

## Q&A – Eligibility Requirement Updates

### Potential Questions and Suggested Answers

**Q. What is the BSA’s policy on allowing transgendered youth as members in Scouting?**

A. The BSA does not have a policy on transgender youth. For more than 100 years, the BSA, along with schools, youth sports and other youth organizations, have ultimately deferred to the information documented on an individual’s birth certificate to determine eligibility for our single-gender programs, such as Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. However, that approach is no longer sufficient as communities and state laws are interpreting gender identity differently, and these laws vary widely from state to state.

**Q. How does the BSA classify gender?**

A. For more than 100 years, the BSA, along with schools, youth sports and other youth organizations, have ultimately deferred to the information documented on an individual’s birth certificate to determine eligibility for our single-gender programs. However, that approach is no longer sufficient as communities and state laws are interpreting gender identity differently, and these laws vary widely from state to state. Starting today, we will accept registration in our Scouting programs based on the gender identity provided on an individual’s application.

**Q. What is changing?**

A. Starting today, we will accept registration in our Scouting programs based on the gender identity provided on an individual’s application. BSA local councils will help facilitate locating units that can provide for the welfare and best interest of the child.

**Q: How does this impact religious organizations who sponsor Scouting?**

A: While religious partners will continue to have the right to make decisions based on religious beliefs, we will work with families to find local Scouting units that are the best fit for their children.

**Q. Why are you making this change?**

A. For more than 100 years, the BSA, along with schools, youth sports and other youth organizations, have ultimately deferred to the information documented on an individual’s birth certificate to determine eligibility for our single-gender programs. However, that approach is no longer sufficient as communities and state laws are interpreting gender identity differently, and these laws vary widely from state to state.

**Q. Is this related to the Maldonado family suit?**

A. BSA leadership has engaged in conversations about this matter over the last several weeks which have included the situation for the Maldonados. We found that our approach to gender identity was no longer sufficient as communities and state laws are interpreting gender identity differently, and these laws vary widely from state to state.

**Q. Have you contacted the Maldonado family?**

A. Yes. Local council Scouting leaders have reached out to the Maldonado family. We hope to welcome Joe back into Scouting soon.

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**Q. How many transgendered youth have you previously turned away? Will you be reaching out to them?**

A. We do not keep such records. We hope that the change in our approach in determining eligibility will enable us to bring the benefits of our programs to as many children, families and communities as possible, and we encourage all interested, eligible youth to apply.

**Q. What programs does this impact?**

A. This change to eligibility requirements will impact single-gender programs – Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts. Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts are year-round programs specifically for males in the first grade through age 17.

**Q. Can an individual who was born a boy but identifies as a girl join Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts?**

A. No. We will accept registration in our Scouting programs based on the gender identity provided on an individual's application. Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts are year-round programs specifically for males in the first grade through age 17. We have since developed alternative programs that are co-ed, serving young men and young women, such as Venturing and Exploring which include activities and programs designed for broader groups.

**Q. Can an individual who was born a girl but identifies as a boy join Cub Scouts or Boy Scouts?**

A. Yes. We will accept registration in our Scouting programs based on the gender identity provided on an individual's application.

**Q. Will you provide a list of inclusive units for families?**

A. We don't keep such a list, but I can assure you that we will work with families to find local Scouting units that are the best fit for their children.

**Q. Will non-religious chartered organizations be allowed to determine eligibility?**

A. As with all Cub Scout packs and Boy Scout troops, volunteer leadership of each unit determines their ability to provide a safe and effective program for the youth who seek membership.

**Q. Who sets the policy? Who makes these decisions?**

A. While individual units (e.g., Packs, Troops, etc.) are locally associated with community organizations, local councils and units are chartered by the national BSA organization. This means that youth who register to participate in a Scouting program are registered as part of the national organization, which sets eligibility requirements for all councils and participating units. Decisions made regarding participant eligibility are made according to the national requirements – not at the local council or unit level.

**Q. What Scouting programs are available to young women?**

A. The BSA offers programs for girls and young women through these programs:

- Venturing provides positive experiences to help young people mature and to prepare them to become responsible and caring adults. This program is available for young men and women, ages 14 to 20.
- STEM Scouts is a coed pilot program that is designed to focus on the fun and exciting opportunities for youth in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). It is open to boys and girls in three divisions: elementary school, grades 3-5; middle school, grades 6-8; and high school, grades 9-12. As a pilot, this program is not yet available nationwide.

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- Learning for Life, an affiliate program, also offers programs for boys and girls. These programs focus on career development, life skills, and leadership for all children from pre-kindergarten to 20 years old.

**Q. Is there mounting pressure to be more inclusive and change your policies again?**

A. We understand and appreciate that the values and the lessons of Scouting are attractive to the entire family, so we are committed to identifying program options that will help us truly do so. This is an area that we will continue to thoughtfully evaluate in order to bring the benefits of Scouting to the greatest number of youth possible.