

## Planning Your Troop's Annual Program Budget

What is the “*Ideal Year of Scouting*” plan? It’s developing an annual program plan, creating a budget to go along with that plan, and then forming a fund-raising plan through one fund-raiser to reach your program goals. The result is a well-managed, well-financed unit that you spend your time doing Scouting, not raising money.

If you like raising money every month, planning your program as you go, limit your activities based on unit’s income, or not involving youth members in the planning process, then this format is not for you!

**Those leaders who want a meaningful, exciting, and comprehensive youth program that achieves the objectives of the Scouting program will find this format the *ideal* way to go.**

Steps in planning your *Ideal Year of Scouting* include:

1. Plan your complete annual program.
2. Develop a budget that includes enough income to achieve the program.
3. Identify the amount of product (popcorn) that will need to be sold per youth member to reach your income goal.
4. Get commitments from parents and youth.

In planning your annual program plan, it is important not to get stuck on what you have “always” done, but what you would “like to do”. Steps in annual program planning include:

1. **Brainstorming** – Brainstorm ideas of things you would like to do as a troop. Be sure to coach a wide range of activities: field trips, activities, service projects, places to go camping, etc. Be sure to throw out the monthly themes to see if anyone has ideas that coincide with them. At this point, every idea goes on the board. No evaluation happens at this point. If someone throws out going to Alaska, put it on the board at this point.
2. **Evaluation** – After you have brainstormed a variety of activities, talk about and vote on each one. The activities that got the most votes or the most positive reception; look at putting into your annual program plan.
3. Put together a draft annual program calendar. Assign potential activities for further research (cost, times, availability, etc.)
4. Finalize annual program plan, put together a budget to fund that program plan.
5. Recruit new youth during an open house in the month of September or October.
6. Hold a program kickoff to: 1. Communicate annual program plan to new and existing parents and youth, 2. Communicate your troop’s budget, 3. Sign non-leader parents to help with 2 or 3

activities throughout the year. 4. Kickoff your annual fundraising event (Popcorn) including per boy goals.

7. Conduct annual fundraising event (popcorn).
8. Implement annual program plan.

### Basic Expenses

1. **Registration fees** – registration fees are paid to the National Council. These fees are only transmitted through our council and do not support the council at all! They pay for program research and development to improve the Scouting program. Units pay an annual charter fee of \$20. Registration fees are \$15 per year. This fee is pro-rated each month from when the youth joins until the month the unit re-charters (\$1.25 per month).
2. **Boys’ Life Magazine** – *Boys’ Life* magazine is the official publication of the BSA and is available to all members for \$12 per year (\$1 per month). Every youth should subscribe to *Boys’ Life* because the quality reading and the articles related to your unit’s monthly program. Research shows he will stay in Scouting longer and advance further if he reads *Boys’ Life*.
3. **Accident and Sickness Insurance** – Every youth and adult pays \$1.00 at re-charter time to be covered going to, from, and during all Scouting events and activities.
4. **Advancement and Recognition** – Every youth member should advance in rank each year. They also earn other awards such as merit badges, mile swim, etc. \$12 per boy is a good budget number to begin with.
5. **Training expenses** – “*Every boy deserves a trained leader*”. Trained leaders are key to a quality and safe program. Each unit should consider paying for each leader to attend leader specific training and outdoor leader skills. Some units pay a portion of their Scoutmaster’s Wood Badge fees.
6. **Program materials** – Each unit needs to provide a certain amount of program materials. Depending on the type of troop program, these could include rope, fire starting equipment, PFD’s, etc.
7. **Summer Camping experience** – The council offers Boy Scout Summer camp at Lost Lake Scout Reservation, D-bar-A Scout Ranch, and Cole Canoe Base. Every youth should participate in this rich Scouting experience annually.
8. **Troop Campouts** – Troops should plan to attend their district camporees and troop campouts. Cost of food, transportation, participation cost, etc should all be considered.

9. Leader recognition – as leaders move up, move on, or do an outstanding job it is always good to say “Thank-you”.
10. Arrow of Light/Webelos Crossover – Many units give a welcome gift to a youth crossing over into Boy Scouts such as a Boy Scout handbook or a neckerchief. It is best to coordinate with the pack your youth are moving up from.
11. Contingency/reserve fund – Keeping your camping equipment in good repair and up to date. Are all tents, patrol boxes, lanterns, all in good working order? A certain amount should be set aside each year in a “capital” fund.
12. High Adventure fund – Funds put aside for high adventure trip (Philmont, etc.)
13. Other expenses – Refreshments, food for courts of honor, Eagle Scout gifts, etc.

### Sources of income

“One fund-raiser per year” is the theme of the *Ideal Year of Scouting*” rather than “nickel and dime” families every week, we suggest that the total cost for the complete year be figured up front. Ideally, all income would come from one fund-raiser (popcorn) conducted in the fall.

### Some important points

**Paying your own way** – This is fundamental principal of the Boy Scouts of America. It is one of the reasons no solicitations (request for contributions) are permitted by units. 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 unit’s entire budget must be provided for by the families through either fund-raising or other means such as dues or fees.*

**Individual youth accounts** – Units using this method have traditionally had stronger programs with less turn-over of youth. Individual Scout accounts, whereby the unit keeps track of how much a youth member of his family has raised toward his “*Ideal Year of Scouting*” goal are critical to the success of this program.

**Money Earning Application** – Except for the council-sponsored popcorn sale, all other fund-raising projects require the submission of the *Unit money earning application # 34427B*. This is to ensure conformity with all Scouting standards on earning money. Leaders should be familiar with the 8 guides listed on the back of the application and 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 following publication: *Troop/Team Record Book #34508C*. Your unit can also use one of the commercial software programs developed for Scouting units, such as *Troopmaster*. These tools are great for keeping track of individual youth accounts. They are usually advertised in the back of *Scouting* magazine.

There are also budget and program planners available at [www.glscouting.org](http://www.glscouting.org), along with sample materials for creating calendar and budget materials to share with families.

### Budget Worksheet

To develop your unit budget, complete the attached worksheet (available electronically at [www.glscouting.org](http://www.glscouting.org)). Share it with the Scouts’ parents. Be sure to keep parents involved and informed. Program calendar and budget information needs to be communicated regularly to families, and especially at the start of the program year.