



Wewanoma Lodge #272, W.W.W

Rio Grande Council • Boy Scouts of America

Order of the Arrow Eligibility Requirements and Election Procedures

About the Order of the Arrow

The Order of the Arrow (OA) is Scouting's National Honor Society. The fourfold purpose of the OA is:

- *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.*

Order of the Arrow Elections

Once each year (calendar year or "scouting" year), a chartered Boy Scout Troop may hold a unit election to elect members of their troop to become members of the Order of the Arrow. Both youth and adult Scouts and Scouters can become members of the OA. New members aren't elected only by the OA members in your troop; everyone in the troop votes (therefore insuring that the scouts are elected mostly by people who are not OA members). If your troop has no active OA members, that's fine. An election team trained in the latest OA election policies will visit a regular troop meeting at your invitation to conduct the election for you.

Youth elections are normally held at a troop meeting, and take about 20 minutes to complete. In order for an election to be held, at least 50 % of your youth members must be present (based on your current chartered troop membership list) - if less than 50 % if the members are present, the election must be re-scheduled. Only elections conducted by an official election team trained by the Wewanoma Lodge will be considered valid. Untrained members of your troop cannot conduct an election for your troop.

The requirements for youth members (in the OA, "youth" is anyone under the age of 21; this differs from the BSA "youth" which is anyone under 18) are as follows:

1. Must be under 21 years of age at the time of election.
2. Hold at least the First Class Rank (this includes Assistant Scoutmasters under the age of 21)
3. In the past two years, have competed fifteen (15) days and nights of camping under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America. The fifteen days and nights must include one long-term camp of six days and five nights, and the balance of the camping must be short term (1, 2, or 3 night) camps.

4. Have these requirements certified by the scoutmaster, and be given a general endorsement of the candidate's scout spirit by the Scoutmaster, BEFORE the election is conducted.

How to schedule a Unit Election/ how the election is conducted for youth

- 1) The Patrol Leader's Council and Scoutmaster pick a date for the OA election. Dates should be picked for enough in advance to allow the election team to schedule the election (this should be a minimum of 10 days before). Elections are best held during a regular troop meeting, at a time where as close to 100% of the troop as possible can attend.
- 2) The SM or SPL contacts the Elections Coordinator (contact information listed below). The election is scheduled through the Elections Coordinator who will personally conduct the election, or send a trained and authorized representative in his place. The SM or SPL should be prepared to give specific driving instructions, meeting time and location, and what time they would like the election team to be there. The election team typically arrives 10 minutes before the election to set up and start the election process
- 3) The Scoutmaster prepares a list of eligible candidates for election based on the requirements above (using worksheet included) this form needs to be submitted 1 -2 wks before. Prior to the election, the scoutmaster should notify and counsel those Scouts he has no recommended for the election if possible, The SM or SPL needs to then forward that form to the Elections Coordinator so that they can pre-print the ballots.
- 4) About a week before the election, the Election Coordinator will contact the SM to verify the election, location, time, etc; Any Questions should be resolved at this time.
- 5) The election team arrives before the election is held. They will ask for the Current Troop roster (that should be no more than 3 months old). They will also ask for the SPL and Troop OA Rep.
- 6) The election team conducts the unit OA election. The names of the candidates are presented, and the election team explains the criteria for voting. Voting for candidates is done by secret ballot and no interference or public revelation of an individual's votes or the votes in total is tolerated. All youth, including Assistant Scoutmasters under the age of 21 may vote. Candidates may vote for themselves if they think that they are worthy.
- 7) Candidates voting have three (3) options:
 - A. They may choose to not turn in a ballot, which is abstaining. This does not affect the final vote.
 - B. They can turn in a blank ballot, which is a vote for nobody. This counts against all candidates.
 - C. They can vote for any number, including all, of the candidates eligible. This helps who they vote for, and hurts those who they don't.
- 8) Ballots are collected by the team and counted in private. In order to be elected, a candidate has to receive 50% of the ballots collected (abstentions don't count to the final, but blank ballots do. The election team notes which scouts have been elected, and destroys ballots (offsite). If no one scout has enough votes to be elected, the election team re-runs the election, with further explanations of the OA and offering to answer questions. If the result of the second ballot is that again, the person with the most votes is elected. As long as one youth is elected the election is valid.
- 9) The SM is told the results of the election. It is his choice as to when the results are made known; immediately or at another time in the troop setting, or he can wait until the next available OA Call-out ceremony. Note, that a candidate has 1 year to complete the Ordeal, which completes his membership in the OA
- 10) Completing the Ordeal, a weekend-long experience that test's a scout's dedication to the Scout Oath and Law, is the final step for membership in the OA. Wewanoma Lodge # 272 has two ordeals a year, one in the spring and one in the fall, so the candidate generally has two opportunities to complete Ordeal. Please do not hold off on notifying a candidate unnecessarily so that he misses a chance to be inducted. Exceptions to the one-year rule may be granted by the lodge for extenuating circumstances. If a scout does not complete the Ordeal within one year and the exception is not granted, they would need to be re-elected.

How to nominate an adult for membership in the Order of the Arrow

As long as the unit successfully elects one youth member to the Order, the troop then may nominate (NOT ELECT) an adult for membership. Where youth membership is given by his peers as recognition for service, adults are nominated and accepted if their membership will enrich the Order of the Arrow experience for the youth, or provide some service to the lodge, the camp, or the council. Adult membership should not be given solely as recognition or honor.

The requirements for election for adult members (in the OA, an Adult is anyone 21 years of age older; this differs from the BSA "Adult" which starts at the age of 18) are as follows:

1. Must be a registered and active member of the Rio Grande Council of the Boy Scouts of America at the time of nomination.
2. Must be at least 21 years old at the time of nomination. Both males and females are eligible.
3. In the past two years, have completed 15 days and nights of camping under the auspices of the Boy Scouts of America. The 15 days and nights of camping must include one long- term camp of 6 days and 5 nights, and the balance of the camping must be short- term (1, 2, or 3 night) camps.

A separate Adult Nomination form exists for all Scouters see attached. At the end of a successful election for youth, the Election Team will give the Troop Committee Chairman an adult nomination form. The nomination form is completed in full and mailed to the OA SECRETARY (via address below). The Troop will be notified so that they can decide how they will inform the candidate. Adult candidates need to complete the Ordeal within one year, same as a youth member.

To Schedule A Unit Election- ALL ELECTIONS MUST BE COMPLETED BY A LODGE ELECTIONS TEAM

To schedule a Unit Election, please contact:

OA Lodge Chief
3712 E. Canton Rd.
Edinburg, TX, 78539

To submit Adult Nomination Forms, please Mail them to:

OA Secretary
P.O. Box 2424
Harlingen, Texas
78550

Unit Elections are normally held from January 1- May 31. Elections are not held during Summer Camp. Other exceptions may be granted by the Elections Team Coordinator.

Any Questions about elections, procedures, results, Ordeal, or any other concern about the OA can be directed towards the Lodge Chief.

Revised January 2010