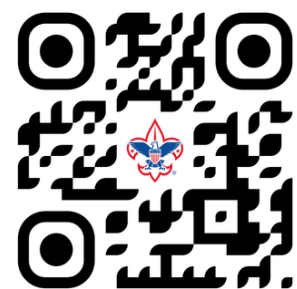


Sea Scout Program Resources

Sea Scouting is a co-educational program for young adults between the ages of 14 and 21 (or 13 who have completed the eighth grade). Sea Scouting promotes better citizenship and improves members' boating skills and knowledge through instruction and practice in water safety, boating skills, outdoor experiences, and our maritime heritage.

Sea Scouting offers the challenge and excitement of the sea including sailing, navigation, safety, communications, mechanics, weather, piloting, and much more. Prior sailing experience is not necessary — beginners are always welcome!

For Sea Scout leader resources including the Program Toolbox, Sea Scout Manual Resource Center, Sample Activities, and Activity Planner, visit www.seascout.org.



FUNDING THE YEAR

Basic Expenses to Budget

<p>National Registration Fees Per youth and adult</p> <p>Unit Recharter Fee Annual per-unit recharter fee</p> <p>Scout Life Magazine Optional subscription per youth</p>	<p>Activities Per-meeting and per-event costs, council events, camps</p> <p>Advancements Awards, badges, and recognition items</p> <p>Troop/Den/Pack Dues Unit-level dues to help cover ongoing costs</p> <p>Reserve Fund Adequate funds for unforeseen expenses</p>
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The Southwest Florida Council provides youth with fundraising opportunities to help pay for unit expenses – awards, camps, registration fees, and more. Teaching our youth that they can earn their own way is one of the many values Scouting instills. Through the popcorn sale and other fundraisers, local units earn significant funds to provide a quality year-round program.

Unit Budgeting

The activities a pack, troop, or crew is able to participate in depends on both what funds are available and how those funds are used. Plan out your unit's budget in advance to match your program calendar.

Unit Accounts

As a service to its units, the Southwest Florida Council accepts advanced deposits to be held in a custodial account in the name of the unit. Unit accounts can be used for registration, Scout Life, camp registration fees, or activity fees.

Only the Committee Chairman, Chartered Organization Representative, Cubmaster, Scoutmaster, or Post Advisor may change the names on the account, and must be done in writing.

Unit Money Earning Application

Unit leadership in chartered organizations may participate in approved fundraising projects, provided Scouting America rules and guidelines are followed. Every unit planning to conduct a fundraising activity outside of the pre-approved popcorn and camp card sales must submit a Unit Money-Earning Application (Form No. 34427) for approval by the chartered organization and the local council prior to holding the activity.

<https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/pdf/34427.pdf>



2027 Family Friends of Scouting

Funding for the Scouting program, local events, camp facilities, trainings, and more comes in large part from our annual fundraising campaign called Friends of Scouting (F.O.S.). This is the one opportunity

each year for communities, businesses, and families to support the Scouting movement and help ensure the delivery of a quality Scouting program to youth across Southwest Florida.

Your annual membership fee goes directly to the National Council, so all locally raised funds support our local Scout council. These dollars are invested into local programs to provide new equipment, camp facilities, large events, supplies, and resources for units throughout the year. All gifts stay local.

We ask that each unit schedule a Family FOS presentation. At this short 5–8-minute presentation, a local volunteer visits your unit, shares the impact of Scouting in Southwest Florida, and invites families to consider a contribution. Presentations are typically held during January, February, and March.

Fall Popcorn Sale

Key Points:

- Great commissions for units
- Prizes and incentives for youth
- Earn your way through Scouting
- Over 70% of sales reinvested back into Scouting
- Free tools to grow your sale: banners, credit card readers, point-of-sale app, and more
- Funds reinvested into local Scouting – camp equipment, facilities, and unit resources



2026 KEY POPCORN DATES

Event	Date/Time	Event	Date/Time	Location
August Sales Blitz – August 1st – 24th				
1st Order Due	Friday, August 14th 5:00 pm	1st Order Pick-Up	Friday, August 28th 5 – 7 pm Saturday, August 29th 8 - 11 am	Midwest Foodbank 5601 Division Drive Fort Myers, FL 33905
2nd Order Due	Tuesday, September 8th 5:00 pm	2nd Order Pick-Up	Saturday, September 12th 8 - 11 am	SWFL Council Office
3rd Order Due	Tuesday, September 22nd 5:00 pm	3rd Order Pick-Up	Thursday, September 24th 9 am - 1 pm	SWFL Council Office
4th Order Due	Tuesday, October 6th 5:00 pm	4th Order Pick-Up	Thursday, October 8th 9 am - 1 pm	SWFL Council Office
Return Request Entered – Cases Only	Tuesday, October 13th 5:00 pm	Pre-approved Returns Only	Saturday, October 17th 8 am - 10 am	SWFL Council Office
5th Final Order Due by bag	Sunday, November 1st 11:59 pm	5th Final Order Pick-Up	Saturday, November 7th BY APPT: 8 am - 9 am	SWFL Council Office
Council Prizes End	Tuesday, November 3rd 11:59 pm			
Popcorn Payments Due	Wednesday, November 18th 5:00 pm	Automatic for units utilizing Trail's End Credit Card System		

ALL ORDERS MUST BE ENTERED INTO THE TRAILS-END SYSTEM

ORDER AT LEAST 3 WEEKS OF PRODUCT

NOT SURE IF YOU HAVE ENOUGH? ORDER A MINIMUM OF \$50 PRODUCT PER STOREFRONT HOUR.

MOST PACKS AVERAGE \$100 TO \$150 AN HOUR IN PRODUCT ALONE THROUGHOUT THE SALE.

Returns: Pre-approved, Unopened Cases only. Up to 30% of last order. Council may decline return based on logged heroes.

Spring Camp Card Sale

The Camp Card Sale is the council's spring fundraiser and the perfect complement to the fall Popcorn Sale. It gives every unit a second opportunity to fund their program year, and gives every Scout a chance to earn their own way to council events, camp, and activities. It's a simple, low-pressure sale that any unit can run successfully.

<p>What is a Camp Card? A Camp Card is a discount card packed with valuable offers from local and national businesses. Scouts sell them to friends, family, and neighbors – and the unit keeps a significant commission on every card sold.</p>	<p>Who Benefits? Everyone! Scouts learn to earn their own way & earn a 50% Commission. Buyers enjoy great local discounts. And the community sees Scouting in action.</p>
<p>When Does It Run? The Camp Card Sale typically runs in the spring, giving units a second fundraising opportunity outside of the fall Popcorn Sale.</p>	<p>Risk-Free Fundraiser Units may return unsold cards by the close of the sale, so there is no financial risk to participation. Sign up early to reserve your unit's cards!</p>

How It Works:

1. Units sign up with the council to participate and receive their allotment of cards. A good starting point is approximately 10 cards per youth in your unit.
2. Scouts sell cards door-to-door, at storefront booths, or to friends and family. The discount offers on the card make it an easy sell!
3. Units collect payment and submit funds to the council by the close of the sale. Any unsold cards may be returned – making this a completely risk-free fundraiser.
4. Commission earned goes directly into your unit's account to fund activities, camps, advancements, and more throughout the year.

GROWING YOUR UNIT

Recruiting Youth

Recruitment is a year-round effort, and strong units are always looking for ways to grow. While our largest organized recruiting push happens during School Nights in the fall, there are many opportunities throughout the year to welcome new Scouts and families.

2026 Fall School Night

School Nights are the council's primary organized youth recruitment events. Units are encouraged to partner with local schools, promote their School Night events in their communities, and engage families throughout the fall. These events are a great way to introduce Scouting and invite new families to join the adventure.

For more information contact your District Executive.

Arrow of Light to Scouts BSA Transition Timeline

A smooth Arrow of Light-to-Scouts BSA transition is critical to the health of both programs. Following this timeline ensures no Scout falls through the cracks:

- August – Troops get names, addresses, and phone numbers of Arrow of Lights.
- September – Troops contact AOL Dens and introduce their Troop. Add AOLs to the Troop newsletter mailing list.
- October – AOLs attend a campout with a Scouts BSA Troop.
- November – Scouts BSA Troops attend AOL meetings and talk to youth about how a Scouts BSA Troop functions.
- December – AOLs attend a Scouts BSA Troop meeting.
- January – Get applications filled out and finalize plans with youth crossing over into their Troop.
- February – Troops participate in a “bridging over” ceremony at the Blue and Gold Banquet.
- March – Troops plan an activity so new Scouts get involved and comfortable in their new Scouts BSA Troop.
- April – Scouts BSA Troops conduct a summer and fall program orientation for new Scouts.
- Summer – Ensure all new Scouts attend summer activities and fall events with the Troop.

Recruiter Strip

The Most Important Patch in Scouting!

One of the easiest – and most impactful – awards a Scout can earn, the Recruiter Strip recognizes any youth member who recruits a friend, relative, classmate, or other acquaintance into Scouting. The best recruiter for any unit is an excited Scout who loves what they do and shares that excitement with others.



Who Can Earn It

The Recruiter Strip is available to all youth members of Scouting America, including Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturers, and Sea Scouts. It is a youth award and is worn on the youth uniform.

How to Earn It

The steps to earning the Recruiter Strip are simple – it all starts with a conversation:

1. Talk to a friend, relative, or classmate about what you love about Scouting. Share your adventures – camping stories, merit badge projects, service projects, and the friendships you’ve made.
2. Invite them to a meeting or council event. Let them experience Scouting firsthand. Don’t leave them alone – be their buddy and make sure they get a true taste of what Scouting is all about.
3. Help them register. Direct them to BeaScout.org to find a unit or register online. Once they are a registered member of Scouting America, the recruiting Scout has earned their Recruiter Strip!

There are no rigid national requirements beyond recruiting a new member – each council establishes its own procedure. In the Southwest Florida Council, units award the Recruiter Strip the first time a Scout successfully recruits a friend into Scouting. The strip is available for purchase at the Southwest Florida Scout Shop.

Scouts BSA Troop Open House

Troop Open Houses are a simple and effective way to introduce new families to Scouts BSA. These events give prospective youth and parents a chance to see the troop in action and learn what Scouting is all about.

Open houses can be held during a regular troop meeting or as a special event. Focus on hands-on activities, Scout-led demonstrations, and creating a welcoming environment for visitors. These events work especially well alongside school outreach and Arrow of Light-to-Scout transition efforts.

Keys to Success:

- Make it fun and interactive
- Have Scouts lead the experience
- Personally invite prospective families
- Share clear next steps to join



A well-run open house helps turn interest into new Scouts and keeps your troop growing throughout the year.

Learn more here: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/scouts-bsa/resources/recruitment-marketing/open-house/>

Venturing Crew Open House

Crew Open Houses are a great way to introduce teens and young adults to Venturing. These events give prospective members a chance to experience the crew's program, meet current Venturers, and see what makes the crew unique.

Open houses can be held as a regular meeting or built around an activity that reflects the crew's interests—such as outdoor adventure, sports, or hands-on experiences. The goal is to create an engaging, youth-led event that highlights the crew's program and invites guests to be part of it.

Keys to Success:

- Make it fun, active, and youth-led
- Showcase the crew's unique program and upcoming adventures
- Encourage Venturers to invite their friends
- Provide a clear invitation and next step to join

A strong Crew Open House creates excitement, builds connections, and helps grow a sustainable Venturing program year-round.

Learn more here: <https://www.scouting.org/programs/venturing/crew-resources/recruiting/>



HOW YOU CAN CONNECT

Staying connected with the Southwest Florida Council is easy! Follow us on social media, bookmark our event calendar, and sign up for our newsletter so your unit never misses a beat.

Council Website & Event Calendar

Our website is your one-stop shop for program information, forms, news, and registration. Use the event calendar to plan ahead — new events are added throughout the year!

Website:

www.swflcouncilbsa.org



Event Calendar:

www.swflcouncilbsa.org/event/calendar/3



Follow Us on Social Media

Like and follow our official pages for event updates, Scout spotlights, photos, and council news. Turn on notifications so you never miss a post!

FACEBOOK
@southwestfloridacouncil

Event announcements, council news, community updates, and great photos — all in one place. Like our page and stay in the loop!



www.facebook.com/southwestfloridacouncil/

INSTAGRAM
@swflcouncil

Behind-the-scenes Scout adventures, troop highlights, and awesome moments from across Southwest Florida. Follow us!



www.instagram.com/swflcouncil/

Sign Up for Our E-Newsletter

Get the latest council news, event announcements, and resources delivered straight to your inbox. It is free and you can unsubscribe at any time!

Subscribers receive:

- Upcoming event and program announcements
- Registration reminders and important deadlines
- Scout achievements and council highlights

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Scouting America

Southwest Florida Council

1801 Boy Scout Dr.
Fort Myers, FL 33907

www.swflcouncilbsa.org

(239) 936 - 8072