



Diocese of Madison
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September 1, 2024
For Immediate Release

FAQs Regarding Boy Scouts of America Scouting
Partnerships with the Diocese of Madison
As of September 2024

Why is the Diocese of Madison changing its previous partnership with Scouting?

- The Diocese of Madison, like many other dioceses in the United States, other religious organizations, and non-profits in general, was forced to evaluate their partnership with Scouting in part due to the National Boy Scouts of America's (BSA's) bankruptcy filing and due to requirements of the BSA's insurance provider.

What is the change in the policy of the Diocese of Madison and when is it effective?

- In a communication in June 2023, and after consultation with diocesan bodies, the decision was made at the diocesan level that Diocese of Madison parishes and entities will not be renewing BSA charters, e.g., parishes serving as Chartered organizations, with an effective date such that no parish charter may extend past December 31, 2024. The decision regarding BSA units (which would no longer be chartered by a parish or school) being allowed to continue to use parish or school facilities under a Facilities Usage Agreement, was made in 2024, and such information on the requirements for such permission is included below.

To what types of BSA units does the change in the Diocese of Madison policy apply?

- The change in the Diocese of Madison policy stated above applies to all BSA scouting programs, including, but not limited to, Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, Sea Scouts, and Exploring.

Will the Diocese of Madison continue to be supportive of Scouting?

- As stated in June 2023, the Diocese of Madison will still have a Catholic Committee on Scouting, may occasionally host a diocesan-level event, e.g., a diocesan Mass to foster and promote Catholic scouting aspects, and will support individual scout formation for scouts to achieve Catholic BSA badges, etc..., in addition to offering the possibility of use of parish and school facilities for BSA units chartered by other organizations, as articulated below, and under proper conditions and fulfilled requirements, and with the pastor's permission.

What are the options, effective January 1, 2025, for BSA Scout units currently chartered to Catholic parishes or schools in the Diocese of Madison?

- Option #1 – Find a new Chartered Organization for the BSA unit and transfer the BSA unit over to that new organization. The new Chartered Organization will own the financial and equipment assets of the unit. Such BSA units will then be allowed to sign a Facilities Usage Agreement (see

below for particulars) with their Catholic parish or school, presuming the pastor's consent, for continued use of the Catholic facilities.

- Option #2 – Become a “Council Registered Unit” within the BSA organizational structure and sign the Facilities Usage Agreement (see below for particulars) with their Catholic parish or school, presume the pastor's consent, for continued use of the Catholic facilities. In this case, the Facilities Usage Agreement must be signed by three parties – an authorized signer of the parish facilities the BSA unit will use, an authorized signer of the BSA Council, and an authorized signer of the BSA unit.

What is required for a BSA Unit chartered with an outside organization, to use Catholic parish or school facilities in the Diocese of Madison?

- A BSA unit will need to contact and work with the parish pastor or his representative in order to discuss any potential arrangement to use parish or school facilities for the activities of the BSA unit. The following specific items need to be done:
 - Complete a Facilities Usage/Indemnification Agreement (between the BSA Chartering Organization and the parish), but please note below the additional requirement of the consent of the diocesan bishop for any ongoing or continuous leasing of parish real estate.
 - Complete an Unaffiliated Organization Agreement (between the BSA Chartering Organization and the parish)
 - Provide a Certificate of Insurance, naming the parish, diocese, and bishop as additional insured parties, and providing minimum limits of \$2 million per occurrence of general liability as well as \$1 million per occurrence of sexual misconduct coverage.
 - Complete and comply with the Diocese of Madison Safe Environment protocols for all adult leaders and volunteers of the BSA unit.
- Please note that the USCCB Complementary Norm to Canon 1297 of the Code of Canon Law, pertaining to the leasing of church property, states, “The valid leasing of ecclesiastical goods owned by a parish or other public juridic person subject to the governance of the diocesan bishop requires consent of the diocesan bishop when the market value of the goods to be leased exceeds \$100,000 or the lease is to be for 1 year or longer.”

Whom do I contact at the diocese to submit the necessary documentation (e.g., facilities usage agreement, unaffiliated organization agreement, certificate of insurance, etc..) for review regarding the use of Catholic parish or school facilities by a BSA unit?

- Please contact the Director of Human Resources at the Diocese of Madison, 608-821-3167, to submit the necessary documentation for review regarding the use of Catholic parish or school facilities by a BSA unit.

What do BSA units need to do to become registered as a Council Registered Unit?

- BSA units will need to meet with their District Executive and obtain a release letter from the current chartered organization. The BSA unit will then complete a new unit application and transfer ownership of the BSA unit to the BSA Council. There will likely be a fee based on the insurance needed to cover the BSA unit's property such as trailers, camping gear, pinewood derby track, etc..., however a new Chartered Organization under Option #1 above may also charge a fee to cover the insurance costs.

What types of outside organizations can become charter partners with a BSA unit?

- Typical BSA unit partnerships are made with other faith-based organizations, civic organizations such as the Lions Club, Kiwanis Clubs, Rotary clubs, veterans' groups, local businesses, etc...

Will there be a fee for BSA units to use Catholic parish or school facilities after a BSA unit transitions to or starts a Facilities Usage Agreement?

- That will depend on the facility's leadership (i.e., the pastor or his representative).

Will BSA adult leaders and volunteers still need to comply with and complete the necessary requirements and protocols of the Diocese of Madison's Safe Environment Program for the protection of children, young people, and vulnerable adults?

- Yes, the training and other compliance requirements for the Diocese of Madison Safe Environment Program will still be required for BSA units that sign the Facilities Usage Agreement, and for their adult leaders and volunteers.

Can a BSA unit incorporate on its own and create its own 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code to become a chartered organization?

- No, this is not allowed by the Boy Scouts of America. It would have unintended and deleterious tax consequences for those in the unit.

How can our BSA unit maintain our Catholic identity, since our BSA unit had been part of a Catholic parish?

- BSA units can celebrate Scout Sunday with the Scouts and leaders in uniform sitting together at Mass. One can work with the parish's Director of Liturgy or pastor to see if Scouts can be altar servers or lectors. Scouts can be involved in parish service projects, including parish service projects that support the parish and its grounds. Scouts should be encouraged to earn their religious emblems.