



# Handbook for Officers and Advisers

Contains the current policies concerning the organization and administration of the Order of the Arrow lodge.



SCOUTING AMERICA®  
ORDER OF THE ARROW



Scouts and their parents expect all Boy Scouts of America activities to be conducted safely. To ensure the safety of participants, the Boy Scouts of America expects leaders to use the four points of **SAFE** when delivering the Scouting program.

## SUPERVISION

Youth are supervised by qualified and trustworthy adults who set the example for safety.

- Accepting responsibility for the well-being and safety of youth under their care.
- Ensuring that adults are adequately trained, experienced, and skilled to lead the activity, including the ability to prevent and respond to likely problems and potential emergencies.
- Knowing and delivering the program of the Boy Scouts of America with integrity.
- Using qualified instructors, guides, or safety personnel as needed to provide additional guidance.
- Maintaining engagement with participants during activities to ensure compliance with established rules and procedures.

## ASSESSMENT

Activities are assessed for risks during planning. Leaders have reviewed applicable program guidance or standards and have verified the activity is not prohibited. Risk avoidance or mitigation is incorporated into the activity.

- Predetermining what guidance and standards are typically applied to the activity, including those specific to the Boy Scouts of America program.
- Planning for safe travel to and from the activity site.
- Validating the activity is age-appropriate for the Boy Scouts of America program level.
- Determining whether the unit has sufficient training, resources, and experience to meet the identified standards and, if not, modifying the activity accordingly.
- Developing contingency plans for changes in weather and environment and arranging for communication with participants, parents, and emergency services.

## FITNESS AND SKILL

Participants' Annual Health and Medical Records are reviewed, and leaders have confirmed that prerequisite fitness and skill levels exist for participants to take part safely.

- Confirming the activity is right for the age, maturity, and physical abilities of participants.
- Considering as risk factors temporary or chronic health conditions of participants.
- Validating minimum skill requirements identified during planning and ensuring participants stay within the limits of their abilities.
- Providing training to participants with limited skills and assessing their skills before they attempt more advanced skills.

## EQUIPMENT AND ENVIRONMENT

Safe and appropriately sized equipment, courses, camps, campsites, trails, or playing fields are used properly. Leaders periodically check gear use and the environment for changing conditions that could affect safety.

- Confirming participants' clothing is appropriate for expected temperatures, sun exposure, weather events, and terrain.
- Providing equipment that is appropriately sized for participants, is in good repair, and is used properly.
- Ensuring personal and group safety equipment is available, properly fitted, and used consistently and in accordance with training.
- Reviewing the activity area for suitability during planning and immediately before use, and monitoring the area during the activity through supervision.
- Adjusting the activity for changing conditions or ending it if safety cannot be maintained.

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# Handbook for Officers and Advisers

## Foreword

Congratulations to Arrowmen who have accepted leadership in the lodge. You have an important responsibility to your fellow Arrowmen and to the future of your lodge. This book has been written especially for you.

While some of the material will seem familiar, it is important that you absorb all the information offered in this handbook and display the knowledge you gain through your leadership performance.

This *Order of the Arrow Handbook for Officers and Advisers* (formerly the *Guide for Officers and Advisers*) reflects the current policies concerning the organization and administration of the Order of the Arrow lodge. It is available at the Order's official Website, [www.oa-scouting.org](http://www.oa-scouting.org). All lodge and chapter officers and advisers should have a copy.







## Lodge Administration

Upon close study, you'll find that your lodge—its purpose, program, and especially its membership—is a natural extension of Scouting itself. It stems from a mutual desire of its members—experienced Scouts and Scouters—to serve a program they greatly admire, respect, and believe in. Good lodge administration is crucial to the lodge's success and, when properly conducted, brings together a dynamic group of self-motivated individuals, uniting them in service to others. It develops synergy, that rare instance where the sum of all the parts is greater than the whole.

Policies and procedures for the Order of the Arrow, which are developed by the National Order of the Arrow Committee based on sound and tested experience, unify the lodges nationally in furthering the objectives of the Order as Scouting's National Honor Society. The unique attraction of the Order is its combination of inspiration, fellowship, and fun that holds, in dedicated service and devotion, your council's finest youth and adults.

As a leader, you show the way for others. Lead by example, in thought, word, and deed. Follow the policies, procedures, and guidelines that have been established, adapting them as necessary to local conditions. Always remember not to shortcut a procedure or bypass a policy, for in doing so you weaken not only your lodge but also the Order of the Arrow nationally.

From its humble beginning, the Order of the Arrow was designed as a resource to Scouting. It is often credited with maintaining the interest of older youth in Scouting and retaining them as they reach adulthood, providing a pool of leaders to Scouting in the council. Arrowmen

can best serve the movement through their personal example by upholding the spirit and traditions of the Order and Scouting.

### Health and Safety

When planning OA activities and meetings, officers and advisers need to make sure that all Scouting America safety rules are followed.

### Youth Protection

Scouting America Youth Protection rules must be strictly followed. Key points are covered below. More information is at [www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection](http://www.scouting.org/training/youth-protection).

Two-deep leadership is required on all Order of the Arrow meetings, trips, and outings. This is a minimum requirement and additional supervision may be necessary depending on the nature of the activities and the size of the group.

Two registered adult leaders 21 years of age or over are required at all Scouting activities, including meetings. A registered female adult leader age 21 or over must be present for any activity including female youth. Notwithstanding the minimum leader requirement, age and program appropriate supervision must always be provided.

Eligible leadership must:

- Be age 21 or over,
- Be registered as volunteers with Scouting America (this includes a background check), and

- Be up-to-date on Youth Protection Training

All Arrowmen who are 18 to 20 years old are considered adults except for voting and holding office, in which case they are considered youth members. This is not only a policy—it is just common sense.

Keep the following in mind when female youth and adults are present:

- Restroom and shower facilities must be available for females or schedules created to provide separate times for female use.
- Separate tent or sleeping accommodations must be provided for boys and girls (under age 18) and for adult males and females, and tent-mates under age 18 cannot be greater than two years apart in age.

## Guide to Safe Scouting

More broadly, a reference to help ensure safe Scouting America events, and a mandatory source for all OA activities and meetings, is the online *Guide to Safe Scouting*, available at [www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss](http://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss).

## Short-Term Camps

Lodge and chapter officers and advisers must make sure that the National Camp Accreditation Program (NCAP) short-term camp requirements are followed for any short-term camp. Any overnight lodge or chapter activity or meeting likely qualifies as a short-term camp. A short-term camp is any council-organized overnight camping program, whether one-time or continuing, that is one, two or three nights in length where the council, lodge or chapter, or its agents provide the staffing and may provide program and food services, and includes camps conducted off council properties. Consult with the lodge staff adviser or a chapter staff adviser if there are any questions about whether an event is a short-term camp. For more information, see [www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/camping/short-term-camp](http://www.scouting.org/outdoor-programs/camping/short-term-camp).

## Organization

Next to the membership itself, the lodge is the most important element in the Order of the Arrow because that is where the program is carried out. But before it can carry out the program, the lodge must be properly organized.

Within the council, the Scout executive is the final authority over the Order of the Arrow and, for this reason, holds the title of Supreme Chief of the Fire. It is the Scout executive's job to see that the lodge adheres to national policy.

Each year the Scout executive appoints an adult volunteer to serve as the lodge adviser. As Deputy Supreme Chief of the Fire, the lodge adviser acts on behalf of the Scout executive in guiding the day-to-day affairs of the lodge. This person normally serves as a member of the council's camping or program committee and is frequently selected to serve on the council executive board.

In some councils, the Scout executive serves as the lodge staff adviser, but in most cases appoints a member of the professional staff to that position. The staff adviser, as Chief of the Fire, acts on behalf of the Scout executive in giving guidance to the lodge adviser and the lodge leadership. With support and counsel from the Scout executive, it is the staff adviser's role to see that the lodge adheres to national policy. A handbook for staff advisers is available at [oa-scouting.org/resources/publications](http://oa-scouting.org/resources/publications).

Many lodges are broken down into smaller organizational groups called chapters. Chapter advisers and chapter staff advisers are appointed annually by the Scout executive, and act on behalf of the lodge adviser in guiding the day-to-day affairs of the chapter.

All lodge and chapter advisers should be Scouters with experience and tenure in the Order of the Arrow. They need to work closely with district and council volunteers and professional Scouters. It is the adviser's responsibility to see that the OA is working in close support of, and in harmony with, the council's strategic plan. *It must at all times be remembered that the Order is an extension of Scouting, an integral part of it, rather than a separate program.*



The lodge adviser and lodge chief normally serve as members of the council camping or program committee, while the chapter adviser and chapter chief normally serve on the district camping or program committee.

Optionally, with prior approval from the Scout executive, the lodge or chapter adviser may appoint an associate lodge adviser or associate chapter adviser annually to help fulfill the mission of the lodge. One associate at the chapter level should be enough; at the lodge level more than one position may be appropriate, depending on the size of the lodge and the duties assigned. If too many associates are appointed, they could interfere and cause confusion for the youth who are trying to lead. Service in any of these positions should not be considered an automatic pathway to the chapter or lodge adviser role.

**Lodge officers.** The elected officers of the lodge are the lodge chief, lodge vice chief, lodge secretary, and lodge treasurer. Some lodges find it desirable to elect more than one vice chief. Arrowmen desiring to serve as a lodge (or chapter) officer or committee chair must meet these eligibility requirements:

1. Be currently registered in Scouts BSA, Venturing, or Sea Scouting, in the council that charters the lodge.
2. Be a member in good standing in the lodge.
3. Be younger than 21 for the entire term of office.

Officers serve a one-year term. Suggested terms of office are a calendar year, January 1 through December 31, or a school year, e.g., September 1 through August 31. Officers may be re-elected. It is recommended that lodge officers hold no other office in the Order of the Arrow. This practice will allow the officer to devote their entire effort to the successful performance of the duties and responsibilities of the office. Lodge chiefs who are elected to be a section chief must resign the lodge chief position within 30 days after election as section chief; section chiefs may not seek election as a lodge chief while serving as a section chief.

All members of the lodge younger than 21 are eligible to vote.

**Lodge executive committee.** The executive committee of the lodge—a key group—consists of the youth serving as lodge officers (including the immediate past lodge chief), lodge operating committee chairs and their advisers, the staff adviser, the lodge adviser, and the Scout executive. If the lodge membership decides that this group is not representative, a lodge may select two or three members at large—training or public relations experts, for instance—to serve on the committee. If there are chapters in the lodge, the chapter chiefs and chapter advisers are members of the lodge executive committee. Any lodge member is welcome to attend executive committee meetings as an observer.

The executive committee is the steering committee of the lodge. It faces the problems, studies possible solutions, and then, through the lodge or chapter committee organization, acts. It carries out the business of the lodge, coordinating the work being done by officers and operating committees. Regardless of any executive committee decision or undertaking, the lodge must operate within the policies established by the National Order of the Arrow Committee, without variation or modification.

The lodge chief is chairperson and presides over meetings. The lodge chief is expected to prepare agendas and share them with the lodge and staff adviser before sending them to committee members with the meeting announcement.

A definite schedule for executive committee meetings should be established before the start of the lodge year. Meetings held monthly or every two months are the customary pattern. Each committee member should have a schedule of the meetings. It is understood that the lodge chief or Scout executive is privileged to call a special meeting of the committee if the need arises.

The executive committee is a relatively small group and thus is able to handle the business of the lodge in a quick and efficient manner. The entire membership of the lodge should,

however, receive a report of all major decisions and projects being planned.

Members of the executive committee who are staff members at a Scouting America resident camp may serve on an Order of the Arrow camp council to handle the OA's business during camp. When not in camp, the lodge chief appoints an Arrowman to serve as camp OA coordinator. The OA provides a reference for this position at [oa-scouting.org/resources/ucl-support/oa-camp-coordinator](https://oa-scouting.org/resources/ucl-support/oa-camp-coordinator).

**Key 3 leadership.** The working relationship of the chief, volunteer adviser, and professional staff adviser is commonly referred to as the "Key 3." Key 3 leadership is common to all levels of the Order: chapter, lodge, section, region, and national. The Key 3 should meet regularly at each level to establish goals and to evaluate progress toward those goals.

**Operating committees.** For the lodge to achieve its camping promotion and cheerful service objectives, several operating committees must be organized to implement its programs.

Committee chairs are appointed by the lodge chief with the approval of the lodge adviser. They become members of the executive committee and may pick their own committee members subject to the approval of the lodge chief.

Each operating committee should have one or more adult committee advisers to guide committee work. They are appointed by the lodge adviser in consultation with the lodge chief and are approved by the Scout executive or staff adviser. It is the adviser's job to provide information, instruction, and coaching for the committee members.

Every Arrowman should serve on one or more committees. In this way, all members share responsibility for lodge activities and projects. Lodge officers should not be burdened with all the details of committee meetings and related projects.

Some larger lodges broaden their committee structure to include editorial, public relations, high adventure, training, etc.

Lodges organized by chapters should have corresponding chapter-level committees with the chapter committee chairs serving on the corresponding lodge level committees.

Here are some of the basic lodge operating committees:

**Activities committee.** Develops plans for two or three membership meeting activities for the lodge each year and is responsible for carrying them out.

**Camping promotion committee.** Develops plans for camping promotion in consultation with the council camping committee; develops promotion helps such as "Where to Go Camping" resources, visual aids, and movies or videos of camping activities.

**Ceremonial committee.** Recruits and trains ceremonialists for pre-Ordeal, Ordeal, and Brotherhood ceremonies, and for the Vigil Honor unless that responsibility is managed by a Vigil committee. Researches appropriate ceremonial attire, procures or assists members in making it, and ensures the attire is clean, properly stored and in good repair. Maintains ceremonial circles used in the performance of all lodge ceremonies. Conducts lodge and unit ceremonies when requested.

**Communication committee.** Prepares lodge newsletters and social media campaigns, develops and maintains lodge websites, organizes and operates the network of OA unit representatives to keep units informed, and promotes participation in OA events and activities. Some lodges may want to create a separate OA unit representative committee. A communication toolkit with lodge best practices is at [oa-scouting.org/resources/communications-toolkit](https://oa-scouting.org/resources/communications-toolkit).

**Finance committee.** Draws up an annual budget based on administrative and program needs, obtains information from the council service center, issues regular finance reports, and is responsible for maintaining the financial status of the lodge. A manual for guiding lodge finances and policies is at [oa-scouting.org/resources/publications](https://oa-scouting.org/resources/publications).

**Inductions committee.** Plans and administers Ordeals, recruits and trains Elangomats and Nimats, administers the Brotherhood hike, and conducts new member orientation. The *Inductions Handbook* provides a ready reference for this committee; it is at [oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions/inductions-handbook](http://oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions/inductions-handbook).

**Leadership development committee.** Plans an annual conference to build members' leadership and job-specific skills, and coordinates continued leadership training throughout the year based on current lodge needs. A guide for lodge leader development is available at [oa-scouting.org/training/syllabi](http://oa-scouting.org/training/syllabi).

**Membership committee.** Checks on inactive members, maintains membership records in OA LodgeMaster, sends out letters each year to identify active members and checks address changes, and sends letters to Ordeal members eligible for Brotherhood membership.

**Service committee.** Suggests a yearly schedule of service projects, obtains lodge approval, and makes complete plans for accomplishing the work.

**Unit elections committee.** Sends out information to unit leaders regarding candidate election procedures, organizes and trains election teams, schedules visits of election teams to units, and records the results of elections. The *Unit Elections Handbook* provides a ready reference and is at [oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions/unit-elections-handbook](http://oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions/unit-elections-handbook).

**Ad hoc committees.** Committees are sometimes appointed to temporarily carry out some specific assignments such as lodge officer nominations, Vigil Honor nominations, lodge rule revisions, or running a single service project, a banquet, or other major lodge activity.

## The Lodge Key 3's Duties

The Lodge Chief	The Lodge Adviser	The Lodge Staff Adviser
1. Elected from the youth membership of the lodge. Responsible to the Scout executive through the lodge adviser and staff adviser for performance of duties. Becomes a member of the council camping or program committee.	1. Appointed annually by the Scout executive. Becomes a member of the council camping or program committee and may be elected to the council executive board. Attends all meetings of that council committee and knows the camping situation in each unit. Knows from chapter reports which units need camping promotion and training.	1. Appointed annually by the Scout executive. If not a member when appointed, participates in the first available Ordeal. Consults with the Scout executive on annual performance and appointment of the lodge adviser.
2. Responsible for adherence to the program and policies of the lodge. Attends appropriate council, section, regional, and national OA functions.	2. Understands the policies and principles of the OA and sees that they are followed in the lodge. Sees that all lodge funds are handled properly. Attends all lodge functions. Attends appropriate council, section, regional, and national OA functions.	2. Understands the policies and principles of Scouting America and the OA. Communicates and ensures their application to OA functions. Ensures funds are properly budgeted, receipted, disbursed, and transmitted according to council procedures and the Scouting America accounting manual. Attends lodge functions and other appropriate OA activities as available.

The Lodge Chief	The Lodge Adviser	The Lodge Staff Adviser
3. Works closely with the lodge adviser, seeking advice and training. The chief does not wait for the adviser to contact them, but contacts the adviser often. Establishes annual goals and objectives for the lodge including attainment of Performance Measurement Program recognition.	3. Sees that the lodge officers get the job done by providing them with tools, opportunities, and necessary transportation. Knows the adult role in the OA and does not wait for the lodge chief to contact them, but is self-motivated and offers help. Assists in establishing goals and objectives, including attainment of Performance Measurement Program recognition.	3. Provides council, regional, and national information, literature, and correspondence to lodge advisers and appropriate committees. Orders materials and supplies from the national service center and Supply Group.
4. Attends all lodge activities and lodge executive committee meetings. Promotes attendance and participation of lodge officers and committee chairs.	4. Makes sure the lodge chief conducts lodge executive committee meetings. Attends all meetings and activities and, for in-person ones, sits with the lodge chief.	4. Works with the lodge adviser to help the lodge chief conduct lodge executive committee meetings. Attends and, for in-person meetings, sits with the lodge adviser and lodge chief.
5. Appoints lodge operating committee chairs in consultation with the lodge adviser and lodge staff adviser.	5. Appoints an adult adviser to each lodge officer and committee chair, in consultation with the lodge chief and staff adviser.	5. Recommends and obtains Scout executive approval of prospective adult advisers.
6. Assigns lodge members to operating committees in consultation with the lodge adviser and lodge staff adviser.	6. Helps every adult Arrowman in the lodge to be a functioning adviser, either as a unit leader (or assistant) or an adult adviser to a lodge or chapter committee or project. There are no honorary adult positions in the Order, the lodge, or the chapter.	6. Encourages appropriate adult participation and support to committees and activities. Informs professional staff associates of OA activities, program, and correspondence.
7. Reminds lodge officers and committee chairs to attend meetings of lodge operating committees related to their assignments.	7. Reminds adult lodge committee advisers to attend the meetings of the lodge operating committees related to their assignments. Ensures the lodge charter renewal application is completed and submitted on time.	7. Works with the lodge adviser to ensure appropriate adult participation in meetings of lodge operating committees related to their assignments. With the lodge adviser, ensures the lodge charter renewal application is completed and submitted on time.
8. Presides over all lodge and lodge executive committee meetings. Works from an agenda established by the Key 3. Solicits agenda items from lodge officers and committee chairs.	8. Aids the lodge chief in producing effective agendas for these meetings. Promotes attendance of appointed adult advisers. Encourages work with officers and committee chairs prior to the meetings.	8. Recommends agenda items. Ensures that financial and activity reports required from the council office are provided with timely information. Works with advisers to the lodge treasurer and other committees concerning the information in the reports.

The Lodge Chief	The Lodge Adviser	The Lodge Staff Adviser
9. Responsible for planning and conducting lodge activities.	9. Limits annual lodge activities to an appropriate number of exciting events scheduled each year that involve the entire lodge membership. These activities should be well planned and provide opportunities for the Arrowmen to learn more about the Order and how to provide effective service. Clears all dates with the staff adviser.	9. Represents the OA at the council annual planning conference, coordinating dates with council, section, region, and national dates and with religious and other holidays. Makes appropriate reservations for council facilities. Works with office staff to ensure timely communication to the membership and units. Involves the OA in council programs. Ensures lodge representation at national and section OA functions.
10. Delegates duties to fellow lodge officers and committee chairs.	10. Helps the lodge chief delegate the full burden of the lodge program so that it is shared with the other lodge officers and committee chairs.	10. Monitors the delegation of responsibilities and assists the lodge adviser and lodge chief in evaluation, assignments, and follow-up.
11. Sees that the chapter program gives complete support to the lodge program.	11. Understands that the chapter (when so organized) is a division of the lodge for carrying out the lodge program. Every youth in the chapter is a member of a unit and has unit responsibilities. Each chapter activity should result in an enriched program for units. Frequently reviews the goals with officers to see that the OA program is being actively followed in each district.	11. Recommends to the Scout executive the appointment of chapter staff advisers. Communicates with chapter staff advisers and ensures appropriate council services to the chapter system. Evaluates and makes suggestions for chapter programs.
12. Undertakes lodge service projects with the advice and approval of their adviser.	12. Clears all lodge service projects with the staff adviser. Knows that the Arrowman is primarily a member of a unit and that OA projects must <b>not</b> remove a youth from their unit too often. The lodge service projects undertaken should be directly related to camping, the council Cub Scout, Scouts BSA, Venturing, or Sea Scouts programs, and the community.	12. Keeps the Scout executive informed on all OA projects. Recommends potential service projects for OA consideration. Coordinates with the camp ranger on Ordeal and other OA projects at camp.
13. Appoints the Vigil Honor nominating committee (chair and members approved by the lodge adviser and Scout executive).	13. Appoints an adviser to the Vigil Honor nominating committee in coordination with the lodge chief and staff adviser.	13. Administratively supports the functions of the Vigil Honor nominating committee.
14. Promotes the correct wearing of the Scout uniform by personal example and special lodge education programs.	14. Sets the example for youth and adult Arrowmen by correctly wearing the Scout uniform with the proper badges and insignia correctly placed.	14. Sets the example for youth and adult Arrowmen by correctly wearing the Scout uniform with proper badges and insignia correctly placed.

The Lodge Chief	The Lodge Adviser	The Lodge Staff Adviser
15. Works with the adviser in providing the lodge officers and chairs with unit contact information.	15. Provides lodge officers and committee chairs with rosters of the units in each district so that proper contact can be made for unit elections, camping promotion, etc. As the lodge adviser, maintains constant and regular contact with the staff adviser so that person can quickly relay any unit personnel changes, etc.	15. Secures rosters and reports required by the OA in a timely manner for their use.

<b>Duties of an Associate Lodge Adviser</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. As directed, supports and assists the lodge adviser in carrying out the operations of the lodge.</li> <li>2. Assumes other responsibilities and duties as assigned.</li> <li>3. Promotes participation in section, region, and national OA and Scouting events.</li> <li>4. Interprets OA policy in consultation with the lodge adviser.</li> <li>5. Serves as an example of the ideals of Scouting America and the OA.</li> <li>6. Wears the Scout uniform correctly.</li> <li>7. Attends meetings as directed by the lodge adviser.</li> <li>8. Functions as an adviser to the youth members.</li> </ol>

## Lodge Program

The first step to creating a good program is to lay out the entire year’s plan in advance and let everyone know about it. To do this, the lodge chief should work closely with the officers and advisers to determine the lodge’s goals and objectives for the coming year, for these dictate its program. From this initial planning session, a lodge program plan book is created. The plan book should include a calendar of events, describe the program of emphasis, and serve as a guide or plan throughout the year.

The lodge program should be directed toward achieving the purpose of the OA, council service, leadership development, and cheerful service to the community.

Lodges are expected to plan a program and activities to support the purpose of the OA, the local council, and its units through outdoor

program promotion and service. This includes the council resident camps, camp facilities, unit camping, Cub Scout outdoor experiences, and Webelos-to-Scout transition. In recent years, this has expanded from traditional areas such as unit camping promotion visits, and Scoutcraft skill resource teams to include many new fields, such as ecology, STEM, websites, social media and electronic communication. Many lodges hold an annual social affair to which members’ friends and family, or the community at large, are invited. These functions often serve as a means of raising funds to provide camp scholarships or for other worthwhile lodge projects. Typical events include hayrides, fish fries, annual banquets, winter carnivals, canoe trips, barbecues, and winter campouts. It must be remembered that prior to embarking on any type of fund-raising project, close coordination with and approval by the council must be secured.

Business meetings are essential to the administration of the OA. These include lodge executive committee meetings and other lodge committee meetings, which occur as necessary to accomplish their tasks. Lodge meetings, where the entire lodge membership gathers, are held much less frequently, and these are often in the form of a lodge fellowship weekend or day, conclave, or banquet. Lodges organized by chapters conduct chapter membership meetings monthly or every other month to deliver the Order of the Arrow program to the membership, foster communication, and organize the lodge's efforts to serve the council.

**Calendar of events.** The lodge executive committee is expected to develop a calendar policy, scheduling meetings to fall at regular intervals and at a routine time and place to improve attendance. Activities should fall on set weekends each year.

In developing the calendar, try to eliminate conflicts in scheduling. Take into account district and council activities, and avoid significant national, state, local, or religious holidays and important community or school events. The lodge calendar should be incorporated into the council planning calendar.

Caution should be exercised to not overprogram the lodge functions and distract from quality unit programs. *Remember, the Arrowman's first responsibility is to the unit.*

**Promoting activities.** The best way to promote lodge activities is by earning a reputation for quality programming—make every event a success. Other effective ways of promoting active participation are through proper coverage in the lodge newsletter and website, general distribution of the lodge calendar, special fliers or postcards, communication through the OA unit representatives, and phone call, email or social media reminders shortly before the activity. At each event, whether it is an activity or simply a meeting, take time to encourage members to attend the next scheduled activity, and to bring a fellow Arrowman who isn't present that day. A key to promoting any event is to begin the promotion well enough in advance so that people can be sure to hear about it and

place it on their calendars. In today's busy world, last-minute or late promotion is about as good as no promotion at all.

## Communication

Every lodge must develop a plan for effective communication to accomplish its objectives. It must inform members of lodge meetings and activities and also keep the Scouting community and the general public informed. Best results are accomplished through balanced communication. The OA Communications Toolkit should be used as a ready reference for lodge communication; it can be found at [oa-scouting.org/resources/communications-toolkit](https://oa-scouting.org/resources/communications-toolkit).

### *Officer Outlook and OA Today*

The national OA committee keeps OA members informed by periodic mass emails. The "*Officer Outlook*" is sent to national committee members and key volunteers, region/section leaders, and lodge Key 3 members. It is focused on lodge best practices and communicating national policy changes. The "*OA Today*" contains more general OA news and is sent to all individuals on general mailing lists accumulated from OA national events. Lodges are encouraged to share the contents of these emails with their membership. Past issues of the *Officer Outlook* may be viewed at [oa-scouting.org/news/officer-outlook](https://oa-scouting.org/news/officer-outlook). Past issues of the predecessor publication *Lodge Ledger* may be viewed at [oa-scouting.org/news/lodge-ledger](https://oa-scouting.org/news/lodge-ledger).

Lodge news items of national interest may be sent to [communications@oa-scouting.org](mailto:communications@oa-scouting.org). To be added to the "*OA Today*" mailing list, use the "Sign Up for eNews" section on [oa-scouting.org](https://oa-scouting.org).

## Camping Promotion

All Arrowmen should be committed to camping promotion. It is essential that Scouts go camping with their units. Over the years, camping has kept Scouts interested in Scouting.

Every OA lodge has the responsibility to do a good job of promoting Scout camping. Arrowmen can do camping promotion individually in their units or by becoming members of the lodge's camping promotion committee.

Arrowmen should be the top camping promoters in their unit. They should set the example for fellow Scouts by being the first to sign up for camp. They lead the way in planning for year-round camping events. They talk about camping, person-to-person with all Scouts.

Arrowmen are enthusiastic about camping and never miss an opportunity to encourage Scouts to enjoy the great outdoors. They are prepared to talk to parents of Scouts in their unit about the values of camping for their children. They assist the unit leader in planning and carrying out camping and high-adventure activities. As an example to younger Scouts BSA members, lodge members who are in Scouts BSA should advance toward Eagle rank and become especially skilled in camping techniques.

An Arrowman's first duty is to the unit. We must always keep in mind that a primary role of the Order of the Arrow is to strengthen units and help units to succeed, particularly in the outdoor phase of their program.

The lodge must work closely with appropriate council and district committees in carrying out the council camping promotion plan. The lodge adviser and lodge chief should be members of the council camping or program committee, and chapter advisers and chapter chiefs should be members of their respective district committees. The camping committees are responsible for camping promotion. It is not the role of the OA to assume total responsibility for camping promotion, but rather to give full support to the entire council and district camping program. This includes monthly unit camping as well as resident camp.

It is the lodge's duty to arrange for an annual Order of the Arrow election for new members in every eligible unit. Elections present an excellent opportunity to promote camping when an OA member takes the floor to explain the OA program to Scouts and leaders.

Teams of Arrowmen may also visit packs, troops, crews and ships to show them videos on camping, talk at parents' night meetings and roundtables, and help provide special unit-level camping programs. They can be a resource of experience and leadership available to assist new or struggling units, providing expertise that may be in short supply in the unit, be it at a meeting, on a weekend outing, or at resident camp. However, advising unit leaders and committee members about their responsibilities for camping should be left in the hands of council and district camping committees.

Many lodges have agreed to help camping committees by providing literature and visual aids (e.g., videos) about camping. Others have produced "Where to Go Camping" booklets or websites for several years. Arrowmen might conduct surveys, compile facts, and prepare the listings of nearby places to camp and hike. These listings should be updated periodically as new places are found and some campsites become unavailable.

Special attention should be given to outdoor adventure opportunities for Cub Scouts, Sea Scouts and Venturers. If Cubmasters, Sea Scout Skippers and Venturing Advisors have proper information at hand, they are more likely to take their units outdoors. Scouting America has an excellent resource, [Passport to High Adventure](#), that is useful in planning high-adventure programs for older Scouts, Sea Scouts and Venturers.

**Sample visit timetable.** The sample "[Camping Promotion Visit Timetable](#)" on page 13 was developed by a lodge, based on one designed for the council camping committee. It provides an effective method for recruiting, training, and scheduling unit visitation teams. This timetable may also be adapted to other phases of the lodge's program such as unit elections, a "Where to Go Camping" project, or a service or Ordeal weekend. The success of the lodge in camping promotion depends on its ability to meet deadlines. Remember, a lodge's camping promotion effort must be carried out in cooperation with council and district camping committees at all times.



## Camping Promotion Visit Timetable

Date schedule adopted by lodge: _____	From September _____
	To September _____

Deadline Date	The Job to Be Done	Date Completed
	Meet with council camping committee.	
	Lodge and chapter advisers obtain assignments and approval of plans.	
	Organize lodge and chapter camping promotion committees. Committees develop pattern of operation to carry out program.	
	Classify camping by district in advance. Classify each unit by camping status—always camps, sometimes camps, rarely camps, never camps.	
	Recruit and train three- to five-member visitation teams.	
	Obtain materials for visitation teams. Provide and train them in use of movies, videos, charts, literature, "Where to Go Camping" publications, exhibits, etc.	
	Contact unit leaders to schedule visits. Explain program to them; arrange time, place, facilities; suggest that parents be invited.	
	Make visits as scheduled. Be prepared with materials; know about units in advance; reschedule visits if necessary.	
	Set deadline for all unit visits. Dates must be set in advance and held to, unless officially extended, if plan is to be successful.	
	Give final report to council camping committee. Report should be in writing with unit analysis and results, problem areas, suggestions, etc.	

## Membership Records

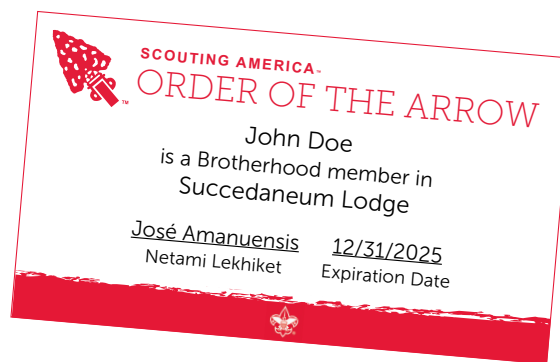
It is essential that each lodge keep accurate membership records at all times. Knowing who the members are and how they can be contacted (address, phone number, and email) is vital for good communication. All personal information must be protected on behalf of the lodge's members. Knowing the dates of Ordeal and Brotherhood memberships and Vigil Honor recognition is vital to conducting accurate inductions.

Every lodge also needs to know who has paid the current year's dues. Continuing to mail correspondence and newsletters to unregistered members is costly. More importantly, determining who has not paid dues tells the lodge whom it needs to contact to encourage reregistration. Perhaps the members feel left out and need to feel wanted. A call, letter, or email from a friend or the OA unit representative could make a difference.

All lodge members must first be registered members of Scouting America. The Scout executive is required to certify that all lodge members are currently registered members of Scouting America and have been checked against the council [my.scouting.org](http://my.scouting.org) membership files as part of the annual lodge charter renewal process. (A function within OA LodgeMaster can quickly perform this verification.)

## OA LodgeMaster

The Order of the Arrow has developed the OA LodgeMaster membership management system for lodge administrative record-keeping. Use of this automated system is required for all lodges in the country. Lodge data are stored on cloud-based servers that are backed up nightly. The system maintains the history of past members and their induction dates and can track everything from service hours to event attendance to finances. It can also manage most aspects of lodge administration, including attaining Performance Management Program recognition, printing membership cards and address labels, and sending mass emails.



## Uniforms

### Lodge Pocket Flaps

Cloth lodge emblems ("flaps") are made available by most lodges. Scouting America's uniform and insignia policy requires that these pocket flap patches be made of, and embroidered on, cloth, and must be of a size and shape as to cover the right breast pocket flap and not extend beyond the outer edge of the uniform pocket flap. They must show the lodge name and, optionally, the totem of the lodge issuing the patch, and only one lodge name/totem may be included. Pocket flap patches may only be issued by Order of the Arrow lodges and the National Order of the Arrow Committee, and may only be worn on the right breast pocket flap of a Scouting America field uniform. The beading of flaps is against Scouting America uniform and insignia policy as are chapter or crew flaps and therefore these types of flaps are prohibited.

It is strongly encouraged that no honor distinction be denoted by the flap or flap border. The national OA committee also recommends that no restrictions be placed on the purchase of flap patches by members of the lodge.

Members may only wear the lodge pocket flap of the lodge where their dues are paid. Therefore, the lodge pocket flap must match the council shoulder patch of the council to which the lodge belongs.

## Lodge-Issued Patches, Memorabilia and Merchandise

All OA patches must include “Scouting America” or the Scouting America fleur-de-lis emblem in their design. All lodge memorabilia and merchandise must be produced by a licensed Scouting America supplier and conform to the OA branding guide, which is at [oa-scouting.org/resources/branding](https://oa-scouting.org/resources/branding). A complete list of Scouting America licensees and the types of products they are licensed to manufacture is available at [licensingbsa.org/bsa-licensee-list](https://licensingbsa.org/bsa-licensee-list).

Additional patch requirements are in the “Guidelines for Custom Patches and Emblems” chapter in the Scouting America *Guide to Awards and Insignia* (Supply #33066).

### Lodge Position Patches

Scouting America does not issue a lodge chief position patch, or any other youth OA position patch, and councils and lodges may not issue youth OA position patches. It is national OA policy that youth OA officers should wear the leadership position patch for their unit role (if they hold one) as that is the position that advances the unit program. Certain adults may wear an OA position patch: the positions of national committee, section adviser, associate section adviser, lodge adviser, associate lodge adviser, chapter adviser, associate chapter adviser, and OA troop adviser are officially recognized as positions within national, section, council, district, or unit structures.

## Lodge Finances and Financial Records

Current, accurate financial records are essential to a lodge’s well-being. The lodge must know how much money it has, along with its income and expenses. Knowing things as simple as how much it costs to have the lodge pocket flap made, or how much a lodge event costs, aids the lodge in planning.

The lodge is to be self-supporting, requiring no funding from the council. Estimating how

much money will be collected from various sources and keeping records of how it is spent will enable the lodge to prepare and operate within a budget. OA LodgeMaster provides support and reporting for financial transactions, budgeting, trading post sales/inventory/consignments, and asset control.

The lodge treasurer should report at each lodge executive committee meeting on the lodge’s financial condition. Financial close-out reports of each lodge event should be prepared; this is the basis for planning future events.

The financial transactions of the lodge must be processed through the council; they are subject to council regulations and auditing procedures as described in *The Local Council Accounting Manual*. All lodge and chapter funds must be handled through the council’s financial system and deposited into the council’s Order of the Arrow custodial account.

Lodges are encouraged to use the OA [Lodge Finance Handbook](#).

### Lodge Membership Fees and Dues

Each lodge sets its own annual dues and its fees for induction into the OA. Only registered Scouts and Scouters who have been officially inducted into the OA are eligible to pay dues and be members of the lodge.

The fee for new member induction varies widely around the country. It should be kept to a minimum and should cover dues, Ordeal sash, *Order of the Arrow Handbook*, and a lodge pocket flap. Food, insurance, and other costs are also included.

Annual lodge dues should also be kept to a minimum, covering the cost of mailings to members, the lodge charter renewal fee, and other expenses. Most lodge dues are \$15-\$20. OA LodgeMaster allows members to print their own membership cards via the member portal. Lodges that offer the member portal to their members should make sure members know about the self-print option. Other lodges should provide a new membership card within 30 days of dues payment. (New Ordeal, Broth-

erhood and Vigil Honor members should be given new membership cards at the applicable event.)

The lodge charter renewal fee is based on the total paid membership as of the last day of the lodge's dues year. The records of dues received should be kept in OA LodgeMaster by the lodge secretary or membership committee.

Members of the OA may be official dues-paying (and in the case of youth, voting) members of only one lodge, that being the lodge chartered to the council where they have their primary Scouting registration.

When an active member moves and wishes to be transferred to another lodge, the lodge secretary or membership committee should provide a printed or PDF copy of the Arrowman's membership record from OA LodgeMaster to the Scout executive of the new council.

If a member's dues are not paid, they are not allowed to wear a lodge pocket flap. They also cannot attend lodge functions or become Brotherhood or Vigil Honor members. Youth members whose dues are not paid also cannot vote. Members may be reinstated with no penalty by paying their current year's dues.

## Lodge Charter Renewal

Each lodge operates under a charter granted by the National Council and must apply annually for renewal. The charter renewal kit is provided to the council Scout executive in October each year. All lodge charters expire on December 31.

All Scouting America councils have an Order of the Arrow lodge. Scouting America will grant a charter to only one lodge per council. When councils merge, their OA lodges must also merge. (Two resources are available for lodges that may be affected by a council merger. They are Appendix 3 (Council Mergers) of the [Field Operations Handbook](#) and the [Lodge Merger Handbook for Councils](#).)

Lodges must submit their completed charter renewal application through OA LodgeMaster. The system automatically calculates the fee,

and the council is billed by the national service center. A printed copy of the application must be signed by the lodge chief, lodge adviser, and Scout executive, and then scanned and emailed to the national service center by December 31.

Submission of the lodge's data through OA LodgeMaster and a signed application are required for a new charter to be issued. Orders for supplies, Founder's Awards, and Vigil Honor certificates will not be processed for a lodge whose charter has not been renewed, and lodge members cannot attend section, regional or national OA events out of council. A dropped charter may be reinstated by submitting the required information to the national service center.



## Lodge Performance Measurement Program

The Lodge Performance Measurement Program (PMP) is the performance measurement and recognition program for all Order of the Arrow lodges. The program evaluates and encourages lodge performance through continuous improvement. It provides a guide for good lodge administration. More information is at [oa-scouting.org/resources/ucl-support/performance-measurement-program](http://oa-scouting.org/resources/ucl-support/performance-measurement-program).

The annual charter renewal process requires completion of the lodge petition. When the charter renewal application is submitted through OA LodgeMaster, the lodge petition and data are automatically transmitted.

To be considered for recognition, the lodge must have filed its charter renewal on time and achieved the necessary point score on the petition. The petition's objectives form an overall plan and guide that help ensure a successful lodge program.

**Lodge Performance Measurement Program**  
2022 OA Program Year

Council name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Lodge name: \_\_\_\_\_  
City & State: \_\_\_\_\_  
Council # \_\_\_\_\_  
Region: \_\_\_\_\_  
Senior: \_\_\_\_\_

To qualify for recognition, lodges must renew their 2023 charter on time and be in compliance with the current OA Handbook, Guide for Officers and Advisers, Field Operations Guide, Guide to Instructors, and ceremony books. A completed Lodge PMP petition through OA lodges/master is required to receive a 2023 lodge charter.

Item #	Objective	Level			Points	Y	HP		
		Thriving	High Performing	Points					
1	<b>Unit Elections:</b> Conduct to assign unit elections in all troops, crews, and ships.	Complete unit elections in 50% of troops, crews, and ships.	Complete unit elections in 90% of troops, crews, and ships.	2	4				
2	<b>Religion:</b> Induct youth* Ordeal candidates.	Induct 60% of youth* Ordeal candidates.	Induct 90% of youth* Ordeal candidates.	2	4				
3	<b>Activision:</b> Induct new youth* lodge members within the first 6 months of membership.	Activate 20% activation of youth* members.	Achieve 50% activation of youth* members.	2	4				
4	<b>Membership Retention:</b> Improve the retention rate of youth* lodge members.	Achieve 40% retention of youth* members.	Achieve 50% retention of youth* members.	2	4				
5	<b>Membership Growth:</b> Examine growth trends in youth* membership over the previous year.	Grow total youth* membership by at least 1 more member over last year.	Grow total youth* membership by at least 4% over last year.	2	4				
<b>Secondary Objectives</b>									
6	<b>Lodge Level Participation:</b> Improve lodge membership participation at all lodge events.	Average at least 7% of lodge membership at all lodge-wide events.	Average at least 15% of lodge membership at all lodge-wide events.	1	2				
7	<b>Religion Completion:</b> Convert eligible youth* Ordeal members to brotherhood.	Convert at least 50% of eligible youth* Ordeal members.	Convert at least 50% of eligible youth* Ordeal members.	1	2				
8	<b>Contribution to Council:</b> Contribute cash, materials, and/or staff to the council.	Contribute an average of \$7.00 per lodge member.	Contribute an average of \$23.00 per lodge member.	1	2				
9	<b>Council Service:</b> Deliver to the council measurable service in terms of the average service hours per lodge member.	Award an average of 4 service hours per lodge member.	Award an average of 10 service hours per lodge member.	1	2				
10	<b>Membership Development:</b> Conduct at least one 120 during the year with qualified instructors using current materials.	Train 7% of lodge members.	Train 10% of lodge members.	1	2				
<b>Award level:</b> _____					Total achieved _____			Total possible 15 30	
					Grand total _____				

## Forming Lodge Chapters

Order of the Arrow lodges vary in size from about 50 to several thousand members. In many lodges a chapter plan is necessary if the objectives of the OA are to be realized. In other lodges where there are few members, chapters would be of little value. For these reasons, the National Order of the Arrow Committee has purposely left the decision as to the need for chapters in the hands of the Scout executive in consultation with lodge leaders.

Before organizing chapters within a lodge, the council staff, lodge officers, and advisers should thoroughly study these factors:

- The active membership of the lodge
- The geography of the council
- Whether a chapter should include one or several districts (a district should never

have more than one chapter in its geographical area)

- Whether sufficient potential members and leaders are available to support a chapter operation
- Whether the advantages of the chapter plan will offset the additional lodge administration that will be required
- Whether the best interests of Scouting and the OA will be served through a chapter plan
- Whether sufficient potential members exist to form effective ceremonial teams

After a careful study of these factors, the Scout executive decides whether chapters are needed. If they are, the Scout executive annually appoints a chapter adviser and staff adviser for each chapter. The chapter adviser functions at chapter meetings and activities in the same way that the lodge adviser does with the entire lodge. The chapter adviser works in conjunction with the chapter chief, chapter staff adviser, lodge adviser, lodge chief, district camping chair, and lodge staff adviser. The chapter adviser should also become a member of the district camping or program committee.

As stated in ["Organization" starting on page 4](#), with the prior approval of the Scout executive, the chapter adviser may appoint an associate chapter adviser annually to help fulfill the objectives of the chapter. No more than one associate should be appointed for a chapter.

The chapter staff adviser should meet the qualifications specified for all advisers. This person works closely with the lodge staff adviser to coordinate lodge and chapter activities and promote harmony between the district camping committee and the membership.

The chapter officers are nominated and elected by the youth who are members of the chapter, in the same way that lodge officers are elected. Their duties are the same on the chapter level as those of lodge officers on the lodge level. The chapter chief and the chapter adviser become members of the lodge executive committee. Each chapter should have the

same operating committees as the lodge. The chairs of these committees become members of the corresponding lodge operating committees. All candidates for chapter office or committee chair must meet the eligibility requirements outlined earlier in this section under the heading "[Lodge officers](#)" on page 5.

When a chapter plan of operation is firmly established, most OA projects, ceremonies, and activities can be carried out on a chapter basis. It should be possible for each chapter to train ceremonial teams to conduct Ordeals and Ordeal ceremonies, as well as the Brotherhood membership ceremony. Vigil Honor ceremonies must be left for the lodge to conduct. Service projects should be cleared with the district camping committee. The year-round program of the chapter must be coordinated with that of the district and lodge.

When larger lodges operate on an effective chapter basis, each chapter becomes much like a small lodge. In this way, more youth are given an opportunity to develop and demonstrate leadership and to share in the responsibility of giving cheerful service to their units and districts.

Under a well-established chapter plan, the entire lodge gathers only occasionally. Each chapter plans its program to carry out the objectives of the lodge. Events, such as call-out ceremonies, Ordeals, Ordeal ceremonies, and Brotherhood ceremonies can be conducted by chapter personnel. Service projects and social events lend themselves better to smaller groups than to the entire lodge. Some chapters hold banquets, campouts, and other Order of the Arrow activities.

When the entire lodge gets together for a fall reunion, an annual meeting, or a weekend conclave, the event takes on the atmosphere of a fellowship conference and should feature fun, fellowship, inspiration, and training.

### **Don't Just Meet: Do (But Not Too Much)**

Experience has proven that the lodges that keep general lodge and chapter meetings or

activities to a minimum will have better attendance. Experience also has shown that the most active and successful lodges are those that offer service opportunities and are actively involved in helping units and the council.

It is recommended that general lodge meetings or activities be held at a time most convenient for the majority of its members to attend.

Lodge officers direct activities through their executive committee meetings. The actual work of the lodge happens through the lodge or chapter committee meetings—not at general meetings. The frequency of committee meetings is determined by the work to be done and the time of the year.

Arrowmen are expected first to give service to and be active in their own units. Then as time permits, they can assist the lodge in such activities as unit elections, camping promotion, service to council camping facilities, etc.

In addition, Arrowmen have other outside and school interests and activities, so they will not be interested in attending too many lodge and chapter meetings and activities. Don't try to schedule too many ceremonies, inductions, rehearsals, or fellowships, either.

## **Lodge Rules**

Each lodge should develop and formally approve a written set of lodge rules to govern its operations. These rules should be reviewed annually and should cover topics like insignia, officers and advisers, officer election and replacement, meetings, activities, and dues. In addition, the National Order of the Arrow Committee requires that the following rules be incorporated into all lodge rules. *No lodge rule, policy, or procedure may deviate from or change in any manner a requirement in the current edition of any of the Order's literature.*

- I. Mission. The mission of this lodge is to fulfill the vision, mission, and purpose of the Order of the Arrow in the council, districts, and units.
- II. Name and affiliation of lodge. The lodge shall be known as: \_\_\_\_\_ Lodge,

\_\_\_\_\_ Council No. \_\_\_\_\_,  
Scouting America, and shall be under the supervision of the council camping or program committee and the administrative authority of the Scout executive.

- III. Election to membership.
  - A. The requirements for membership in this lodge are as stated in the current edition of the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* and the *Order of the Arrow Handbook for Officers and Advisers*.
  - B. The procedure for the Ordeal shall be as stated in the current edition of the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* and the *Inductions Handbook*.
- IV. Officers.
  - A. The officers of this lodge shall be lodge chief, lodge vice chief(s), lodge secretary, and lodge treasurer. These elected officers must be younger than 21 during their entire term of office.
  - B. The members of the lodge executive committee shall be the elected lodge officers, immediate past lodge chief, lodge operating committee chairs, lodge adviser, one member of the council camping or program committee if appointed by the Scout executive, chapter chiefs and chapter advisers (where applicable), Scout executive, and lodge staff adviser. Only LEC members under age 21 may vote on LEC business.
- V. Brotherhood membership. Completion of Brotherhood membership shall be in accordance with the requirements in the current edition of the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* and the *Order of the Arrow Handbook for Officers and Advisers*.
- VI. The Vigil Honor. Attainment of the Vigil Honor shall be in accordance with the requirements in the current edition of the *Order of the Arrow Handbook* and the *Order of the Arrow Handbook for Officers and Advisers*.

VII. Finances. All Order of the Arrow funds shall be handled through the council service center and go through all normal council accounting procedures.

VIII. Voting. Arrowmen under the age of 21 who are primarily registered with a unit in this council and whose dues are currently paid in this lodge may vote in matters of lodge business.

## **Drug, Alcohol, and Tobacco Policy**

Scouting America prohibits the use of alcoholic beverages and controlled substances (including marijuana) at Scouting encampments or activities on property owned and/or operated by Scouting America, or at any activity involving participation of youth members. Arrowmen learn from the examples set by their advisers. Advisers should support the attitude that young adults are better off without tobacco and may not allow the use of tobacco products by anyone at any Scouting America activity involving youth participants. This includes the use of electronic cigarettes, personal vaporizers, and electronic nicotine delivery systems that simulate smoking.

## **Membership Requirements**

**Unit leader approval.** To become eligible for election, a Scout must be registered with Scouting America and have the approval of their unit leader prior to the election. The unit leader must certify their Scout spirit (*i.e.*, their adherence to the Scout Oath and Law and active participation in unit activities). The unit leader must also certify that the nominee meets all specified requirements at the time of this annual election.

**Youth membership qualifications.** All members of, or candidates for membership in, the Order of the Arrow who are under 21 years of age shall be considered youth members or candidates for youth membership, subject to meeting these requirements:

- Be a registered member of Scouting America.
- At the time of their election, youth must be under the age of 21, and hold one of the following ranks corresponding to the type of unit in which they are being considered for election: Scouts BSA First Class rank, Venturing Discovery Award, or Sea Scout Ordinary rank, or higher, and following approval by the Scoutmaster, Crew Advisor or Sea Scout Skipper, be elected by the youth members of their unit.
- Have experienced 15 nights of camping while registered with a troop, crew, or ship within the two years immediately prior to the election. The 15 nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of at least five consecutive nights of overnight camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of Scouting America. Only five nights of the long-term camp may be credited toward the 15-night camping requirement; the balance of the camping (10 nights) must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps of, at most, three nights each. Ship nights may be counted as camping for Sea Scouts.
- Adults (age 21 or older) who meet the camping requirement may be selected following nomination to and approval by the lodge adult selection committee.

Candidates for youth membership shall be elected by other youth members in accordance with policies set forth by the National Order of the Arrow Committee.

**Scouts with special needs.** The Order of the Arrow is committed to including Scouts and Scouters who have special needs because of a disability. In the case of special-needs troops, crews and ships, election teams should follow the same procedures, keeping in mind that any Scout who is classified as a youth member of a Scouts BSA troop, Venturing crew, or Sea Scout ship regardless of age, will be considered a youth (voting) member. All other membership requirements remain the same.

Members of Scouting America who are at least 18 years old are generally required to complete

Youth Protection training as a condition of membership. However, some Scouts and Scouters with special needs may be exempt from that requirement. Any Scout who is at least 18 years old, is classified as a youth member, and has been properly exempted from completing Youth Protection training by Scouting America Membership Standards may participate in OA programs without having completed Youth Protection training.

When inducting a Scout or Scouter with a special need, as with any candidate, lodges should make the activities challenging within the individual's limitations, and plan accordingly. Accessibility to ceremonial circles, sleeping sites, and appropriate work projects should be taken into consideration to ensure a meaningful induction. (See the appendix for "[Guidelines for Assisting Scouts and Scouters with Special Needs](#)" starting on page 37.)

**Adult membership qualifications.** All members of, or candidates for membership in, the Order of the Arrow who are 21 years of age or older and who are registered members of Scouting America shall be considered adult members or candidates for adult membership. Individuals shall be selected as candidates based on the following:

1. **Adult leaders in units:** Each year, upon holding a unit election for youth candidates that results in at least one youth candidate being elected, the unit committee may nominate registered unit adults, 21 years of age or older, for membership in the OA to the lodge adult selection committee, composed of the lodge adviser, the chair of the council committee on which the lodge adviser serves, and the lodge staff adviser. The number of adults nominated can be no more than two-thirds of the number of youth candidates elected, rounded up where the number of youth candidates is not a multiple of three. In addition to the two-thirds limit, the unit committee may nominate the currently serving unit leader (but not assistant leaders), as long as he or she has served as unit leader for at least the previous 12 months. Recommendations of the adult selection committee, with the approval of the Scout executive, will be



candidates for induction, provided these conditions are fulfilled:

- Selection of the adult is based on the ability to perform the necessary functions to help the OA fulfill its purpose, and not for recognition of service, including current or prior achievement and positions.
- The individual will be an asset to the OA because of demonstrated abilities that fulfill the purpose of the Order.
- The camping requirements set forth for youth members are fulfilled.
- The adult leader's membership will provide a positive example for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge.

2. **Adult leaders in council and district positions:** The lodge adviser, district chairs, council president or board chair, or members of the professional staff may nominate adults to the lodge adult selection committee. (Merit badge counselors who are not also registered in a unit, district, or council position may not be nominated for membership in the Order of the Arrow since registration solely as a merit badge counselor does not meet the Scouting America requirement of registration as an adult volunteer or an adult program participant.) All requirements set forth for adult leaders in units must be fulfilled, with the exception of the camping requirements, which may be waived at the discretion of the lodge adviser and Scout executive. Recommendations of the adult selection committee, with the approval of the Scout executive, serving as Supreme Chief of the Fire, will become candidates for induction.

Adults may be nominated for membership only one time per year as either unit Scouters or district/council Scouters, but not both. How they are nominated depends on where they maintain their primary registration.

Because the Order of the Arrow is principally a youth organization, unit, district, and council Scouters are not selected for membership as a recognition. Selection should take place only when the adult's position in Scouting will make OA membership more meaningful in the lives of the youth membership.

**Professional membership.** Members of the professional service of Scouting America shall be considered *ex officio* members of the lodge of the council in which they are employed. Members of the professional service designated by the Scout executive to serve in camp positions should be given an opportunity to complete the Ordeal and the Ordeal ceremony if they have not previously been inducted into a lodge of the OA. Members of the professional service whose responsibility in the council would be enhanced may be inducted into the lodge based on the recommendation of the Scout executive and upon completion of the Ordeal experience and ceremony.

Camp staff members (paid but not considered members of the professional service) shall be elected only by members of their own unit if they are under age 21 and meet the youth membership requirements. Staff members over age 21 must meet the adult membership requirements and be selected as either unit Scouters or district/council Scouters.

**Honorary membership.** Honorary membership in the Order of the Arrow is not authorized and shall not be given. Membership in the OA shall be gained only through fulfillment of membership requirements as stated in the official literature of the Order of the Arrow, Scouting America. Visiting Scouts or leaders cannot be given honorary memberships in the OA.

**Life membership.** A life membership in the OA is not authorized and shall not be recognized. Membership in the OA requires current, paid registration with Scouting America. There is no official or authorized life membership registration status for the Order of the Arrow in Scouting America.

## Unit Elections

To become a member of the OA, a Scout is chosen by vote of the youth in their unit. This is a unique feature of the OA since the majority of those who select their candidates for this honor are not members of the lodge. However, lodge members in the unit have a vote as well as nonmembers. In this way membership is controlled by the youth in their own units and not by those who are already Arrowmen.

It is important that the members of the unit have the membership requirements properly explained to them. Unit elections requirements and process are detailed in the *Unit Elections Handbook*, available at [oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions/unit-elections-handbook](https://oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions/unit-elections-handbook). Under no circumstances may a unit conduct their own unit election.

**Registered active member.** In Scouts BSA, Venturing, or Sea Scout units, every registered active member of the unit under age 21 at the time of election is eligible to vote.

A Scout who carries a current national membership card and participates in at least some unit activities during the year is considered to be a registered active member of the unit. For example, a youth away at college who participates in some unit activities when home, such as a campout, camporee, or occasional unit meeting, should be considered a registered active member.

A youth who moves away or drops out of the unit because of other interests would not be counted in the registered active membership figure.

**Elections outside the council.** All elections must be conducted by the Order of the Arrow lodge of the council in which the unit is chartered. *No unit may visit outside its own council and hold an OA election under the auspices of an OA lodge of another council.*

### Election to Ordeal

1. The lodge will determine the time of the year unit elections will be held and should

inform unit leaders of this by mail well in advance. Lodges are encouraged to complete all unit elections prior to their units going to summer camp. This ensures that the maximum number of unit members can be present to vote in the election. Elections may not occur in Cub Scout packs.

2. The lodge, through the unit elections committee, should work with the unit leader in establishing the actual time and place to conduct the election. The Order of the Arrow should be represented by a two- or three-member team from the lodge or chapter unit elections committee. All election team members must be trained and in proper uniform during the election.
3. Before the election, the OA team must secure from the unit leader verification that at least 50 percent of the registered active unit membership is present. If at least 50 percent is not present, an election cannot be held. The number of registered active members and the number present are entered in the spaces provided on the Unit Election Report (in the *Unit Elections Handbook*). If the unit leader is an Arrowman, he or she may explain to the group the purpose of the Order of the Arrow and the basis upon which candidates should be selected, and describe the method of election. If the unit leader is not a member of the Order, a member of the OA team should make this presentation with the unit leader's consent, demonstrating that election leadership is a cooperative effort of the unit leader and the OA team.
4. The unit leader provides a list of all registered active members of the unit who meet all eligibility requirements, including attitude and participation. The names of these members are entered on the report form and the unit leader signs the certification.
5. The election team leader explains the following to the unit leader:
  - This is the current method of election approved by the national OA committee in use by the lodge.

- Only one election may be held per year. (It is possible to request a second election to correct an election process error, as detailed on [page 24 under "Election Errors"](#))
  - All eligible youth who receive votes from at least 50 percent of those who turn in ballots are elected. If no one is elected a second vote may be held immediately, and the result of this vote will be final.
6. A voter may list on their ballot the names of any or all of the eligible candidates who he or she believes are worthy to become members of the Order of the Arrow.
  7. The OA team conducts the election using the "Unit Elections Ceremony" (in the [Unit Elections Handbook](#)). Stress these points:
    - Select the candidates who, in your opinion, have set the best examples of brotherhood, cheerfulness, and service.
    - Vote only for those you believe will continue in unselfish service to your unit.
    - If you feel that no one is worthy, turn in a blank ballot.
    - If you are new in the unit and do not know the candidates well enough to vote wisely, you may abstain by not turning in a ballot at all; this will not affect the final result.
    - Youth eligible for election also vote, and they may vote for themselves if they feel they are worthy.
  8. When the voting is finished, the OA election team counts the number of ballots turned in, and enters the numbers on the unit election report.
  9. The OA team determines the minimum number of votes one must receive to be elected, as follows: If the number of ballots turned in was even (2, 4, 6, 8, etc.), divide this number by two. If the number was odd (1, 3, 5, 7, etc.), add one and then divide by two. The number of votes a youth must receive to be elected is entered on the report form.
  10. The votes are counted in private by the election team and the unit leader to determine who has been elected. All votes count equally. If at least one has been elected, the election result is final. If no one is elected, the OA team announces this fact and states that the unit will now be given the opportunity to vote again. Time is allowed for further explanation of the purpose of the OA and the election procedures, and for any questions. (No information about the votes received by candidates is to be revealed at any time.) The second ballot is then held immediately, and if the unit still elects no one, this is the final result for the year's election. The OA team places a check mark next to the names of those who have been elected.

**Note:** Two unit elections videos, "Conducting a Quality Unit Election" and "Electing New Members Unit Elections" are available at [www.oa-scouting.org](http://www.oa-scouting.org).

**Announcement of results.** As soon as the election is completed, the unit leader may or may not choose to announce to the entire unit the names of members who have been elected. Often, if the unit will be participating in a call-out, the announcement of results may be postponed until the call-out. The names and addresses (plus additional information the lodge feels is necessary) are listed on the election report form. OA team members sign the form and mail it to the specified address immediately following the election.

**Call-outs.** Most lodges offer optional call-out ceremonies for newly elected candidates; these candidates should be called out at the earliest possible time, either at a resident camp, a camporee, or a special ceremony. The [Inductions Handbook](#) contains information on how to conduct a call-out ceremony. Lack of participation in a call-out ceremony does not affect eligibility to attend an Ordeal; lodges should invite all duly elected candidates to all Ordeals while they are candidates (see "Candidate Status" below). Call-outs should be conducted by the OA lodge of the council in which

the unit is chartered. This is the preferred method of call-out.

Some lodges conduct call-outs at summer camp. A lodge may not call out candidates from a visiting out-of-council unit unless the unit leader presents a letter from the home lodge chief and lodge adviser, requesting the call-out and identifying the members to be called out. A signed copy of the home lodge's unit election report must accompany this letter. The home lodge chief and lodge adviser must receive confirmation of the call-out following the event.

**Candidate status.** Scouts and adults remain candidates until completion of the Ordeal and Ordeal ceremony. If this period of candidacy exceeds 18 months, the candidate's name will be dropped. To become a candidate again, they must be elected/selected again. The executive committee of the lodge may extend the 18-month limit if a candidate is ill or there are other unusual circumstances.

If a candidate permanently relocates to a new Scouting America council prior to completing the Ordeal, the candidate should immediately join a unit in the new council. A copy of the election report must be presented to the new unit leader to arrange induction in the new lodge. The candidacy period is not restarted or extended.

**Ordeals.** Candidates for membership in the OA must complete the Ordeal and must be inducted into the OA by the lodge that serves the council in which the unit is chartered. Out-of-council Ordeals are not permitted except when religious custom and observance precludes attendance at the Ordeals of a Scout's home lodge (e.g., Sabbath-observant Jewish Scouts). In this special case, the region Order of the Arrow chair may be petitioned for an exception to permit the Scout to be inducted by another lodge.

**Election Errors.** If an error in the election process is identified after conducting an original election, the unit leader may submit a request to the lodge executive committee for a second election to be held on behalf of only the affected individual(s) in the unit. Approval of an

additional election is solely at the discretion of the lodge executive committee.

## Ceremonies

Although we might not always understand or remember all that happened, our most vivid and lasting impression of the Order of the Arrow was probably formed during the pre-Ordeal, Ordeal, and Brotherhood ceremonies. The exhilarating fatigue that comes from working hard with very little food amid the excitement of a special ceremony heightens the experience of the Ordeal. So it is important to the success of the OA that every lodge conduct the best ceremonies possible.

Businesses usually are successful when they spend extra time and effort on their customers, and if a lodge is active enough to qualify for Performance Management Program recognition, it probably can credit some of its accomplishments and strengths to good ceremonies. Because candidates realize and remember that a lot of hard work went into "their" ceremonies, the lodge's efforts in producing good ceremonies often are repaid by inspired new members who will take an active interest in the activities of the OA. Correct ceremony planning and execution is governed by the *Inductions Handbook*; it can be found at [oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions/inductions-handbook](http://oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions/inductions-handbook).

**Conducting ceremonies.** Ceremonies are an important part of the activities of the Order of the Arrow. They must always be conducted in a manner that is in complete compliance with the ceremony texts and the *Inductions Handbook*. Neither hazing nor any other action that endangers the health of or disrespects the candidates has a place in an OA ceremony.

Ceremonies should be dramatic and held in an appropriate setting with proper use of attire as documented in the *Inductions Handbook* and approved council fire techniques. Nothing should be done to detract from the serious purpose of honoring candidates. The difference between success and failure of a lodge starts with the ceremonies of the OA. Proper attire, a well-kept and symbolically correct ceremonial circle, ceremonialists who understand

and have fully memorized their parts, efficient time management, and respectful treatment of candidates all contribute to meaningful ceremonies.

## Ceremonial Teams

The ceremonies of the OA are designed to be rich and vibrant experiences that communicate the essence of the OA to the candidates in an inspirational and memorable manner. To achieve this effect, ceremonialists must understand the symbolism associated with the principal they are to personify; they must know verbatim the words they are to say and be able to speak so as to be heard clearly by each candidate. Above all, they must understand the meaning of their words and be motivated to convey that understanding to candidates. All Arrowmen involved in conducting ceremonies must be fully aware of the impact their efforts will have on candidates and members. Our ceremonies are far too important to allow for mediocrity.

Four ceremonial team members are needed for the pre-Ordeal, Ordeal, and Brotherhood ceremonies. Fewer team members are needed for the Vigil Honor ceremony. Regardless of the ceremony, all ceremonialists must be youth members of the OA (younger than 21).

Ceremonial team members must hold the membership of the ceremony being conducted (or a higher membership level). For example, an Ordeal member may not be a member of the Brotherhood ceremony team, but a Brotherhood member may be a member of the Ordeal ceremony team.

Additional members, as many as may be desired by the lodge, may serve as caretakers of the council fire, assistant guides, etc., so long as they are younger than 21.

All principals who conduct the ceremony should wear ceremonial attire that is appropriate and respectful of the American Indian cultures being represented in our actions, and that is from a single tribe and time period. Alternatively, the full field uniform or black shirts and pants, with ceremonial medallions, may be worn. (See [www.oa-scouting.org/resources/](http://www.oa-scouting.org/resources/)

[inductions/approved-attire](#) for more information on attire options.) In addition they should wear their current Order of the Arrow sash. Other members attending join in the circle of membership, in Scout uniform, wearing their current OA sash. All members should help preserve the quietness, dignity, and inspiration of the occasion.

Nobody should take photographs or video recordings of the pre-Ordeal, Ordeal, Brotherhood, or Vigil ceremonies. Photography and video recording are a distraction to the ceremonialists and candidates and compromise the inspirational environment lodges take great care to create.

**Approved ceremonies.** There is no official notification or call-out ceremony for Ordeal membership or the Vigil Honor. Instead, lodges are encouraged to develop their own call-out ceremony. A list of key elements that all Ordeal call-out ceremonies should include can be found in the [Inductions Handbook](#). The [Ceremony for the Vigil Honor](#) contains information on call-out ceremonies and candidate notifications.

All other ceremonies of the Order are prescribed nationally and are contained in the [Inductions Handbook](#), [Ceremony for the Ordeal](#), [Ceremony for the Brotherhood](#), and [Ceremony for the Vigil Honor](#). They were carefully reviewed and approved by the Scouting America National Alliances team and various religious groups. **No change of any kind is permitted in these ceremonies.** Ceremonies must be memorized and presented without deviation. All spoken words and movement diagrams are to be followed. **Hazing, kneeling, and blindfolds are forbidden in all Order of the Arrow ceremonies.**

**Call-out ceremony.** Many lodges have developed a call-out ceremony for use at summer camp, unit meetings, retreat ceremonies, campfires, camporees, and other district/council events.

Each lodge should develop its own call-out ceremony. The [Inductions Handbook](#) contains information on how to conduct a call-out ceremony and a sample call-out text that lodges

may use as a basis for their own call-out ceremonies. Here are some basic principles that must be observed:

1. Call-out ceremonies shall be held in public.
2. The candidates and the audience of youth, parents, and leaders shall be made aware of the importance of the honor being given.
3. The name, unit, and community of each candidate shall be announced clearly.
4. Call-out ceremonies should be dignified and impressive.
5. Rough stuff, making the candidates kneel, blindfolding the candidates, hazing, teasing, marking the candidate in any way, or any other kind of physical or psychological abuse has no place in the Order of the Arrow and is strictly forbidden.

**Brotherhood Ceremony.** The ceremony for Brotherhood membership is in the *Ceremony for the Brotherhood*, available at [www.oa-scouting.org](http://www.oa-scouting.org).

At a time and place determined by those responsible, the Brotherhood ceremony may be held as outlined in the *Ceremony for the Brotherhood*. Only Brotherhood candidates and Brotherhood and Vigil Honor members may attend. Brotherhood ceremonies are encouraged at every lodge fellowship event held at camp.

From the inception of the Order of the Arrow in 1915, it was intended that all members should be of the same rank or standing. Brotherhood membership does not carry with it any degree of rank, status, or special privilege within the lodge. It is not to be thought of as a separate honor in the same sense as the Vigil Honor. Except for making the necessary arrangements for Brotherhood ceremonies, Brotherhood members should not meet as a separate group. Social and service activities are intended for all members of the lodge.

The Brotherhood is an opportunity for members to evaluate their unit service since their induction, to contemplate their future service to the lodge, and to reaffirm their belief in the

high purposes of the OA. The ceremony is intended as a source of inspiration, motivating its members to render even greater service to Scouting and the lodge.

**Brotherhood membership can only be conferred by an Arrowman's home lodge—the lodge that serves the council in which the Arrowman's unit is chartered.**

**Face paint policy.** The use of face paint, body paint, and wigs by non-American Indians could be offensive to some groups of American Indian people. Where lodge activities related to ceremony and dance are offensive to local American Indians, they must be discontinued for OA members. Appropriate local use is to be interpreted by each lodge based on their relationship with American Indian tribes in the council area and those being represented in lodge ceremonies.

National Order of the Arrow Conferences, conclaves, and other events conducted beyond the individual lodge will not permit face paint, body paint, or wigs to be used in social or competition dancing or in ceremonies, ceremony team evaluations or ceremony competitions.

**Protected species and flag policies.** No feathers, talons, or other parts from protected species of birds may be worn in Order of the Arrow dance competition or used in demonstrations, displays, workshops, or ceremonies. Nearly every bird species is protected, except resident state game birds and domestic fowl such as turkey and chicken. The same might be true regarding animal or reptile parts; if so, they are equally forbidden. Check with the U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, and state conservation authorities for details.

Within the guidelines found in the U.S. Code pertaining to the American flag, flags are not to be worn as apparel. With this in mind, no type of U.S. flag can be worn as part of ceremony or dance attire. Flag motifs in quillwork and beadwork are acceptable.

**Fire Safety.** All ceremonialists must be aware of and adhere to the Scouting America [Guide to Safe Scouting](#). The chapter of particular inter-

est is VI. Chemical Fuels and Equipment. The passages of note are:

1. "Using liquid fuels for starting any type of fire—including lighting damp wood, charcoal, and ceremonial campfires or displays—is prohibited.";
2. "Definitions: Prohibited chemical-fueled equipment—Equipment that is handcrafted, homemade, modified, or installed beyond the manufacturer's stated design limitations or use."; and
3. "Definitions: Approved chemical-fueled equipment—Commercially manufactured equipment, including stoves, grills, burners, heaters, and lanterns that are designed to be used with chemical fuels."

Homemade torches are therefore prohibited. Torches that are commercially manufactured, like Tiki torches, are acceptable.

A trail marker-can that uses a roll of tissue soaked in kerosene is prohibited. A trail marker-can that uses a candle is acceptable.

Lodges should develop a fire mitigation plan for all ceremonies. This plan should be submitted to the appropriate council committees for approval. The lodge should have fire extinguishing equipment available during a ceremony to deal with any unplanned fires. An adult knowledgeable about chemical fuels and equipment should be appointed to supervise the storage, handling and use of chemical fuels and equipment. Before leaving the ceremonial circle and the trails leading to and from the area, all fires must be completely out.

Additional information is contained in the OA [Inductions Handbook](#) which is available at [oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions](https://oa-scouting.org/resources/inductions).

## Choosing Vigil Honor Candidates

The Vigil Honor is a high mark of distinction and recognition reserved for those Arrowmen who, by reason of exceptional service, personal effort, and unselfish interest, have made distinguished contributions beyond the immediate responsibilities of their position or office

to one or more of the following: their lodge, the Order of the Arrow, Scouting or their Scout camp. Under no circumstances should tenure in Scouting or the OA be considered as reason enough for a Vigil Honor recommendation. (For a complete explanation of the meaning and selection criteria, refer to "Vigil Honor" in the *Order of the Arrow Handbook*.)

The following procedure has been established by the National Order of the Arrow Committee to maintain a consistent, high standard in the selection of Vigil Honor nominees across the country. Lodges should observe the procedure in recommending candidates for the Vigil Honor and in carrying out the Vigil Honor induction. None of the Vigil Honor selection and induction procedures may be delegated to chapters, other than to recommend candidates to the lodge nominating committee.

The lodge chief appoints a Vigil Honor nominating committee chair and committee members composed of youth who have been approved by the lodge adviser and Scout executive. The lodge adviser appoints one adult adviser in consultation with the lodge chief and staff adviser. The chair and committee members are usually Vigil Honor members; however, any youth member of the lodge may serve on the committee, provided that they are not eligible to receive the Vigil Honor. A committee of five to ten youth has been found effective in many lodges. The key is to keep the committee to a manageable size, yet large enough so that its members will collectively be aware which Arrowmen have been the leaders and workers in the lodge.

Mailed ballots should never be used for selection of Vigil Honor candidates. Open discussion between members of the Vigil Honor nominating committee is the best way to ensure that all eligible Brotherhood members receive proper consideration. *Inasmuch as the Vigil Honor does not connote a separate membership or grouping, it is inappropriate for the nominating committee to be "a committee of the whole" involving all or substantially all Vigil Honor members of the lodge. Nor is the Vigil Honor nomination process to be one in which the Vigil Honor members of the lodge, as a group, determine who is selected.*

In selecting Vigil Honor candidates, the lodge nominating committee may reach agreement through consensus, without a formal vote. However, if a vote is taken in order to select Vigil Honor candidates, only those members younger than age 21 may vote, as in all OA matters. The nomination flows from the lodge to the national committee.

The lodge nominating committee should use the following step-by-step procedure in determining Vigil Honor nominations to be submitted to the national OA committee for approval.

1. Secure from OA LodgeMaster a list of Brotherhood members who are in good standing with the lodge and Scouting America and who have been Brotherhood members for at least 2 years. *There will be no posthumous Vigil Honor candidates.*
2. Determine the number of Vigil Honor candidates that the lodge is eligible to nominate to the national committee by finding out the total lodge membership, as reported on the most recent lodge charter renewal application. Use this figure against the chart, "Quota Table: Vigil Honor Nominations," to determine the maximum number of candidates the lodge is eligible to nominate.

**Quota Table: Vigil Honor Nominations**

Total lodge membership reported on latest charter renewal application	Maximum number of lodge Vigil Honor nominations
0–99	2
100–149	3
150–199	4
200–249	5
250–299	6
300 or more	As above, ratio of 1 to 50

3. In selecting candidates for the Vigil Honor, keep in mind that all candidates must be in good standing with the lodge and Scouting America and must have been Brotherhood members for two years or longer at the

time of selection by the lodge Vigil nominating committee.

When weighing "distinguished service" in nominating candidates, remember to measure a Scout on a youth's standard and an adult on an adult's standard.

To maintain a proper ratio of youth to adults in awarding the Vigil Honor, the national committee has established a policy which requires that at least 50 percent of a lodge's nominations must be for candidates younger than 21, including those, as outlined below, that do not count against the quota for any given year. All nominations may be for candidates younger than 21, but no more than 50 percent may be for persons 21 years of age or older.

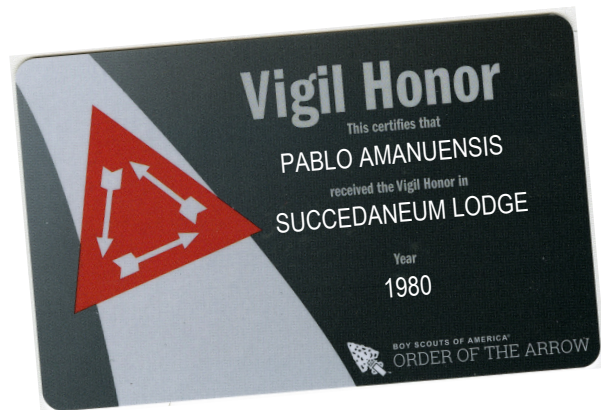
Nomination of professional Scouters, the council president or board chair, the council commissioner, council camping or program committee chairs, and camp rangers will not count against the lodge quota for total nominations. However, these nominations will count toward the policy limiting total adult nominations to a maximum of 50 percent of the total nominations submitted in a given year. Adults in this group must meet the requirement of at least two years of service as Brotherhood members.

4. Select an **honorable** English Vigil Honor name for the candidate. The Vigil Honor name should be selected in a serious manner, based upon each person's qualities, talents, or traits.
5. Prepare the Vigil Honor petition, available at [www.oa-scouting.org](http://www.oa-scouting.org).

The petition must be filled out completely before it can be approved. Particular care should be used in furnishing the date that Brotherhood membership was conferred. Specific reasons for nominating the candidate for the Vigil Honor should be listed completely and concisely. The petition must be used during the current charter calendar year. Unused quota may not be carried over to future years.



6. Secure approval of the petition from the lodge chief, lodge adviser and Scout executive. Each must personally sign the petition before forwarding to the director of the Order of the Arrow. (The signatures may be made electronically or with a pen.) Unsigned petitions will be returned to the council. A lodge's Vigil Honor petitions must be submitted as a group, and only once per calendar year.
7. Scan and email the signed petitions to the national service center. The council will be billed for the total amount due. At least 45 days must be allowed for the national OA committee to consider the petition and advise the lodge of its acceptance or rejection. Do not assume approval or make a public announcement until certificates and Vigil ID cards have been received in the council service center.
8. Upon receipt in the national service center, petitions will be reviewed. If approved, certificates and Vigil ID cards will be sent to the council Scout executive. If petitions are not approved, the council Scout executive will be notified with an explanation for the disapproval or a request for further information. Nominations will not be accepted or considered for posthumous awards.
9. When the certificates and ID cards have been received, arrange for notification or conduct a call-out of the Vigil Honor candidate.
10. Order Vigil Honor sashes from Scouting America's Supply Group through the local council service center.
11. Arrange and conduct the Vigil Honor induction. If there are no Vigil Honor members in the lodge, arrange to have candidates inducted by a nearby lodge that has Vigil Honor members, or bring in Vigil Honor members from another lodge to conduct the induction. Approved Vigil Honor candidates must all complete their inductions within **one year** of national service center approval (the date on the certificate). Otherwise the certificate and ID card must be returned to the national service center and the name will be removed from the approved list. Their selection must then be considered anew with a future year's quota.
12. Arrange and conduct a public presentation of Vigil Honor sashes and certificates to the new Vigil Honor members at a major function of the council or the lodge.



Planning for the Vigil induction ceremony must include arranging for drivers for the candidates and the ceremonial participants following the ceremony.



Vigil Honor sash





## Structure, Program, and Awards

The Order of the Arrow is fully integrated into the program of Scouting America as Scouting's National Honor Society. Nationally, the magnitude and dynamics of the Order of the Arrow program require administration by a full-time, paid staff. This staff works at the national service center and is responsible for carrying out all aspects of the OA's program, processing Vigil Honor and Founder's Award recognitions and lodge charter renewals, liaising with local councils, and conducting all national business and financial matters of the OA.

The staff is headed by the director of the Order of the Arrow. The director is assisted by an associate director.

The Order is a self-funded program and pays all costs associated with its operation through its own revenue sources, which include annual lodge charter fees and recognition sales.

The [Field Operations Handbook](#) provides complete information on the field organization and operations of the Order of the Arrow at the national, regional, and section levels.

For additional information on national policy, programs, and events, the Order of the Arrow also maintains an official Website: [www.oa-scouting.org](http://www.oa-scouting.org). This *Handbook for Officers and Advisers* and the [Field Operations Handbook](#) are available at the website.

### National Order of the Arrow Committee

The National Order of the Arrow Committee, a support committee of the national council,

sets policy and directs the program of the OA. The OA is organized into lodges; the lodges are grouped into sections of the two regions.

The volunteer leader is the chair of the national OA committee. The chair is appointed annually by the Chief Scout Executive. The members of the national committee are appointed annually by the chair.

The staff advisers to the national committee are the director and associate director of the Order of the Arrow. These individuals are national professional Scouters.

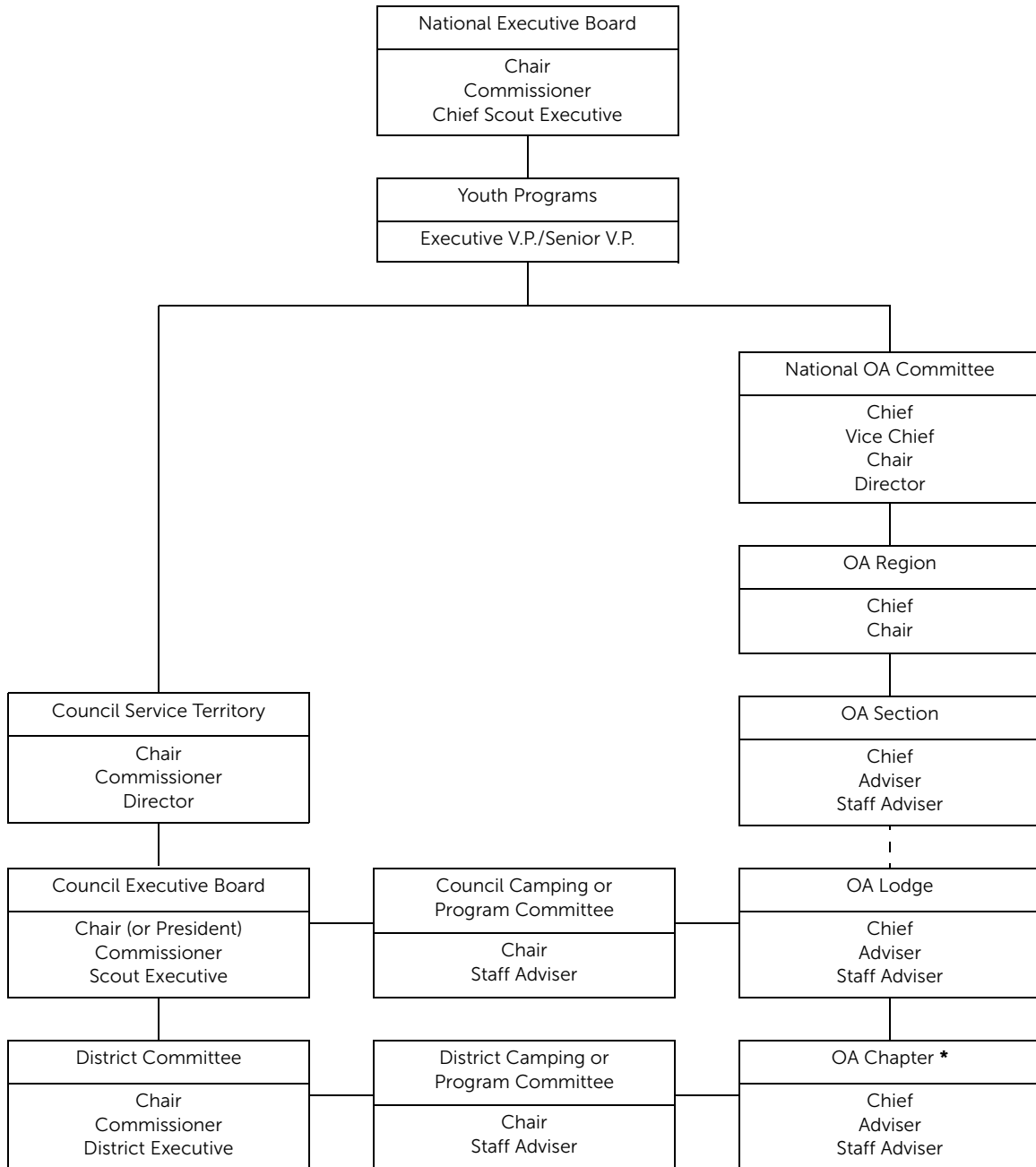
The national officers (national chief, national vice chief and region chiefs) are the top youth leaders of the OA and serve on the national committee to provide youth involvement in decisions affecting the program nationally. The immediate past national officers may also serve on the national committee.

To implement and manage the program of the Order of the Arrow, the national committee is organized along these functional lines:

- Lodge Impact
- Operations
- National Programs
- Mission and Reputation
- Financial Stewardship

Vice chairs of the national committee are appointed annually by the chair to manage and administer each of these areas.

# The Order of the Arrow and its Place in Scouting



\* A chapter can consist of one or more districts.

Periodically, the national chair convenes a Strategic Planning Task Force. Organized across functional areas, the task force develops the OA's multi-year plan for growth and improvement.

Because of the size and complexity of the program and the number of individuals who serve

on the committee to deliver the program across the country, a steering committee has been created to manage the day-to-day affairs of the National Committee. As a whole, the national committee meets at least semiannually; the steering committee meets more frequently throughout the year. Various members of the steering committee are in constant con-

tact with one another to handle the work of the OA. Members of the steering committee are the national chair, national vice chairs, national chief, and national vice chief. The director and associate director of the Order of the Arrow serve as nonvoting members.

The national OA committee may be contacted through:

Scouting America  
Order of the Arrow, S325  
1325 West Walnut Hill Lane  
P.O. Box 152079  
Irving, TX 75015-2079  
Phone: 972-580-2438  
[national.director@oa-scouting.org](mailto:national.director@oa-scouting.org)

## National Conference

Every two or three years, usually in late July or early August, the Order of the Arrow holds a national conference. The national conference is held over six days with thousands of Arrowmen participating, coming from throughout the United States and its territories, and some from overseas. The conference program includes innovative leadership development programs, fellowship opportunities, inspirational gatherings (shows), ceremony team development, camping promotion, and opportunities to hear from and talk with national leaders of the Order of the Arrow and Scouting America.

### National Conference Committee

The National Order of the Arrow Conference is planned and conducted by the national conference committee, which is composed of those youth from throughout the country, younger than 21, who are serving as section chiefs at the time of the annual national planning meeting, and lead advisers appointed by the vice chair of National Events in consultation with the national chair.

Section chiefs, national committee members and other invited Arrowmen participate in a national planning meeting held annually in late December or mid-January. As the meeting's first order of business, the section chiefs elect

four national officers: a national chief, a national vice chief, and two region chiefs. To be eligible to be a national officer, a section chief must be younger than 21 during the entire term of office. In addition, no person who has ever been a national OA officer can ever again be eligible to be a national OA officer. These officers serve until their successors are elected at the next planning meeting.

Following the elections, the national chief and vice chief organize functional subcommittees, called conference committees, and direct the program planning for the national conference. Members of the national OA committee or other invited Arrowmen serve as advisers.

Each section chief is assigned to a conference committee, after indicating their preferences. The committees meet and each elects a chair, called a conference vice chief. Like the section conclave, these committees often include training, ceremonies, special events, communication, shows, competitions and recreation, conference festival, and others.

While the responsibilities are definite, it must be remembered that at each level of the Order of the Arrow, the three types of leaders—youth, volunteer, and professional—must work in close harmony to ensure an effective program.

## National Training

### National Leadership Seminar



The National Leadership Seminar (NLS) is a national Order of the Arrow leadership program conducted in a weekend conference format. The adaptive leadership approach builds on ethical leadership, self-awareness, and skills needed to lead teams and individuals. The program is designed to enhance the leadership capacity and abilities of the OA's youth and adult members as they seek to improve their

service to Scouting America and the greater community.

The NLS is an intensive, engaging, and experiential learning opportunity in which attendees will gain knowledge about themselves, learn how to adapt their leadership approach to their current situation, and cultivate a mindset of resiliency. While designed to be a fun engaging experience, the NLS program is also mentally challenging. Attendees should be developmentally, physically, and mentally prepared to actively engage in a strenuous and invigorating weekend. Youth participants should be at least 14 years of age or a chapter or lodge officer.

The NLS program is executed at the region level by a trained and qualified youth staff. Information about future NLSs can be found at [oa-scouting.org/training/national-leadership-seminar-nls](https://oa-scouting.org/training/national-leadership-seminar-nls).

### Developing Youth Leadership Conference



The Developing Youth Leadership Conference is an innovative training program for all advisers, regardless of their current responsibilities. Advisers learn how to apply the words and skills learned in NLS when working with young people.

The Developing Youth Leadership Conference will help advisers learn how to establish a lodge and chapter culture that grows leaders who are capable of establishing goals, building teams, and guiding the lodge's work. Prior participation in the National Leadership Seminar is encouraged but not required. Information about future DYLCs can be found at [oa-scouting.org/training/national-leadership-seminar-dylc](https://oa-scouting.org/training/national-leadership-seminar-dylc).

## Regional Organization

The Order of the Arrow is organized into two geographical regions, roughly east and west of the Mississippi River. These are called the Eastern Region and the Gateway Region.

The region chief is the youth leader of the region elected by the section chiefs from that region at the national planning meeting. The region chief must be younger than 21 during the entire year of their term; and will serve until a successor is elected. The election is held following the election of the national chief and national vice chief.

The volunteer leader in the region is the region Order of the Arrow chair. Appointed annually by the chair of the national OA committee, this person is responsible for administering and managing the program regionally, with a special emphasis placed on the role of adviser to the region chief.

The national director and associate director serve the shared duty of acting as staff adviser to the two OA regions. Duties of the staff adviser include regular communication and counsel with the region OA chairs.

Each region is divided into geographical sections composed of several councils. The number of sections varies according to region. The national chair establishes the boundaries, based on recommendations made by the region OA chair and the director of the OA.

Communication is a very important role for the region. Some regions use a newsletter to keep their sections up-to-date.

Each region has its own website:

[oa-scouting.org/eastern](https://oa-scouting.org/eastern)

[oa-scouting.org/gateway](https://oa-scouting.org/gateway)

## Section Organization

The section provides an inter-lodge forum for lodge and chapter leaders, bringing them together for fellowship and mutual improvement through the exchange of ideas. The sec-

tion organizes and conducts an annual conclave at which training plays a major part. In addition, the section creates a monitoring/mentoring relationship with its lodges, provides leadership development opportunities, fosters understanding and adherence to national OA policies and procedures, and coordinates OA administrative and program functions.

The section officers are the chief, vice chief, and secretary. They are elected at the annual business meeting held during the conclave. The section adviser is the adult volunteer leader, and a professional Scouter serves as staff adviser. The section adviser is appointed annually by the national chair, with the concurrence of the region OA chair and the director of the OA. The section staff adviser is appointed annually by the national director, with the concurrence of the region chair and national chair. These adviser appointments require approval of the Scout executive of the council in which they are registered. The advisers work closely with the section officers in planning and conducting the conclave.

The section adviser is the important link between lodges within the section. This person provides advice and guidance to the section officers and is an important resource of program ideas and help for lodge advisers.

A field operations publication is available at the OA's official website, [www.oa-scouting.org](http://www.oa-scouting.org), and should be used by all section officers and advisers. The *Field Operations Handbook* is designed as a guide to administration and program pertaining to section, region, and national operations of the OA. It includes current information about the organizational structure and program, as well as the section rules.

Secondly, the *Field Operations Handbook* is dedicated to providing the necessary background, knowledge, and information about how to organize and run a successful section conclave. It is informative and full of helpful hints, including sample training outlines.

Names and addresses of all elected personnel should be sent by the staff adviser to the direc-

tor of the Order of the Arrow within a week following the election of section officers.

## The OA and International Scouting

The Order of the Arrow is an integral part of the program of Scouting America and operates within its official structure. Neither the OA nor individual members may enter into any type of agreement concerning the OA and another Scout association or individuals in terms of individual or honorary memberships.

Remember, to be eligible for election to the Order of the Arrow, the individual must first be a registered member of Scouting America. Recognizing international camp staff participants or members of other national Scout organizations with any type of OA membership is contrary to the policies of Scouting America. This type of recognition also can create difficulties in Scouting America's relationships with other national Scout organizations.

## Special Programs and Awards

A variety of special programs and recognitions have been created by the national OA committee over the years. Each is administered by the director of the Order of the Arrow, and pertinent information and appropriate forms are available at [www.oa-scouting.org](http://www.oa-scouting.org). In addition to the national awards listed below, certain awards that were presented in the past have been retired; for more information on these retired awards, see [oa-scouting.org/program/awards/retired](http://oa-scouting.org/program/awards/retired).

**Josh R. Sain Memorial Scholarships.** These college assistance scholarships are awarded annually to immediate past national officers (national chief, national vice chief, or region chief) and immediate past section chiefs, based on exceptional service and scholarship achievement. The scholarships are given in memory of 1997 National Vice Chief Josh Sain, who died in a car accident during his term of office. The first two awards were given in 1999.

**Founder's Award.** The Founder's Award was created to honor and recognize those Arrowmen who have given outstanding service to the lodge. The award is reserved for those Arrowmen who memorialize in their everyday life the spirit of achievement as described by founder E. Urner Goodman. The award is a handsome bronze medallion bearing the likenesses of E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson, with wooden base and brass plate suitable for engraving. The award is suitable for display at home or the office. Also available is the Founder's Award arrow ribbon, similar to the universal arrow ribbon, except that it has a gold-colored arrow suspended from a red ribbon. Lodges may petition the National Order of the Arrow Committee to present up to four awards annually, based on lodge membership. If the lodge presents more than one award, at least one must be to a youth under the age of 21. Petition forms are available at [www.oa-scouting.org](http://www.oa-scouting.org).

**Red Arrow Award.** The award was created in 1967 to recognize individuals who are not members of the OA for outstanding service to the OA. This attractive award, a red arrow and medallion superimposed on an engraved plaque and a miniature charm for civilian wear, can be awarded only by action of the National Order of the Arrow Committee. Petitions, available at [www.oa-scouting.org](http://www.oa-scouting.org), must be submitted to the director of the Order of the Arrow. The awards are presented at a National Order of the Arrow Conference.

**Distinguished Service Award.** The Distinguished Service Award was created in 1940 to honor those who rendered service to the Order beyond the lodge level. The award is presented to those Arrowmen who have rendered distinguished and outstanding service to the OA on a sectional, regional, or national basis. It is given primarily for dedicated service

to the Order and Scouting over a period of years. The first awards were presented at Camp Twin Echo, Pennsylvania, to E. Urner Goodman, Carroll A. Edson, and eight others at the 1940 national meeting. Between 1940 and the first national conference in 1948, the award was presented at national meetings as deserving individuals were found. Thereafter, the award presentation became a traditional part of the pageantry and ceremony of the national conference. Since the time of the first awards in 1940, through 2024, 1,178 Distinguished Service Awards have been presented. This alone is a testament to its high standard of excellence. The award is a sterling silver arrowhead, bearing an arrow pointing upward and to the wearer's right, suspended from a white neck-ribbon upon which are embroidered red arrows. A white square knot embroidered upon red cloth is available for uniform wear, and a miniature silver arrowhead lapel pin is available for civilian wear. Presentation of the award is limited. Arrowmen whose service records are the most outstanding and extend farthest beyond others are usually selected. Nominations are open to both youth and adult Arrowmen. Petitions are available at [www.oa-scouting.org](http://www.oa-scouting.org).

**Other awards.** A variety of recognition items are available from the Scouting America Supply Group for use by lodges and chapters. These include plaques suitable for engraving, statuettes, and certificates. These may be obtained through the council service center. While it is not necessary to obtain approval of the national OA committee for these local recognitions, lodges and chapters must have the Scout executive's approval prior to presentation.

It is recommended that awards of this type be kept to a minimum so that they are more meaningful to the recipients.





## Appendix

### Guidelines for Assisting Scouts and Scouters with Special Needs

This information is provided to help members of the Order of the Arrow address issues regarding Scouts and Scouters with special needs. It is important to realize that **70 percent of disability = ability**, and that the Order of the Arrow program can be adapted to include everyone. Do not assume what a person is capable (or incapable) of doing by looking at them. These guidelines should help in understanding ways to adapt to meet special needs while still upholding the customs and traditions of the OA. Even though the experience may need to be different, it is no less meaningful to those involved.

#### Eligibility

If a unit leader believes that a Scouts BSA First Class, Venturing Discovery Award, or Sea Scout Ordinary rank (or above) Scout cannot complete the camping requirement of the youth membership qualifications due to a disability or long-term medical condition, they should contact the lodge adviser well in advance of the unit election to discuss possible modification or waiver of the camping requirement. The lodge adviser should contact the Scout executive, who has final authority in the matter. The Scout executive should make a determination in consultation with the council's Disability Awareness Committee. In councils where this committee does not exist the Scout executive should make the decision on their own. If the Scout executive grants a modification or waiver of the camping requirement, the lodge

or chapter should then schedule and conduct the unit's election.

#### Inductions and Ceremonies

##### The Ordeal

It is important to understand how a special need can affect a candidate's ability to perform the four challenges of the Ordeal. The best way to establish this understanding is by asking questions of the candidate and/or their parents, unit leader, or a medical professional. This should begin immediately after the election/nomination of an individual with a special need. It is important that all of those involved with the Ordeal (including elangomats and ceremonialists) understand as much as possible about the candidate.

**The night alone.** Most individuals will be able to complete this challenge, but some might require slight adaptations. Someone might need to spend the night with the candidate to ensure safety, as that is the number one priority. A Scout or Scouter who uses a wheelchair for mobility might not be able to transfer out of their chair to sleep on the ground, but a simple accommodation like a cot can help them complete this challenge. Some individuals might need private surroundings to address bathroom/toileting issues but can sleep outdoors without assistance.

Good judgment of all parties involved is important to ensure a safe and pleasant experience. Unit leaders often can answer most

questions and can provide the necessary assistance for the candidate.

**The day of silence.** There may be times that the vow of silence will need to be broken to advocate immediate needs and concerns, and flexibility should be provided. When possible, the special accommodations should be done apart from the other candidates. If a discussion is held prior to the Ordeal, a candidate with a special need can be asked to carry a pen and paper to minimize the need to actually talk during the Ordeal.

**Scant food.** This test requires pre-event planning and might be the requirement that needs the most flexibility. Many medicines are required to be taken with food, or full glasses of water or milk. They also might need to be taken at scheduled times during the day to ensure medical consistency. Discussing a candidate's special dietary needs prior to the event is essential. Foods that typically are used during the Ordeal might not suffice or be practical to Scouts or Scouters with a special need.

**Arduous labor.** Work projects still can be very meaningful but might need to be done a little differently. Try to establish ahead of time some projects that will meet this goal. Whenever possible, include the candidate with a special need in the same projects as the other candidates.

## Training Elangomats and Ceremonialists

It is important that special needs are discussed and understood by each person that will be involved with the induction process. If there is a need to make an accommodation, everyone needs to understand why and how to accomplish this. Consideration should also be given to allow the unit to provide an elangomat to work along with the candidate with a special need throughout the entire Ordeal process.

Direct questions about what needs to happen during the Ordeal process and the ceremony should be discussed prior to the event. A plan should be established that meets the needs of the candidate involved, as well as the lodge, but does not lose sight of the traditions of the

Order of the Arrow. Things to discuss might include, but should not be limited to:

- Can the individual pull the bow?
- Can they raise their hand in the Scout sign?
- Can they repeat the Obligation?

This is just a small sampling of questions to be considered, and while they may seem very basic, they need to be asked.

## The Brotherhood

Most individuals with special needs can complete the Brotherhood requirements with little or no adaptation required. As in the Ordeal process, the induction team should hold a discussion prior to the Brotherhood process. Some questions to ask might include:

- Can the individual participate in the Brotherhood Hike?
- How can we help the Scout complete the challenges during the ceremony?

## The Vigil

The Vigil induction can be completed with some assistance without affecting the symbolism of the honor. It will be important to take special precautions to ensure the safety of the candidate and all involved. The induction processes for the Ordeal and Brotherhood should provide plenty of ways to conduct a successful Vigil induction that will make it a very meaningful experience for all involved.

## Participation in OA Events

It is important to strive for **inclusion of all** in any OA event being planned, whether on a local, sectional, regional or national basis. Pre-event planning is the key to accomplishing this, and it is important that all registration and promotional information include a way to address special needs. Special needs can include but should not be limited to:

- Sleeping arrangements and personal hygiene needs

- Diet restrictions/accommodations
- Storage of medicine/medical supplies
- Assistance with mobility to programs at events
- Flexibility with service projects
- Language/communication issues
- Special parking/transportation

Stress that every reasonable effort will be made to meet special needs, **but it is the responsibility of the participant to indicate their needs in as much detail as possible prior to the event.** It should never be assumed that one can just show up at an event and find that their needs can be met. In order to help those with special needs make proper arrangements, **provide clear instructions on whom to contact and how to reach them.**

Section conclaves usually are held at a different location each year, and each location may provide different access. Each year the service lodge should include requests for special needs requirements in its pre-event information. Specific issues can be directed to the service lodge staff adviser.

National Leadership Seminars (NLS), Developing Youth Leaders Conferences (DYLC), and National Order of the Arrow Conferences can accommodate Scouts and Scouters with special needs. The same pre-event planning should occur to ensure the facility meets their needs. The national chair and the director of the Order of the Arrow can help with this information for NLS and DYLC, while all requests for special needs for NOAC should be addressed to the director of the Order of the Arrow. As with other requests, be sure to be as specific as possible to ensure the best results.

## Youth Protection

Scouts and Scouters with special needs can be especially vulnerable to sexual abuse. Care should be given to meeting all guidelines for Scouting America Youth Protection.

## Conclusion

The Order of the Arrow is a wonderful program that can be enjoyed by all. It is important to learn how to assist and involve all Scouts and Scouters in the program, and it is imperative to maintain and respect everyone's confidentiality and safety. Every individual, regardless of ability or special need, can have a rewarding experience as a member of the OA.

## References

- Several Scouting America resources, including the *Guide to Working With Scouts With Special Needs and DisABILITIES*, No. 510-071 and the *Scouting for Youth With Disabilities Manual*, No. 34059 are available at [www.scouting.org/resources/disabilities-awareness](http://www.scouting.org/resources/disabilities-awareness).
- The University of Washington has a glossary of terms at [www.washington.edu/doit/glossary-disability-related-terms](http://www.washington.edu/doit/glossary-disability-related-terms).
- The United Cerebral Palsy Association's website, [www.ucp.org](http://www.ucp.org) includes disability etiquette tips.
- The Americans With Disabilities Act and other disabilities-related laws and regulations can be researched by using Internet search engines.



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Revised January 2025