

LDS Partnership – Statement and Q&A

Statement – Embargoed until 8pm CT/7pm MT on May 8, 2018

The following can be attributed to the Boy Scouts of America:

The Boy Scouts of America (BSA) deeply appreciates the long-standing relationship we've had with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a chartered organization. While Scouting remains a beloved program for many LDS families, the Church has decided to pursue programming that helps it meet the needs of their increasingly global membership and will no longer charter units after December 31, 2019. We jointly express our gratitude to the thousands of Scout leaders who have selflessly served over the years in Church-sponsored Scouting units and wish the Church all the best as it prepares to introduce the new program in 2020.

There are many religiously-affiliated programs that are offered alongside Scouting, and as such, we are confident that many LDS Scouting families will go on to enjoy Scouting for years to come - continuing the legacy of LDS youth who have become Eagle Scouts and community leaders. For LDS families who want to continue the tradition of Scouting beyond 2019, the BSA will ensure a smooth transition to community-sponsored units that will welcome youth previously served by LDS-sponsored units.

At the same time, the Boy Scouts of America is excited about our future and the opportunity to grow by providing families more options for their children to benefit from the incredible character-building experiences we provide.

On background, approximately 425,000 youth in the LDS Church are served by the Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs. As one of the nation's largest and most prominent values-based youth development organizations, the Boy Scouts of America is deeply heartened by the commitment of our many chartered partners whose ongoing commitment to Scouting enables us to serve about 2.3 million youth each year.

FAQ

Q: Why did the LDS Church decide to break away from the BSA? Is this decision in response to BSA membership changes?

A: Although we do not speak on behalf of the Church, the Church has stated that its decision stemmed from the need to offer a program that served its increasingly global membership. As an organization, the Boy Scouts of America is excited about our future and the opportunity to grow based on decisions that enable us to serve more families and their children so they can benefit from the character- and leadership-building programs we offer.

Q: Can LDS youth still participate in Scouting?

A: Of course. Scouting is a beloved, values-based tradition for many Mormon families. There are many religiously-affiliated programs that are offered alongside Scouting, and as such, we are confident that many LDS Scouting families will go on to enjoy Scouting for years to come - continuing the legacy of LDS youth who have become Eagle Scouts and community leaders. For LDS families who want to continue the tradition of Scouting beyond 2019, the BSA will ensure a smooth transition to community-sponsored units that will welcome youth previously served by LDS-sponsored units.

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Q. Is the announcement being made now because of the introduction Family Scouting?

A. While we cannot speak for the Church, the Church has previously stated that the BSA's steps to make Scouting more family-friendly is consistent with the Church's beliefs.

Q: Can the BSA survive the departure of the LDS Church?

A: Yes. In 2017, approximately 425,000 youth in the LDS Church were served by the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts program, which amounts to approximately 18.5% of overall youth membership.

While our partnership with the Church was long-standing, the decision most specifically impacts approximately 28 of our 266 councils with LDS memberships of 35% or greater. The National Council will dedicate resources and support to help transition these councils so that they can operate in a sustainable manner.

Fortunately, our organization is more empowered to serve families in our communities today than ever before, and we are confident that our decision to be responsive to our families and welcome boys *and* girls into our programs will attract even more families and youth to Scouting.

Q. How many LDS Scouts are there and what percentage of the BSA's membership does that represent?

A: As of year-end 2017, approximately 425,000 youth in the LDS Church were served by the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts program, approximately 18.5% of BSA's total youth membership. There are many religiously-affiliated programs that are offered alongside Scouting, and as such, given the Church's encouragement to consider Scouting as an extracurricular activity for families, we anticipate that many youth from the LDS Church will want to continue to participate in Scouting beyond 2019.

Q. What is the percentage of LDS membership in local councils?

A: While most councils have some LDS membership, this decision affects 10% of BSA's councils in a very significant way. Of our 266 BSA local councils, approximately 28 councils have LDS membership of 35% or greater. The National Council will dedicate resources and support to help transition these councils so that they can operate in a sustainable manner.

Q: How will BSA support the councils that are significantly impacted by this decision?

A: Although the Church has emphasized that support of the councils will continue through the end of 2019, the BSA is already taking steps to support the most affected councils. Of our 266 BSA local councils, approximately 28 councils have LDS membership of 35% or greater – mostly in the Western region. The National Council will dedicate resources and support to help transition these councils so that they can operate in a sustainable manner. Councils with the support of National and Region teams will create plans to best serve their Scouting community. The focus will be to grow membership involving LDS Church members that desire to stay with the program and recruit new members to the Scouting family.

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Q. Does the BSA anticipate that local councils will be laying off employees?

A. It is premature to make personnel decisions at this point, especially recognizing that the LDS membership will remain through December 2019 and that the LDS community will be fully engaged and financially supportive of Scouting during that timeframe. Additionally, the National Council will dedicate resources and support to help transition these councils so that they can operate in a sustainable manner.

Q: Will the BSA and/or local councils sell assets to the LDS Church to help support its new program?

A: There are no immediate plans to re-allocate assets based on this decision. The BSA will work closely with the most affected councils to determine the resources that will be needed to ensure a successful transition.

Q: Will Scout camps, buildings and other facilities that bear the names of LDS leaders change?

A: Many such facilities were named to honor dedicated supporters of Scouting, and there is no intent to change the names.

Q: Is the BSA concerned that other religious chartered partner organizations may follow the LDS decision?

A: We do not expect this decision to impact other partners because the partnership with the LDS Church was unique relative to the structure we have in place with most chartered partners. As one of the nation's largest and most prominent values-based youth development organizations, the Boy Scouts of America is deeply heartened by the commitment of our many chartered partners whose ongoing commitment to Scouting enables us to serve about 2.3 million youth each year.

Q: Was the BSA's decision to welcome girls a preemptive effort that anticipated this announcement?

A: The BSA's unanimous decision to welcome girls into our iconic programs came after years of requests from our Scouting families and research that found that the programs were also appealing to families that were not yet involved in Scouting. During our research efforts, we also consulted several chartered partner organizations, including the LDS Church, and received positive feedback from them about the possibility of serving families – both boys and girls – through Scouting.