Lincoln Trails and Prairielands Councils Boy Scouts of America

**Council Shared Services Study**

**Frequently Asked Questions**

**What is a Shared Services Study?**

*On December 1, 2015 the Key Leaders of Lincoln Trails Council (Decatur, IL) and Prairielands Council (Champaign, IL) presented to their Executive Boards a proposal that the two councils study potential shared services. The proposal recommended the creation of a committee to review common services that, if combined, could build a more sustainable operational model for greater impact to area youth, families, volunteers and Charter Organizations.*

*There is no predetermined outcome of the Study other than discerning the best way to provide Scouting to young people in the years ahead. Possible outcomes of the study include:*

* *Identification of ways that the councils can work collaboratively on events and activities*
* *Identification of ways to share administrative services and costs*
* *Recommendation that the councils consider consolidation discussions*
* *Determination that no operational changes are necessary at this time*

**Who will serve on the Shared Services Study Group?**

*The Shared Services Study Group will be made up of 12 to 20 volunteers appointed by the Council President of each council. The two Scout Executives will support the Study Group as non-voting Staff Advisors.*

**Who is driving the Shared Services Study?**

*The study is being driven by Council volunteer leaders in both Lincoln Trails and Prairielands Council. The process is being supported by but not under direction by the Central Region or the National Council.*

**Is this being driven because one or both councils are at some level of distress?**

*No. Both councils are in good financial health and come into the study with no long-term debt. This is one of the important issues related to the study. Because both councils are fiscally sound, both can enter into the discussion in a position of strength. The question for both councils is whether financial stability is sustainable in the years ahead and, if not, is now a good time to look at ways to solidify long-term fiscal health.*

*However, declining membership in both councils is an increasingly significant concern. If membership continues to erode each council will begin to lose relevancy in the community. Shared services or consolidation could allow the allocation of funds to go more directly to unit service and have a significant impact on the declining membership trend.*

**Who will review and take action on the recommendations?**

*The Executive Boards of both councils will review the recommendations of the Shared Services Study. Each Board will vote independently on the recommendations based on what is best for their council.*

*If the recommendation would be to consolidate, final approval would be made by the voting members of each council. Voting members include Executive Board Members and Charter Organization Representatives.*

**What is the timeline of Shared Service study?**

*Upon agreement by both Executive Boards to move forward with a Shared Services Study, the Council Presidents of each council will appoint representatives to several sub-committees by the end of January 2016. The sub-committees will meet and submit their reports to council leaders in 60-90 days.*

*The full report of the subcommittees and recommendations will be presented to the Executive Board of both councils in May 2016. Both Executive Boards will review and take action on the recommendation of the committee.*

*If the recommendation is to share common services, the Council President of each council will appoint a representative(s) to enter into an agreement to for those services. An implementation plan will be written with the objective of having recommended changes in place by December 31, 2016.*

*Details of shared services will be announced to Scouting membership upon approval.*

*Should the recommendation be a consolidation of the two councils, the Council Presidents will appoint representatives to a Consolidation Committee to move forward with further study needed to develop of consolidation plan for approval by the voting members of both councils in a reasonable timeframe that will allow for thorough planning and transparent communication. Voting members include Executive Board Members and Charter Organization Representatives.*

**Have the Key Council Leaders made any agreements up to this point?**

*The Key Council Leaders and the Scout Executives of the two councils have met and agreed only to present a Shared Services Study Committee proposal to their respective Executive Boards. There are no written or unwritten agreements between the councils.*

**What have the discussions between Key Council Leaders included so far?**

*The Key Council Leaders have discussed the common challenges that both councils face in the operation of a relevant Boy Scout council. These include financial sustainability, fund-raising potential, membership growth, manpower recourses, service to local units and asset & property management. The Key Council Leaders from both councils have stated that:*

* *A sustainable financial base is critical for either council to continue to operate*
* *Significant future growth in youth membership must be a top priority*
* *The camp in both councils is a vital part of providing the Scouting experience.*
* *The common objective of the Key Council Leaders in both councils is to develop a strategy to assure the continued stability and growth of Scouting in the areas now served by each council.*

**What about…….what if……how will…….?**

*There are a lot of questions, most of which are premature at this point. Under the direction of their Executive Boards, the Council Presidents will appoint the Shared Services Study Group to begin looking at how we as councils can better serve our members. Once we have the Study recommendations we will be able to explore more specific questions.*

It is the mission of the Boy Scouts of America to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the vales of the Scout Oath and Scout Law.

11/30/2015