



2024-25 GUIDE FOR POST SCOUTING CHAIRS

Department of Florida
October 2024

(This supersedes all previous Department of Florida Scouting Guides and Manuals)

FOREWORD

The purpose of this guide is to provide an overview of the scope and duties of the **Post Scouting Chair** position. It is not intended to be an encyclopedia on Scouting – those resources are easily found elsewhere. This guidance for American Legion-chartered Scouting units is provided with the newly appointed Post Scouting Chair in mind...a volunteer who has ventured into a job designed to bridge the two cultures of the The American Legion (TAL) and the Boy Scouts of America (BSA). This guide should bring clarity to terms, roles and responsibilities, new regulations, and create consistency for those both old and new to this critical juncture of TAL and BSA.

BACKGROUND

Of note, the Boy Scouts of American will officially change its name to Scouting America effective February 8, 2025.

The Boy Scouts of America is a congressionally chartered national corporation founded in 1910. Its mission is to provide a program for America's youth that will prepare them to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. The American Legion is also a congressionally chartered national corporation founded in 1919.

Shortly after its organization, TAL adopted the BSA program as its official and primary program for Children and Youth under the Americanism pillar. TAL does this by encouraging its Posts to partner with local BSA Councils to charter individual local Scout units. TAL has developed over the years into one of the largest community organizations to charter Scout units nationwide. **The bond between TAL and BSA is strong.**

POST SCOUTING CHAIR

If you serve your Post and Scouting as the **Post Scouting Chair**, you deserve gratitude from both fine organizations. You have volunteered to take on a uniquely important position in your Post. While most other Chairs are involved in activities supporting the older generations of veterans, you will be guiding and shaping the development of the youngest generation of Americans. Your involvement will impact how they embrace leadership, citizenship, patriotism and community service.

In this role, you serve as the Scouting advisor to the Post Americanism Chair, but ultimately to the Post Commander, on all issues related to Scouting. Your duties will vary depending on the level of your Post's involvement in Scouting. While not every Post has the resources to charter or sponsor Scouting units, this should not be a deterrent to your Post's and your involvement in Scouting. There are many Scout units in every community that will benefit from the support of the Legion. You may involve your Post in Scouting in many ways, such as:

- inviting neighboring Scout units to march in veteran and patriotic parades
- providing instruction in flag handling and respect
- encouraging Legionnaires to be merit badge counselors
- allowing Scout units to use Post facilities for meetings or fundraising events
- donating equipment directly to Scout units (but not funds)
- donating funds to the local Scout council through Friends of Scouting
- presenting Eagle Scout certificates (downloadable from TAL national website)

If your Post does charter a Scouting unit(s), or wishes to start one, your Post Scouting Chair position will evolve into an even more important role. So, what is chartering?

CHARTERING

The terms chartering and sponsoring of Scouting units are often used synonymously but are distinctly different. **Chartering...a formal charter between a BSA council and a chartered organization (place of worship, school, veterans service organization or other community group)...entitles the organization or group to conduct the Scouting program with adult leadership that they approve in order to accomplish its mutual objectives and to serve the organization's and community's youth and families.** Having a charter with the BSA is very similar to being awarded a business franchise. Each partner is beholden to conduct business in a certain way, and each relies on the other for different aspects of the partnership.

TAL charters all of its 55 Departments to deliver the American Legion programs. Each Department then charters Posts to do the same. Similarly, the BSA charters 253 Councils nationwide to deliver its youth programs. The Councils then partner individually with Posts to jointly charter Scout units. This charter is renewed every year and is codified through an "Annual Unit Charter Agreement" which must be signed by the Post Commander. This agreement outlines the conditions under which the Post is to conduct and deliver its youth program through Scouting units. It is very important that these conditions are read, understood and followed. This chartering procedure supports an important legal relationship.

SPONSORING

Sponsoring is the less formal support of a Scouting unit. It often involves donating money, providing opportunities to earn money, allowing post property to be used for activities, courts of honor, service projects or meetings without that formal agreement that a charter codifies. Posts can provide this type of support to as many Scouting units as it can reasonably handle.

SCOUTING UNITS

There are several types of Scouting units, each one tailored to a different BSA program and youth age group. They are:

BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA (BSA) PROGRAMS

PROGRAM NAME	YOUTH INVOLVEMENT	UNIT NAME
1. CUB SCOUTS	grades K to 5, ages 5 to 10 ½	Organized as Packs.
2. SCOUTS BSA (formerly Boy Scouts)	grades 6 to 12, ages 10 ½ to 17	Organized as Troops.
3. VENTURING	grades 8 to 12, ages 14 to 20	Organized as Crews.
4. SEA SCOUTS	grades 8 to 12, ages 14 to 20	Organized as Ships.
5. EXPLORING	grades 6 to 8, ages 11 to 13 grades 8 to 12, ages 13 to 20	Organized as Clubs Organized as Posts.

(NOTE – Varsity Scouts, BSA ended December, 2017 and STEM is a sub-program involved with any of the above.)

The Cub Scout program opened its membership to girls in September of 2018, with the Scouts BSA program (formerly Boy Scouts) following suit in February of 2019. Girls in the BSA are not referred to as “Girl Scouts”, as that name belongs to the Girl Scouts of the USA, which is not affiliated with the BSA. Just call all of the youth “Scouts”. Cub Scout packs can be (all) Boy, (all) Girl, or Family packs, which include both genders. Scouts BSA troops are organized as Boy and Girl troops, with a B or G suffix that follows their unit number to identify it as a Boy or Girl troop. But they are all called “Scouts”.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POST AND ITS SCOUT UNITS

The relationship between the Post and its Scouting units is well established by the Charter agreement and the various BSA Rules and Regulations referenced therein. To list some of them:

- The Post wholly owns all of the assets of its chartered Scouting units. This includes all properties, gear, vehicles, trailers and any funds that the unit has raised or collected.
- The Post exercises reasonable control and approval of the activities of the Scout units, and in particular, the financial activities. Scouting units utilize the Post’s EIN for tax exemption purposes. The Post usually pays their Units’ annual registration (charter) fee.
- Scouting units are on as equal a program level within the Post as the SAL, Auxiliary, and ALR and can be codified as such in the Post Bylaws.
- The Post Commander gets a Scouting title - Institution Head (IH) or Executive Officer

(XO) - and is the only person who may sign the Charter Agreement. The IH is, however, NOT a registered Scout leader and does not need to pay dues or take Scouting training.

- The IH agrees to appoint one Legionnaire to represent the Post at the Post's chartered Scout unit level - the Chartered Organization Representative (COR). That one COR is responsible for all of the Post's chartered Scout units.

THE BSA CHARTERED ORGANIZATION REPRESENTATIVE ROLE

The Chartered Organization Representative (COR) is a BSA position. The title is a mouthful and almost always just referred to as the C-O-R by pronouncing the individual letters. Note – try not to pronounce this as “core”, as it will immediately identify you as an outsider in Scouting circles. Chartered Rep is another acceptable way of shortening the title, especially when speaking with other Legionnaires.

The COR is almost always the Post Scouting Chair. Thus, your Post Scouting Chair should be prepared to assume a BSA Unit level position as the COR. The COR is a registered Scout leader, should wear the BSA Field uniform when supporting the Scouts, must comply with and enforce all BSA rules and regulations, and must take the required BSA training.

On behalf of the Post, the COR is both a Human Resources and Quality Control manager of the Scouting unit. The COR is the only registered Scouter (adult volunteer) in the Post's Scouting units who may approve adult volunteers for unit leadership positions. If it ever were to become necessary, the COR is the only one authorized to remove an adult leader from a position. The COR approves fundraising activities and liaisons with the Post Finance Officer for periodic reviews of the Scout units' financial activities. Additionally, since the CORs are registered Scout leaders, they are also voting members at the local BSA district (as a district committee member at large) and at the council's annual meeting. The COR is responsible for representing the American Legion's interests in a proactive manner at both of these two local levels.

For these reasons, **the Legionnaire filling the Post Scouting Chair/COR position ideally does so on a long-term basis.** With Post Commanders frequently changing, it is important for the Scouting units to have a consistent point of contact and advocate at the Post.

The Post Scouting Chair should report the status of their Scouting units to the Post Commander, Post Executive Board, and the Post general membership frequently, and optimally on a monthly basis. They should also maintain consistent communications with their Department of Florida District Scouting Chair. Although the COR is a registered Scout leader, their position does not require them to take an active role in the day to day delivery of the Scout program in their units. Many other Scout leaders will be required in order to do this.

SCOUT UNIT LEADERSHIP

The overall operation of a Scouting unit is entrusted to what is referred to as the **Key 3**: The **COR**, the **Committee Chair (CC)**, and the **Unit Leader**. Both the CC and the Unit Leader are approved by the COR. Every Scouting unit has its own CC. The Unit Committee Chair:

- Reports the unit's status to the COR on a regular basis
- Leads the Unit Committee and all aspects of the unit
- Approves all youth for membership
- Recommends adults for leadership positions to the COR

- Holds a registered BSA position and is properly trained
- Ensures the unit knows and follows all BSA rules
- Has as many approved adults on the Unit Committee as is necessary to run the unit

The Committee Chair recommends Unit Leaders to deliver the Scout program to the youth. These Unit Leaders have different titles depending on the type of unit. The Unit Leaders will have as many assistants as are needed to properly deliver their program. The Top Unit Leaders are:

Cubmaster	for Cub Scout Packs
Scoutmaster	for Scouts BSA Troops
Advisor	for Venturing Crews
Skipper	for Sea Scout Ships
Sponsor	for Explorer Clubs
Advisor	for Explorer Posts

Unit Leaders do the following:

- Deliver the official Scout Program to their Unit's youth
- Organize work for their assistant leaders and sub-leaders
- Ensure that the program follows BSA guidelines as they pertain to Youth Protection and safety.
- Serve as advisors only to the Unit Committee

It is very important on a practical level that each BSA adult leader fully understands their role and has cognizance of their position and responsibilities. Each position in Scouting is already clearly defined.

CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING ADULT LEADERS

For the Screening of Leaders, know that

- As part of the adult membership registration process, the BSA will screen each adult applicant for legal background issues, driving records, and run their names against lists of barred individuals

For the Selection of Leaders, consider

- An interview of each adult by the CC and the COR before selecting and registering
- That each adult's skills and attitudes match their position
- Instituting a trial period before the assignment is permanent
- That not everyone is always selected for the position they want
- That enthusiasm does not always equate to competence...ensure that prospective leaders meet your expectations regarding communication, attendance, and organizational skills

For the Training of Leaders, remember

- Youth Protection Training is completed before first registration & again bi-annually
- Position-specific training is completed within 90 days of registration and before every change of position.

- Advanced leadership and Scouting skills training of your leaders should be encouraged (e.g. Basic Adult Leadership Outdoor Orientation – BALOO, Introduction to Outdoor Leadership Skills - IOLS, University of Scouting, Wood Badge)
- Recognize training and tenure accomplishments

For the Protection of everyone, know that

- BSA National provides General Liability insurance and indemnification for all adult leaders
- Local BSA Councils provide secondary medical insurance coverage for all during Scouting activities
- These coverages are in effect ONLY if all of the BSA rules are followed
-

Your Scout unit is a reflection of your Post and its leaders are a reflection of you. Be sure to take the time and care necessary in selecting them. The best question to always ask yourself is this: “Would I want this individual to supervise my child or grandchild?”

Where Can I Get Help?

When you contact your local Scout Council for assistance, you will be placed in contact with a professional, full-time Scout representative, typically called a **District Executive (DE) or District Director (DD)**. If you already have a Scouting unit, its Committee Chair and Unit Leader will know your DE or DD. These professionals are specifically tasked with helping the Posts CORs establish and maintain their Scout units. Please be sure to make this important first contact, as they will simplify the process for your Post to deliver your Scouting programs.

The Scouting District in which your Post resides will have a large number of volunteer Scout leaders whose mission is to help your Scout units succeed. Principal among these is the Unit Commissioner and one should be assigned to your units. If you don't have one or haven't met yours, contact your DE or District Commissioner to address that.

The Department of Florida Legion District in which your Post resides should have a District Scouting Chair. The Department of Florida also has a Department Scouting Chair. Inform your Legion chain of command of any issues, and use the Legion Scouting chain for assistance. If your District doesn't have a Scouting Chair, you can contact the Department Scouting Chair directly at Scouting@legionmail.org.

You will find many resources and information at the Department website under the Scouting tab. <https://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/scouting/resources/>

- These items will be updated and revised with new information as needed. There have been many changes in Scouting recently and there will undoubtedly be many in the future. Also, the Department website has an archive of monthly Legion Link publications which have Scouting articles dealing with current topical issues.

Your most important task is to know when help is needed, and how to ask the appropriate position to assist. Never be afraid to ask for help.

DETAILS THAT CAN KEEP YOU OUT OF TROUBLE

Remember that Scout units are NOT military-type organizations and should never be run like, or treated as such. No camouflage or military type uniform items should be allowed at any Scout events.

Two Deep Leadership...a key tenet of the BSA Youth Protection policy...dictates that neither you nor your adult leaders should ever have contact with a Scout unless another adult over 21 is present. This includes meetings, counseling, emails, texts, phone conversations, social media etc. BSA has explicit rules for all of this. (The Scout's parents are, of course, excepted.)

Remember that the Post, and not the unit, maintains possession of the unit's financial and material assets. When the unit raises money, it does so for the unit needs and not the individual Scouts. ***Fiscal Policies and Procedures for BSA Units, March 2015, BSA Product Sales Guide, August 2014***, and the ***BSA Fundraising Policy and Procedures Manual*** are governing references for all BSA unit financial activities. They may easily be found by searching online.

As noted above, membership in the Cub Scouts was opened to girls in September of 2018 and in Scouts BSA starting in February of 2019. There are special safety considerations for girls in BSA programs, some of which are still being developed. Stay in touch with your DE, Unit Commissioner and Scout District as the details are revealed and updated.

Bylaws for your Scouting units are inappropriate and BSA will not recognize any of them; rather the units follow the Post Bylaws. The units may write up short procedural guides for their day-to-day operations. These Unit Handbooks are extremely valuable, particularly for parents of new Scouts entering the unit.

As a Post Scouting Chair/COR, you should wear the BSA Field uniform when serving in your COR role, and your American Legion uniform when in your Post Scouting Chair capacity. No Scout or adult leader affiliated with an AL-chartered unit may wear any American Legion item or marking on the BSA Field uniform, with three notable exceptions.

- Only the Post's COR may elect to wear the 3" round Legion Emblem Boy Scout patch (Item Number 720.003) in the temporary patch position on the right pocket of the BSA Field Uniform.
- Post Scouting units are allowed (and encouraged) to order custom numeral emblems (the numbers on the left sleeve of the BSA Field Uniform, directly underneath the Council Shoulder Patch) that reflect their American Legion affiliation.
- Scouters awarded the American Legion Square Knot Award, and thus eligible to wear the BSA Community Organization Knot on the BSA Field Service Uniform, may place a 3/8-inch American Legion Lapel Tack in the center of the knot (Item Number 715.100)
- The Legion Emblem Scouting Shoulder Patch (Item Number 720.430) is not for wear on the BSA Field Uniform, but rather on the left sleeve of the Legion uniform.



- The Legion Scouting Insignia patch (Item Number 720.337) can and should be worn on the left side of the cap to identify your dual role as a Legionnaire and a Scouter.



Legion caps MAY NOT be worn with the BSA Field Uniform. These decisions were made jointly between BSA and TAL National Headquarters in December of 2018. This guidance is posted at the Department website under Scouting.

Rules and Regulations of the BSA, July 2023 can be found at the Department of Florida Scouting Resource link (<https://www.floridalegion.org/programs-services/scouting/resources/>)

IN CLOSING

Again, the objective of this guidance is to give new Scouting Chairs a head start in understanding and performing in their positions. Any recommendations for additions, deletions or clarifications are welcome and appreciated. Please forward them to the Scouting Chair at the address below.

Your commitment to this very important Family and Youth program of TAL's Americanism pillar is noteworthy. Very few programs provide more goodwill to the community than our Scouting programs. And none contribute as profoundly to the moral, ethical, character and leadership development of our youth than a well-run and safe Scouting program.

Yours in Scouting and For God and Country,

Christopher M. Ragusa

Christopher M Ragusa
Scouting Chair
Department of Florida
The American Legion
Scouting@legionmail.org