



2015–2016

Cub Scout Program

FAQs

July 7, 2014 Update



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If you have specific questions, please send an email to program.content@scouting.org. We will provide you with an immediate answer and use new questions to generate the next round of FAQs.

OVERALL PROGRAM QUESTIONS

Q: Where did all of this begin?

A: A team of volunteer leaders, supported by BSA professional staff members, developed the 2010–2015 National Strategic Plan. The plan is a comprehensive document that addresses improvement opportunities in program, membership, and more. See www.scouting.org/filestore/strategicplan/pdf/Strategic_Plan_Progress_Report.pdf.

Q: Who is responsible for the program changes?

A: A committee was established to achieve overall progress as outlined in the strategic plan. The charge of the 411 Task Force was to ensure that all levels of program in the Boy Scouts of America become more relevant to and engaging for all boys. Over 100 volunteer leaders, drawn from across the country, contributed to the analysis of the current program and made recommendations for program changes.

Q: What was the key charge for the task force?

A: The charge of the 411 Task Force was to ensure that all levels of program in the Boy Scouts of America remain relevant to and engaging for all youth.

Q: Who was involved in making the changes?

A: Two groups were involved in the changes:

- (1) The 411 Task Force was charged with an overall review of program content in Cub Scouting, Boy Scouting, and Venturing to evaluate the current program and make recommendations to achieve the desired outcomes for the entire Scouting program. These desired outcomes are designed to maintain a clear program focus at all levels, ensuring that youth who experience Scouting develop skills and dispositions that foster growth in character development, participatory citizenship, personal fitness, outdoor adventure, and leadership development.
- (2) The Cub Adventure Team took on the responsibility of developing program design based on the desired outcomes established by the 411 Task Force.

Q: What are the qualifications of the Cub Adventure Team?

A: All members of the Cub Adventure Team are experienced Cub Scout leaders. In addition, they have contributed previously to Cub Scouts by developing other Cub Scout program and program support materials such as BALOO training, the Cub Scout Outdoor Adventure Award, the former Theme Task Force, and Cub Scout National Camping School curriculum. Team members also have professional expertise in curriculum design and/or professional expertise in youth development.

Q: How were the changes determined?

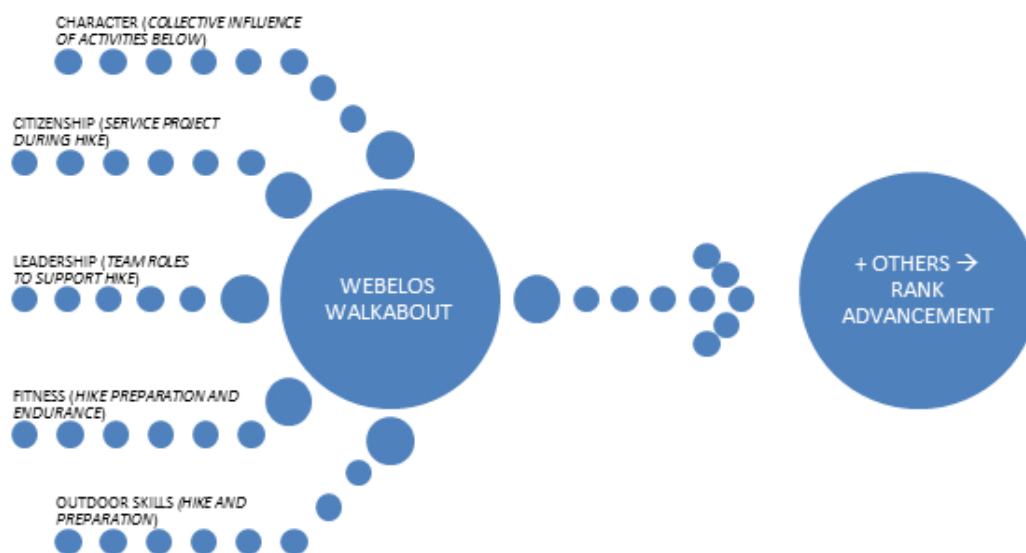
A: A two-year study produced the following findings:

- (1) The Cub Scouting program was not as strongly aligned with the mission of the Boy Scouts of America—character, citizenship development, and personal fitness—as other segments of the program are.

- (2) Cub Scouts and den leaders found the program to be more sedentary than was desirable.
- (3) Over time, a variety of additional awards and recognitions had been developed for use in Cub Scouting. Not all of the awards were aligned with achieving the mission and aims of the BSA. The abundance of awards and recognitions tended to undermine the core advancement program for Cub Scouts. This increased number of awards and recognitions resulted in two unwanted outcomes: First, they made the advancement system grow in complexity; second, they caused the program to drift away from delivery of the aims of Scouting.

Q: What is an “adventure?”

A: An adventure is the new basic program unit in Cub Scout advancement. Each adventure represents an integrated program that uses a theme to deliver content derived from the desired outcomes. For example, one of the Webelos adventures, the Webelos Walkabout, achieves multiple desired outcomes within a single, theme-based adventure:



Q: Why was the Academics and Sports program retired?

A: The value of the fun and engaging activities present in many of the requirements for the Academics and Sports program was retained. Many of those activities were made part of the adventure recognition program, so boys will still take part in the activities they enjoyed before. The new activities also are more closely aligned with the desired outcomes of the Cub Scout program (character development, participatory citizenship, personal fitness, outdoor adventure, and leadership development).

Q: I have heard that the program is easier. Why did you do that?

A: The program was *not* made easier. It offers appropriate challenges to all Cub Scouts with the goal of making Cub Scouting more active, more fun, and easier for den leaders to implement. Advancement will now be simpler for the den leader to administer because all ranks take the same approach to achieving rank advancement: complete seven adventures.

Q: Will the STEM-based Nova program continue?

A: Yes.

Q: How will the STEM-based Nova program change with the retirement of the Academics and Sports program?

A: The STEM team is working on integrating the Nova awards structure with the new Cub Scout adventure program. They will announce the changes when their review is complete.

Q: When will the STEM/NOVA award requirements be modified and how will the new requirements be communicated?

A: Now that the core of the new Cub Scout program development is complete, the development team is moving on to other, connected elements of Scouting, of which the STEM/NOVA awards is one. The requirements will be revised and released no later than January 1, 2015. When the new requirements are finalized, it will be communicated via www.scouting.org/progamupdates, Bryan on Scouting and other appropriate channels.

Q: What will happen to the Core Values and the Character Connections?

A: The 12 Core Values of Cub Scouting will be replaced by the 12 points of the Scout Law and will be referred to as Character Compass points in the boys' handbooks.

Q: Will there be a new handbook for the Arrow of Light Award?

A: The required and elective adventures for the Webelos rank and the Arrow of Light Award will be combined in one shared youth handbook (and complementary *Webelos Den Leader Guide*). The core adventure requirements for the Webelos rank and Arrow of Light Award differ, but the elective adventures are shared and may be used to meet the requirements of either one.

Q: With seven adventures required for rank advancement in Cub Scouting, will boys still be able to earn their rank advancements by the time the blue and gold banquet is held?

A: Earning a rank advancement in time for the blue and gold banquet is not and has never been a program goal in Cub Scouting. It is a custom in many packs to encourage this, but it is not an expected outcome of the program. The Cub Scout program is a year-round, family-based program. There are plenty of adventures in the new Cub Scout program model to deliver Cub Scouting year-round.

ADVANCEMENT QUESTIONS

Q: Our Bear den will finish the Bear requirements sometime after the beginning of January in 2015. What sort of transition is planned for Cub Scouts at that program level?

A: The new program changes will be implemented beginning June 1, 2015. Boys in a Bear den who complete their Bear rank in January 2015 still have several months in which to experience Cub Scouting as Bear Scouts. There are additional adventures that boys in the den may earn. This reflects current practices, as dens are structured based on grade levels in traditional Cub Scout packs, so they would not begin their work toward Webelos until the end of the traditional school year in late spring.

When the den crosses over to become a Webelos den in late spring 2015, it would begin using the new adventure-based advancement requirements after June 1, 2015, as the boys pursue their Webelos award.

Q: What does the transition from the current program to the new Cub Scout adventure-based program look like?

A: Use the following guidelines to plan your program year:

- After June 1, 2015, use the new recognition system and adventures for the Tiger, Wolf, Bear, and Webelos ranks.
- Special guidelines for the Arrow of Light Award – there are two options:

Option 1: He may continue to work out of the current handbook and complete the Arrow of Light requirements as stated.

Option 2: He may begin using the new Webelos Handbook and the Webelos Den Leader Guide for the Webelos adventures. If he chooses this option:

- He must complete the four defined required adventures.
- To satisfy the requirement for three electives, he may use EITHER the new adventure electives OR activity badges earned under the current program but not used to fulfill Webelos rank requirements. *Elective* activity badges earned before June 1, 2015, may be used to meet requirements for *elective* adventures during the first year of the new program, June 1, 2015, through May 31, 2016.

Previously only Option 2 was available, meaning when first-year Webelos transitioned to the second-year Webelos program in 2015, they would need to get the new book and earn their Arrow of Light Award under the redesigned program.

They may still do that, or they may choose Option 1 and stick with the current handbook and requirements as they finish Cub Scouts.

- Since the Scouting program of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints uses boys' birthdays, not grade levels, for program transitions, specific transition suggestions for LDS units will be released in advance of the new program model. These suggestions are available on the BSA's Program Updates web page.

Q: Will the "Earned All 20" (activity badges), "Super 20," or "Webelos Super-Achiever" awards remain available after the transition to the new program model?

A: Currently, more than 20 new Webelos rank and Arrow of Light Award adventures are included in the program; it is possible that still more will be developed.

Some background and commentary: You may not be aware that the Perfect 20 and similar awards are not recognized by the National Council. We certainly encourage boys to experience all that Cub Scouting has to offer as aggressively as they choose, but these awards will continue to exist only if the local council decides to maintain them. At the National Council, our focus is on quality program for the core adventures in the new program since it is these adventures that are connected most closely to the mission and aims of the Boy Scouts of America. Any rush to Perfect 20 or Super 20 that diminishes the outcomes of the core requirements would, in our opinion, be unwise. But hey, if the boys want to ...

Q: What is the transition timeline for using the Scout Oath and Scout Law and for the new program materials?

A: The official timing for shifting to the use of the Scout Oath and Scout Law, per the National

Executive Board resolution, is with the other changes in the Cub Scout program. We will begin transitioning into the new program beginning with the 2015–2016 Scouting year. Program materials to support the new handbook will be in Scout shops no later than June 1, 2015.

Many dens and packs are already beginning to use the Scout Oath and Scout Law. The National Council has no issue with this earlier transition since it gets us to the desired outcome sooner, but that is a local decision. The only implication is that the unit would need to discuss its alignment with the Bobcat requirements.

Q: Why don't boys have to earn all of the lower ranks to earn the Arrow of Light Award? That's like earning the Eagle Scout Award without earning the lower ranks!

A: Cub Scouting is not the same as Boy Scouting.

In Cub Scouting, since a boy may join at any level and does not “go back” to earn an earlier award, the awards are more “standalone” in nature. In addition to serving as a capstone award for Cub Scouting, the Arrow of Light Award symbolizes readiness to become a Boy Scout, as it has since it was first developed. The new requirements for the Arrow of Light Award are designed to achieve that transition effectively, even for boys who join Cub Scouting as late as the fifth grade.

Q: You said that the immediate recognition items are being changed. What will replace them?

A: New immediate recognition devices were released at the May 2014 National Annual Meeting.

- Boys will receive an adventure loop to be worn on the Cub Scout belt for completing adventures at the Tiger, Wolf, and Bear level.
- Boys working on the Webelos and Arrow of Light ranks will receive adventure pins when each adventure is completed. The pins have been redesigned for the new program

Q: Our local district offers a Cub Scout activity day using the Academics and Sports program—we call it “Belt Loop College.” What will replace that? We will begin planning next year's Belt Loop College next month; what program feature should we use as a planning guide?

A: New immediate recognition devices were released at the May 2014 National Annual Meeting. The Academics and Sports program will be retired June 1, 2015, so the district program you described may continue in the same manner through that date. The content for the Academics and Sports program has been incorporated into many of the new Cub Scout adventure recognitions. Two alternatives may work for your district:

- Create a similar program around the Cub Scouting elective adventures.
- Provide a single embroidered emblem for participation in an enjoyable day of Cub Scout activities (which could incorporate the activities that were present in the Academics and Sports program).

Q: As I understand it, boys complete six den-based adventures plus a family-based Duty to God adventure to earn the Tiger, Wolf, and Bear ranks, and each adventure will require about three den meetings to complete. Will this plan require a total of 21 den meetings to complete each rank? I'd appreciate any clarification.

A: The number of meetings required to meet the requirements for each adventure was presented as what is “typical” for dens. Most of the adventures were designed so that two meetings and one outing complete each adventure. The Duty to God adventures are designed to be completed by families. This would translate into about six months of programming to complete advancement toward the Tiger, Wolf, and Bear ranks. All of the additional adventures provide ample

opportunities for an entire year of programming for Cub Scout dens.

Q: Some of the adventures look pretty challenging to me as a leader—I don't know much about robotics or using technology. What help will be available?

A: The den leader guides for each rank provide enough support that all leaders can successfully lead a STEM-based den meeting.

Q: What is the role of the Character Connections approach, Know – Commit – Practice

A: The Core Values are replaced by the 12 Points of the Scout Law. The highly structured know-commit-practice process has been replaced by two different approaches:

- Reflections in each youth handbook
- Call-outs for den leaders in the den leader handbooks, to reflect on the values of the Scout Law during the leader minute and during reflections after games and activities.

LEADER TRAINING AND SUPPORT MATERIALS

Q: What training materials will be available to leaders?

A: Support for leaders includes the following:

- Leader information materials and outreach plans currently in development through the professional and volunteer leadership of the BSA's regions, areas, and local councils
- Weeklong conferences at Philmont Training Center during the summer of 2014
- Training materials for local councils and area-level training events to orient leaders to the new materials for the fall of 2014 and spring of 2015
- Information on program updates to be shared during monthly roundtable meetings
- Updated unit and den leader training courses

Q: Will the new Position-Specific and Fast Start trainings be available by January, 2015?

A: Yes to Position-Specific, TBD on Fast Start

Q: Tell me about the den leader guides.

A: Four separate den leader guides have been developed for each of the program levels (one each for Tiger, Wolf, and Bear and a combined guide for Webelos Scouts and the Arrow of Light Award). They were designed as complete, all-in-one den meeting plan and resource guides to help leaders of all experience levels provide a fun and rewarding program to the boys in the den. Materials were extensively field-tested, then revised based on feedback.

Den leaders using the new materials during field testing were able to present the new adventure-based program simply by reading the den leader guides and following the program materials.

Q: Will leader materials, specifically den meeting plans, be available in languages other than English and Spanish?

A: Currently the Boy Scouts of America's provides support for volunteer leaders in English and Spanish. There are no current plans to make the new Den Leader Guides available in other languages.

Q: I would like more information now—what is taking so long?

A: The process of redesigning the Cub Scout program at this level is a significant undertaking. The

Scouters designing and developing the materials would like to share as much as possible as it becomes available, but sharing information now that may change before the full program launch in 2015 could create confusion.

Q: Will there be a new *Cub Scout Leader Book*?

A: Yes, there will be an updated *Cub Scout Leader Book* that reflects the changes to the program and its advancement. It, along with the den leader guides (one each for Tiger, Wolf, and Bear, and a combined guide for Webelos Scouts and the Arrow of Light Award), will represent the primary resources for den leaders, Cubmasters, and committee members.

Q: The *Cub Scout Leader How To Book* – is it going to be revised?

A: This resource will remain available without significant changes.

Q: I think addressing the changes at roundtable would be very helpful to leaders, and perhaps more leaders will attend to learn about the changes.

A: We are on the same page. Orientation materials will also be released through the roundtable commissioner guide. The information will be shared in “bite-sized” pieces for the year leading up to the release of the new program materials.

Q: What is changing in the Parent Guide inserted into the handbook?

A: A cross-functional task force consisting of Scouters, National Council staff and outside subject matter experts is currently being empaneled to assure that Boy Scouts of America has the best possible practices in the area of youth protection and enabling parents and leaders to provide a positive environment for the youth we serve. The task force’s recommendations will be incorporated into the Parent Guide when its work is completed.

Q: Will there be some sort of phone app or apps supporting the new program?

A: The primary resources (boys’ handbooks, Den Leader Guides and *Cub Scout Leader Book*) will be available as e-books in addition to printed versions. The new advancement tool enhancement to My.Scouting Tools will support tracking and management of advancement in a similar manner to current third-party tools. Timing on this enhancement is still being finalized but is anticipated in mid-2015. The tool will be available via smart phones and tablets.

ADVENTURE LOOPS AND ADVENTURE PINS

Q: What will happen to the Academics and Sports program?

A: The Academics and Sports program is “going away,” and with it, the belt loops and pins. At a deeper level, the best of the Academics and Sports program has been reviewed and, where appropriate, integrated into the required and elective adventures of the new program. Each adventure will have an immediate recognition item that Cub Scouts will wear on their uniforms. A series of belt loops, similar to those used in the Academics and Sports program, are being designed to serve as recognition items.

Q: My boys really liked the Academics and Sports program belt loops. I am unhappy that the loops were discontinued.

A: Many of the activities that were part of the Academics and Sports program were integrated into

the new Cub Scout adventure program. Belt loops—now called *adventure loops*—will be used to recognize completion of each of the Cub Scout adventures described in the handbooks.

Q: Can boys work on elective adventure loops before they advance in rank?

A: Yes—and they may continue to earn additional adventure loops designed for each rank level after they have earned the rank at each level.

Q: Do boys need to complete all requirements to earn an adventure loop?

A: They will need to complete the requirements as written for each adventure.

Q: Do the adventure loops need to be earned in a specific order?

A: No. Work on them when it works for the boys in the den you lead. A set of required adventures, represented by the loops, need to be earned to achieve the ranks of Tiger, Wolf, Bear, and Webelos Scout and the Arrow of Light Award.

Q: What are the loops made of?

A: The loops are metal, similar to the loops used in the Academics and Sports program.

Q: Are they washable?

A: Well, yes. But since they are metal, they will make a lot of noise in the dryer and probably will have some adverse effect on other things in the load, so washing them is not recommended. 😊

Q: How many can a Cub Scout earn?

A: A boy may earn as many as he wishes. The loops are different for each rank.

Q: Can the adventure loops all fit on the Cub Scout belt?

A: Yes. They are slightly narrower than the Academics and Sports loops.

Q: Can the adventure loops be worn without a Cub Scout belt? Or worn with another belt?

A: They are designed to be worn on the official Cub Scout uniform belt.

Q: Some are colored, some are not. What's the difference?

A: Core adventure loops are in several colors; elective adventure loops use a single-color design.

Q: Can boys earn them at camp?

A: Yes, if your day camp or resident camp program offers them as part of the camp program.

Q: Can boys work ahead on the next rank level adventures and earn the loops while in their current rank?

A: No, this is not an option. The adventure loops were developed for each level of program.

Q: Must the adventure loops only be earned at den meetings?

A: No. The den meeting program materials are designed to help den leaders assist boys in delivering a program that is commemorated by awarding adventure loops. Adventure loops may also be completed by families and during day camp and resident camp.

Q: Do Webelos Scouts still earn adventure loops?

A: Webelos recognition will make use of adventure pins. The pins may be worn on the Webelos

colors or on the front of the Webelos cap. The pins will be used to recognize completion of adventures while earning the Webelos rank and Arrow of Light Award. Webelos Scouts can earn nearly 30 different adventures.