

A SCOUT IS THRIFTY: Resources and ideas for decreasing financial barriers to scouting

As one of the tenets of the Scout Law, keeping Scouting thrifty is an important part of welcoming every child into the wonders and adventures that Scouting offers.

These ideas have been contributed by unit leaders all over the country for how to make Scouting more affordable for units and families alike. If you have additional ideas to contribute to our guide, email them to annehwangblair@gmail.com and they will be incorporated into future versions of this document. Thank you for all your efforts to help our Scouts be thrifty Scouts!

Dues

1. Check with your local council to see if they have scholarships that can cover registration fees. In our Virginia Headwaters Council, contact Sue Hart at sue.hart@scouting.org or by phone at the council office at (540)943-6675.
2. Cover the adult volunteer fees to increase adult leader participation.
3. Offer a payment plan for unit dues.

Uniforms/Handbooks

1. Keep a unit uniform closet where scouts and families can donate outgrown uniforms, out ranked patches, loops, neckerchiefs, slides, handbooks, etc. Check with the council uniform closet if your unit does not have the specific item needed. Ben Cochran, Unit Commissioner for Monticello District, completed his Wood Badge ticket about this subject and is happy to be a resource if you need ideas or support getting started. He can be reached at cochranbe@gmail.com or at (703) 282-6479.
2. Make a specific pitch at the end of the year to families to collect/donate items to the closet.
3. Check in with nearby units in your area to see if they have any closet items they are willing to share/trade. A Google document can be started with other local units so everyone can see what they have available to share/swap with one another.
4. Local “Buy Nothing” groups can be a good source for uniforms sitting in the closet of former scouts. If you have never heard of Buy Nothing groups, check them out here: <https://www.facebook.com/BuyNothingProject>

5. Keep in mind what you are requiring from Scouts and families in order to join. Do they have to have a handbook in the age of Scoutbook and the app? What parts of the uniform are must-haves and what parts can be optional?
6. Tie a Friendship Knot instead of using a slide/woggle
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eEIzcoUDa9c>

Patches/Adventure loops

1. Encourage troops to trade position leadership patches after elections.
2. Contact local businesses about specific patches and loops requirements and see if they are willing to donate materials or provide technical help.
3. Be thrifty with leaders' time. One council buys supplies in bulk and lets den leaders buy and make kits for cubs at roundtable meetings. Leaders don't have to spend as much time sourcing materials.
4. Rethink awards. Some units have made their own trophies and medals for events.
5. Combine orders for awards/uniforms/handbooks to save on shipping costs.

Events

1. Keep unit events as low cost as possible for everyone.
2. Invite Scouts and families to contribute towards the cost of outings for other unit members if they are able to when collecting permission slips and/or payment. Be mindful about keeping the identities of recipients confidential.
3. Establish a campership fund to help pay for summer camp.
4. Consider spots to camp for free or low-cost. Ask sites if they offer reduced fees for scouting groups.

Camping Equipment

1. Local "Buy Nothing" groups can be a good resource for borrowing or getting free equipment.
2. Keep a database of families/scouts willing to loan out various gear and equipment.
3. Share database with other nearby units to increase size of database and support each other.

Fundraising ideas (contributed by various units)

1. Popcorn and peanuts fundraising for troops
2. Encourage troop units to keep separate Scout accounts.
3. Country meats/meat sticks
4. Coffee and donuts
5. Partner with local roaster to sell bags of fresh roasted coffee
6. Wreaths/Christmas trees/Mistletoe

7. Camp cards
8. Helping out at stadium/arena/festival events
9. Touch A Truck (Inviting community to see emergency and construction trucks up close)
10. Spaghetti dinners/pancake breakfasts
11. Store/restaurant charity days
12. Silent auction
13. Yard sale
14. First Aid kits
15. Brunch boxes (Big game/Mother's Day/Father's Day)
16. Thanksgiving/Holiday pies

Additional tips

1. Check with local council about Eagle Scout scholarships.
2. Teach scouts reusing, budgeting, meal planning, repair, and mending skills.

Submitted by:

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