

Planning Your Crew's Annual Program Budget

What is the unit budget plan? First of all, it is a part of the annual program planning process that will lead to a successful year and increased tenure of your members. Just like in any family, planning and managing your income and expenses is very important.

The key to having a great year is to have a great annual program plan, and that plan should also contain an annual budget plan. What follows are some suggestions for how to build that unit budget.

Having an annual program plan and budget leads to a well-managed, well-financed unit.

Recognizing this, the BSA recommends the following recipe:

1. Plan your crew's complete annual program. (This is a MUST.)
2. Develop a budget that includes enough income to achieve the program.
3. Identify the amount of product (popcorn, for example) that will need to be sold per youth member to reach the income goal.
4. Identify service and/or work projects that the crew can participate in to bring income to the unit.
5. Get commitments from parents and youth.
6. Make fundraising fun!

BASIC EXPENSES

1] Registration. When a youth joins, the crew normally asks him or her to pay the full \$24 national registration fee*, regardless of the number of months remaining in the unit's charter year. The unit sends to the council the prorated amount for those remaining months.

Note that fees are figured on a monthly basis: 1 month, \$2.00; 2 months, \$4.00; 3 months, \$6.00; 4 months, \$8.00; 5 months, \$10.00; 6 months, \$12.00; 7 months, \$14.00; 8 months, \$16.00; 9 months, \$18.00; 10 months, \$20.00; 11 months, \$22.00; 12 months, \$24.00.

The balance of the youth's fee is kept in the unit treasury to supplement his or her dues in paying the next full year's fee. This procedure ensures prompt registration at charter renewal.

2] Unit Liability Insurance Fee. Crews are required to pay an annual unit liability insurance fee of \$40. This fee is submitted with the crew's annual charter application and helps to defray the expenses for their general liability insurance.

3] Boys' Life. *Boys' Life* magazine, the official publication of the Boy Scouts of America, is available to all members at \$12, which is half the newsstand rate. (Prorated fees are available for youth who join a unit during the year.) Every youth is encouraged to subscribe to *Boys' Life*.

4] Unit Accident and Liability Insurance. Protecting the leadership and parents from financial hardship due to high medical bills from an unfortunate accident is a must for all involved in Scouting. Specific details on insurance programs are available from the local council.

5] Awards and Recognition. Every youth member is encouraged to achieve advancement and awards each year. The Venturing Awards and Advancement program has a number of options that will help your Venturers grow and enjoy your program.

6] Activities. Well-conceived and well-planned activities are critical to a successful annual program plan. A complete program should include an annual Open House to welcome new members into the crew and monthly activities such as camping, hiking, service projects, bicycling, climbing, and trips. It is suggested that the complete cost of these outings be built into the unit's budget.

7] Summer Camp/Activity/Trip. Central to a complete Venturing experience is a BIG summer activity, whether it is a trip to camp or to Europe. Local and national opportunities abound for Venturers to have an exciting, program-rich summer experience. Consider one of the national high-adventure bases.

8] Program Materials. Each unit needs to provide a certain amount of program materials. Depending on the type of program, these could include craft tools and supplies, Kodiak supplies, camping equipment, videos and books, or ceremonial props. (Note: Units may not hold title to property; only chartered organizations or the local council legally can own property.)

9] Training Expenses. Trained leaders are key to delivering a quality and safe program. Both adult and youth leader training should be considered an integral annual crew expense. It also supports the element of leadership development, one of the methods of Venturing.

* The same rate applies for registered adult Scouters.



10] Uniforms. Each crew determines its own uniform; however, it is recommended that Venturers wear the green Venturing shirt. The Venturing uniform gives Venturers a place to display the awards and advancements they have earned and provides a sense of belonging.

11] Reserve Fund. The reserve fund might be established by a gift or loan from the chartered organization, by members of the committee, or by a unit money-earning project. The reserve fund should meet unexpected expenses.

12] Other Expenses. These could include a gift to the World Friendship Fund, meeting refreshments, service project costs, and/or contingency funds.

SOURCES OF INCOME (AND A WARNING!)

The total cost for the complete year should be figured during your budget building process. Ideally, all income would come from one fundraising event at the beginning of the program year; however, a spring fundraiser could be planned as well. Some crews plan monthly fundraisers like a carwash or book sale, but be aware that you could wear out your members with too much fundraising.

Some Important Points:

Paying your own way. This is a fundamental principle of the Boy Scouts of America. It is one of the reasons no solicitations (requests for contributions from individuals or the community) are permitted by units. Young people in Scouting are taught early on that if they want something in life, they need to earn it. This principle is among the reasons that adults who were Scouts are found to have higher incomes. The unit's entire budget must be provided for by the families, through either fundraising or other means such as dues or fees.

Except for council-sponsored fundraisers, all other fundraising projects require the submission of the Unit Money-Earning Application, No. 34427, to the local council. To ensure conformity with all Scouting standards on earning money, leaders should be familiar with the eight guides listed on the back of the application and in the financial record books. This policy also protects you from doing a fundraising project that might have just been done by another unit.

OTHER RESOURCES

Additional information concerning unit budget plans, the treasurer's responsibilities, camp savings, forms, and records can be found in the *Venturing Leader Manual*, No. 34655.

The Crew Operating Budget Worksheet

To develop your crew's budget, complete the worksheet and then share it with the crew members and their parents. The crew president and vice president of finance should review the budget and put it in final form prior to presenting it to the entire crew. Be sure to keep parents involved and informed. Program calendar and budget information needs to be communicated regularly to families, especially at the start of the program year.