

Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow--Scouting's National Honor Society

For more than 95 years, the Order of the Arrow (OA) has recognized Scouts and Scouters who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives. This recognition provides encouragement for others to live these ideals as well. Arrowmen are known for maintaining camping traditions and spirit, promoting year-round and long-term resident camping, developing leaders, and providing cheerful service to others. OA service, activities, adventures, and training for youth and adults are models of quality leadership development and programming that enrich, support, and help to extend Scouting to America's youth.

Mission

The mission of the Order of the Arrow is to fulfill its purpose as an integral part of the Boy Scouts of America through positive youth leadership under the guidance of selected capable adults.

Purpose

As Scouting's National Honor Society, our purpose is to:

- Recognize those who best exemplify the Scout Oath and Law in their daily lives and through that recognition cause others to conduct themselves in a way that warrants similar recognition.
- Promote camping, responsible outdoor adventure, and environmental stewardship as essential components of every Scout's experience, in the unit, year-round, and in summer camp.
- Develop leaders with the willingness, character, spirit and ability to advance the activities of their units, our Brotherhood, Scouting, and ultimately our nation.
- Crystallize the Scout habit of helpfulness into a life purpose of leadership in cheerful service to others.

History

The Order of the Arrow was founded by Dr. E. Urner Goodman and Carroll A. Edson in 1915 at the Treasure Island Camp of the Philadelphia Council, Boy Scouts of America. It became an official program experiment in 1922 and was approved as part of the Scouting program in 1934. In 1948 the OA, recognized as the BSA's national brotherhood of honor campers, became an official part of the Boy Scouts of America. In 1998, the Order of the Arrow became recognized as Scouting's National Honor Society when it expanded its reach beyond camping to include a greater focus on leadership development, membership extension, adventurous programming, and broader service to Scouting and the community. Today, its service, activities, adventures, and training for youth and adults, are models of quality leadership development and programming that enrich, support, and help extend Scouting to America's youth.

Membership

The OA has over 171,000 members in lodges affiliated with more than 290 local BSA councils.

Eligibility

The Order of the Arrow membership requirements are:

- Be a registered member of the Boy Scouts of America.
- After registering with a troop or team, have experienced 15 days and nights of Boy Scout camping during the two-year period prior to the election. The 15 days and nights must include one, but no more than one, long-term camp consisting of six consecutive days and five nights of resident camping, approved and under the auspices and standards of the Boy Scouts of America. The balance of the camping must be overnight, weekend, or other short-term camps.
- Youth must be under the age of 21, hold the BSA First Class rank or higher, and following approval by the Scoutmaster or Varsity team Coach, be elected by the youth members of their troop or team.
- Adults (age 21 or older) who are registered in the BSA and meet the camping requirements may be selected following nomination to the lodge adult selection committee. Adult selection is based

on their ability to perform the necessary functions to help the Order fulfill its purpose, and is not for recognition of service, including current or prior positions. Selected adults must be an asset to the Order because of demonstrated abilities, and must provide a positive example for the growth and development of the youth members of the lodge. Note a 2012 policy change has relaxed the selection process for many Scoutmasters and Team Advisers.

Ordeal Membership

The induction process, called the Ordeal, is the first step toward full membership in the Order. Upon completion of the Ordeal and its ceremony, the member is expected to strengthen his involvement in the unit and encourage Scout camping.

Brotherhood Membership

After 10 months of service as an Ordeal member and after 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 of the Arrow.

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 youth or adult Arrowman 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 Arrowman for every 50 members registered with the lodge each year.

Lodges

An Order of the Arrow lodge is granted a charter from the National Council, BSA, upon annual application by the lodge's local council. Only one lodge charter is granted per council. The OA lodge helps the local council provide a quality Scouting program through recognition of Scouting spirit and performance, youth leadership development, adventurous programming, financial support, and enhanced membership tenure.

Sections

An Order of the Arrow section consists of lodges within a geographic area of the region. Annually, representatives of lodges in the section come together for a conclave to share in fellowship, skills, and training. In addition the section creates a monitoring/mentoring relationship with its lodges, provides leadership development opportunities, fosters understanding and adherence to national OA policies and procedures, and coordinates OA administrative and program functions. A section is led by three elected youth officers - the section chief, vice chief, and secretary - who are advised by an adult section adviser and a professional section staff adviser.

Region Leadership

The region chief is the youth OA leader of the region elected annually by the section chiefs of his region. This election is held in conjunction with an annual national OA planning meeting attended by the approximately 50 section chiefs from around the country. In addition to representing the national chief, the region chief conducts national leadership seminars and national lodge adviser training seminars in their respective regions. The region chief is advised by an adult region Order of the Arrow chairman and a professional region staff adviser.

National Leadership

The national chief and vice chief are youth Arrowmen elected to one-year terms by the section chiefs attending the annual national OA planning meeting. They serve as members of the national Order of the Arrow committee, providing youth involvement in decisions affecting national OA policy. They serve as the presiding officers for national OA events, and are advised by the adult national Order of the Arrow chairman and the professional OA team leader. In addition, each year the national chairman appoints approximately 50 Arrowmen to serve on the national Order of the Arrow committee to oversee the OA program. **Revised 10/18/2012**

For more information visit <http://scouting.org/sitecore/content/Home/BoyScouts/OrderoftheArrow.aspx>