

Blue Mountain Council Financial Assistance Policy - Final

Purpose

The Blue Mountain Council is committed to ensuring that every youth has the opportunity to participate in Scouting, regardless of financial circumstances. However, it is essential that families and units share in the responsibility of supporting their Scouts' participation to foster commitment, accountability and self-reliance.

Guiding Principles

1. **Shared Responsibility** - Families and units should contribute to the cost of participation, ensuring that recipients have a vested interest in the Scouting program.
2. **Sustainable Support** - Assistance should be structured in a way that aligns with the Council's financial capacity and does not divert resources from core operational needs.
3. **Thrifty Approach** - Scouts and their families should be encouraged to actively participate in fundraising efforts as part of demonstrating commitment to the program.

Financial Assistance Guidelines

1. Eligibility & Application

- Financial assistance is available to registered youth members of the Blue Mountain Council facing financial hardship.
- Applications must be submitted by the parent/guardian and endorsed by the unit leader.
- Assistance is intended as a temporary aid and not an ongoing subsidy.

2. Cost-Sharing Requirement

- Families are expected to contribute a portion of the cost to demonstrate commitment to the program.
- A maximum of 75% subsidy will be provided, with the expectation that the remaining cost be covered by the family, unit, chartering organization, or through fundraising.
- Units are encouraged to develop fundraising strategies to support members in financial need.

3. Assistance Scope

- Eligible expenses may include national membership fees and uniform shirt costs.
- The council service center receives donations of used uniforms for re-use. This option should be considered before the purchase of new uniforms.
- Assistance will not cover optional events (camping, summer and day camp fees, etc.), camping equipment or travel expenses.
- Assistance will not cover unit fees paid to the council, these fees are the responsibility of each unit.

4. Funding & Accountability

- Funding will be a finite council budgeted expense, set annually by the council executive board. Once the set amount has been expended, no additional funds will be allocated (with the exception of donated funds specifically given for youth financial assistance covered by this policy).
- Recipients are expected to actively participate in fundraising efforts through the council and/or unit whenever possible.

5. Review, Approval & Appeal

- Financial assistance applications must be fully completed by a parent or guardian. If English is a second language, a member of the unit's leadership may assist with completing the application.
- For youth new to Scouts, the application must be accompanied by a completed Scouting America membership application.
- Applications are first reviewed and endorsed by the unit leader.
- Note: To ensure the fund can assist as many Scouts as possible, units should consider other options prior to submitting a request. This includes determining what the family can afford, can the unit support part of the request internally, and has the unit asked their chartering organization for assistance.
- After submittal to the council service center, the application is then reviewed by the council registrar and final approval will be by the Scout Executive.
- Application approval will be based unit leader endorsement, available budgeted funding and review from the council registrar and executive.
- Approved applications will be tracked and recorded by the council registrar and treasurer.
- Note: Parents or guardians that annually self-register their Scout through National, should indicate on the online application they will pay through the council service center office and not online.
- All applications and communications regarding requested assistance shall be treated as confidential material.
- If an application for assistance is denied, the family may appeal. All appeals will be reviewed by the council Key Three (Scout Executive, Council President and Council Commissioner).
- Continued assistance is contingent on demonstrating engagement in the program, along with participation in available fundraising activities.
- When continued assistance is granted in subsequent years, the council will provide a 50% subsidiary the second year, and a 25% for a third year.

Conclusion

The Blue Mountain Council remains committed to supporting youth participation in Scouting while fostering responsibility and sustainability. This policy ensures that financial assistance is provided equitably while maintaining the integrity and long-term stability of the program.