



# Membership Policy Transition

## Making it Happen at Home

### Session Objectives

- **Explain** the updated membership policy, and what to expect moving forward into 2019
- **Demonstrate** how to best implement these new changes into your lodge's program
- **Guide** participants to fully understand all the changes, and what to do in difficult situations
- **Enable** participants to fully implement these new changes effectively and correctly, while still leveraging a highly engaging lodge program

**Session Length:** 60 Minutes

### Appendix Resources

- Guide to Safe Scouting (<https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/gss/>)
- Youth Protection Guidelines (<https://oa-bsa.org/about/membership/youth-protection-policies>)
- National OA Membership Transition Landing Page (<https://oa-bsa.org/about/membership>)
- Email for additional questions: [family.scouting@scouting.org](mailto:family.scouting@scouting.org)

### Required Materials

- CTI Membership Transition Handout (1 for every participant)
- CTI Membership Transition Scenario Discussion Sheet (1 document for the entire group)
- Flipchart / Easel & Markers
- Scissors to cut the scenarios
- Pens/Pencils & Scrap Paper
- Small prizes for participation (optional)

### Trainer Preparation

The trainer for this session should be familiar with all aspects of the membership policy transition set to go into effect on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 and be able to cultivate a culture of positivity surrounding this change. The trainer should also be highly energetic, enthusiastic, and able to leverage his past training experiences to create enthusiasm among the participants. The trainer should review this syllabus and support materials thoroughly and be able to deliver the presentation without simply reading the material.





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### Session Narrative

#### Introduction

5 Minutes

*Trainer Instructions:* As participants are taking their seats, and entering the session, pass out the handout. Give one handout to every participant in attendance.

The OA has more than 160,000 active members located in lodges affiliated with over 270 BSA local councils. The National Order of the Arrow Committee passed a resolution in May of 2018 that changes their membership policies to align with changes passed by the Executive Board of the BSA. The new OA membership policy provides for OA elections in all Scouts BSA troops, Venturing Crews and Sea Scout Ships effective February 1st, 2019 and allows election of both male and female members of their units to the Order of the Arrow. This change in policy has resulted in numerous questions regarding how current policies and practices will be impacted at all levels within the OA. In this session we will be looking at the new membership policy transition and any changes in the delivery of the program.

First, we will look at the membership requirements. The structure of the new requirements changes very little, except to become more aligned with the inclusive changes taking effect with the BSA program.

- Be a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America.
- 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 the Boy Scouts of 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.
- At the time of their election, youth must be under the age of 21, hold the Scouts BSA First Class rank, the Venturing Discovery Award, or the 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.
- Adults (age 21 or older) who meet the camping requirements may be selected following nomination to and approval by the lodge adult selection committee.

As we move forward in this pivotal time in scouting and the order's history it is imperative that we be ever mindful of the purpose of our order and always do our best to live the scout oath and law in our daily life.

#### Induction

5 Minutes

Unit elections under the new membership policy are authorized beginning February 1st, 2019 when the revised membership policy takes effect, not before. Elections held in Venturing and Sea Scout





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ships on that date or after should be scheduled and conducted in the same manner as those held in troops.

Lodges and chapters should prepare their election teams for the need for more thorough explanations of the OA and its purpose since many of these Scouts may have no prior knowledge of our Order.

Youth may be eligible for election in more than one unit. To be eligible for election, the youth must meet the applicable requirements of the BSA program in which they are being considered (Venturing, Sea Scouts or Scouts BSA). The one exception might be in meeting the camping requirement.

There has been some confusion over what camping qualifies in meeting the membership requirement for camping. The following factors apply:

- Camping must be under the auspices of an approved BSA program.
- The decision on what specific camping meets the spirit and intent of the camping requirement rests with the unit leader of the unit in which the youth is being considered for election.
- It is preferred that camping requirements be met as part of the unit in which the youth is being considered for election (i.e., troop, crew or ship); however, extenuating circumstances may exist (e.g., in cases where a youth did not have an opportunity to meet the requirement with the unit), that make it appropriate for unit leaders to consider other BSA camping experiences (e.g. a Venturer counting camping nights completed with a troop or camping nights completed while serving as a staff member at a council camp or national high adventure base). In each case, the unit leader must satisfy themselves the spirit and intent of the requirement was met (i.e., it was indeed qualifying outdoor camping).
- The term “ship nights” refers to nights during which the individual slept overnight on their ship. The ship need not be underway during that period for the nights to qualify.

Once elected in any unit, a youth is no longer eligible for election in another unit. In the rare instance a youth was elected in a second unit because they were not yet notified of their election in another unit, the lodge will determine the unit of election based on the unit with the earliest date of election.

### **Ordeal**

The induction ceremony, called the Ordeal, is the first step toward full membership in the Order. During the experience, candidates maintain silence, receive small amounts of food, work on camp improvement projects, and sleep apart from other campers. The entire experience is designed to teach significant values. All candidates for membership must complete the Ordeal.

Application of the youth protection principles during Ordeals include:

- Separated overnight camping areas for male and female candidates
- Random walk-throughs of overnight camping areas by two adults 21 or over, one of which must be female when female youth are participating.

### **Conversion**

**2 Minutes**

Revised 2018

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Though the requirements to be elected as a candidate of the OA have changed, there have been no changes to the process of sealing one's membership by becoming a Brotherhood member or by being recognized with the Vigil Honor. The structure for both are still as follows:

### Brotherhood Membership

After 10 months of service as an Ordeal member and fulfilling certain requirements, a member may take part in the Brotherhood ceremony, which places further emphasis on the ideals of Scouting and the Order. Completion of this ceremony signifies full membership in the Order.

### Vigil Honor

After two years of exceptional service as a Brotherhood member, and with the approval of the national Order of the Arrow committee, a Scout or Scouter may be recognized with the Vigil Honor for their distinguished contributions to their lodge, the Order of the Arrow, Scouting, or their Scout camp. This honor is bestowed by special selection and is limited to one person for every 50 members registered with the lodge each year.

### Program

**20 Minutes**

### Terminology

In general, OA publications and ceremonies are being updated to incorporate broader use of gender-neutral terminology so that all members feel equally welcome.

The use of "Arrowmen," "Brother," and "Brotherhood" and will continue as focus group discussions we have held with female Scouters and youth recommend we do not change the use of those terms.

The term "Chief" will not be changing.

### YPT

Youth protection guidelines for Order of the Arrow events with female youth present are the same as with any Scouting event with female youth present and are specified in the Guide to Safe Scouting. Recognizing the uniqueness of conducting Ordeals, guidance has been developed to assist lodges in the application of these guidelines in the conduct of Order of the Arrow Ordeals. This information is available online at [oa-bsa.org/about/membership](http://oa-bsa.org/about/membership).

Youth Protection guidelines require that at least one registered adult female over the age of 21 be in attendance at any meeting or event in which a female youth member is present. Lodges should be working now in anticipation of this requirement to ensure provisions have been made for appropriate adult female participation to ensure female youth members are afforded the same opportunities in the OA as their male counterparts as they enter the OA next year.

### Unit Reps

The former OA Troop Representative Program is being renamed the OA Unit Representative Program and is being expanded to allow for OA Unit Representatives in Venturing Crews and Sea Scout Ships. Clarifying guidance on this program will be published in the upcoming OA Unit Representative Support Pack listed in the Publications Changes section of the national website.





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The Unit of Excellence Award criteria is being updated to align it with the new OA Unit Representative Support Pack guidelines and will be published simultaneously.

### Youth Leadership Opportunities

All leadership positions in the OA will be open to female OA members on an equal basis with their male counterparts.

All OA youth members, regardless of Scouting program source, will be eligible to run for Section Chief.

Regional and National Officers will continue to be chosen from those elected as Section Chiefs. The process of elections and people chosen for a position are to be created as an equal opportunity for all involved.

The underlying principle which you will find applies in all circumstances is that female OA members are to be provided the same opportunities as their male counterparts.

### AIA/ICE

Any rumors that suggest the OA is distancing itself from the use of American Indian regalia are false. What we are doing is strengthening our policies to ensure when American Indian clothing and other regalia are used that we ensure it is respectful of the American Indian cultures in our local area and of those we are emulating, particularly with respect to the introduction of female youth as ceremonialists and as dance competition participants.

*Trainer Instructions:* Mention that the national OA committee is developing evaluation criteria for four new dance styles: Fancy Shawl, Jingle Dress, Woman's Northern Traditional and Women's Southern Traditional.

Each region has AIA folks identified who are key source leads for AIA/ICE questions. Your Region Chief and Region Chairman have their contact info.

Two additional contacts for AIA/ICE questions are: Ron Bell, and Darrell Donahue. Their contact info is listed in the slides and the handout.

In regard to female youth participation in OA ceremonies, female youth members must be accorded the same opportunity as male youth members with respect to participation in OA ceremonies. The frequent question we hear is can females be chief. The short answer is there are numerous examples of female chiefs in American Indian culture and that in itself is not a limiting factor; however, we must still satisfy ourselves that we are being respectful of the cultures we are emulating. If a conflict exists that cannot be resolved, the principle of equal opportunity takes precedence and the lodge/chapter will have to shift to a format of conducting OA ceremonies in alternative authorized clothing. Currently the only authorized alternative is to conduct OA ceremonies in complete field uniform. A second option is being explored and, if approved, will be announced on the national website.

Ceremony guidelines are also being updated primarily to incorporate gender-neutral language into existing ceremonies.





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### Scenarios

15 Minutes

The following information serves as a compilation of potential scenarios in which chapter, lodge, or section leaders may find themselves. Though it does not serve as an exhaustive list of every potential happening that may occur with the change in policy that the Order of the Arrow will go through this next year, completing this exercise will allow individuals to experience some of the situations or conversations that may occur. Not every situation is an example of exclusion or sexism; it is important to consider each of our own biases and realize that most people intend to live by the Scout Oath and Law throughout every part of their life. If people make mistakes, we should intend to collaborate with them to evaluate the implications of what they do and redirect their actions toward positive destinations.

*Trainer Instructions:* Split up the audience into small groups (4-5 people) and assign them each a scenario. Provide about 8 minutes for participants to work through the scenario with the group and think of how to provide a positive outcome from it. Use the remaining 6 minutes to have the groups share their scenarios and their solutions to the rest of the training participants. Use the remaining 1 minute to wrap up the activity.

### Conclusion

3 Minutes

What we hope you take away from this session is a better understanding of how to incorporate the new membership policy standards. The Order of the Arrow is a program that we all know and love, and with this new transition, we are able to open up the opportunities available in the Order to even more youth.

The successful implementation of these new practices and standards are going to rely heavily on you, local leaders, as being an ambassador for these changes. I urge you to continue to be the voice of positivity in your local lodges.

At the end of the day we are all Arrowmen who share the similarity of wearing the sash and representing the best that Scouting has to offer.

