

INDIAN WATERS COUNCIL

GUIDEBOOK FOR APPROVING, PRESENTING, AND DOCUMENTING ADULT AWARDS



“Yet one more item is needed to complete success, and that is the rendering of service to others in the community.” - Robert Baden-Powell

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AWARDS FOR ADULT LEADERS

Introduction

Indian Waters Council (IWC) has an incredible collection of adult leaders, all of whom provide a wide range of Scouting leadership from direct contact leaders, members of committees both at the unit, District, and Council levels; and a wide range of other Scouters who are involved with the Scouting program. Without these adult leaders, there would be no Scouting program here—or anywhere else in Scouting America.

Recognizing adults for achievement and training has a positive effect on the adult. There is documented, empirical evidence that adults respond positively to recognition. The adult leader can feel that they were acknowledged for their hard work, giving them a sense of self-pride. It can also energize other adults who feel that the award is worth earning. And, just as important to both, it can show to youth members that adults are working to become better, and better trained, leaders. All three of these will ultimately improve the Scouting program and ultimately the experience for the youth.

Naturally, not all awards in Scouting America tie directly to training and performance, e.g., awards for valor. However, a significant number of the awards are tied directly to completed training and performance. The most important part of a Scouter earning an award is that it results in a Scouter who is better trained, or who is serving Scouts with more knowledge and experience. Regardless of the nature of the award, the payback to Scouts is huge. When viewed across all adult volunteers, the impact cannot be measured.

Purpose of the Guidebook

The purpose of this guidebook is to provide a consistent process for the awarding of adult leaders who have earned an award, and provide a standard process for ensuring that the award will be included in their award and/or training records at Council. These processes may change due to circumstances, so they are not absolutes. This is a *guide*, and as such should be viewed in that light.

Also, this guide does not add or change any requirements to the earning of any award, nor does it mandate how an award might be presented. Further, this guide does not address youth awards, e.g., Eagle Scout.

Range of Awards

Scouters earn any number or type of awards. Some are for the completion of specific training. Others are for achievement or service. There are specific types of awards to acknowledge levels of professionalism as a volunteer. Even others are for acts of bravery. For the purposes of this guide, the awards that are called out in this procedure will fall into those general categories. The

awards that are identified in this guidebook will be categorized simply so that the reader will have a better understanding of why an award might be handled in a specific way.

Then there is the consideration of the level of the award, and how it will be presented, and even documented. Some awards are restricted, and must be approved at the National, Council, or District levels. Some are approved of by specific roles in the Council, such as the Council Training Chair or an Awards Committee, and some are documented at the National level. It should also be noted that how awards are categorized here does not necessarily align with Scouting America's grouping of awards.

Unfortunately, this guidebook cannot categorize every award available in Scouting, so this guidebook will attempt to steer the reader toward how an award will be processed. It should be used accordingly.

Processing of Awards

As addressed previously, there are different types of awards. These will be handled at the appropriate level in Scouting America. All awards have a recommendation form or application that must be submitted for the award. Some awards take multiple signatures, and approval of specific members of the Council. Some require the approval of committees. Others can be approved at the district level with less documentation. Still, regardless of the type of award to be awarded, it must still be documented by the correct person if it is to become part of the Scouter's training and/or award records.

Awards must also be paid for and procured, especially for certain restricted awards. It is highly recommended that recommendations for awards be processed through the District Executive to ensure that they are procured and funded. Even for awards that must go to Council for approval, they should still be processed through the DE to ensure that they have been tracked locally. It should be noted that except for the certificate and one square knot, the Scouter who earns the award is responsible for paying for the award, e.g., medals. Unit level awards should be procured and paid for by the unit itself. This is not the case in exceptions such as the DAM, the Silver Beaver, and the Distinguished Commissioner Service Award.

Some awards that focus on specific training can be included in the Scouters *training* records by a number of different people with the correct permissions. Conversely, awards can only be entered into Scouter's *award* records by staff with permissions to access those records. This requires that the approval for the award be forwarded to the Council Registrar, or a Scouting professional with similar permissions, for inclusion.

CATEGORIES OF AWARDS

There are awards for training, for professionalism, for exceptional service, and even for bravery. There are also awards that are not Scouting America per se, but are awarded by outside entities, and are still worn on the Scouter's uniforms. Included among those awards are the awards for Duty to God, and awards by civic organizations. These are not Scouting America awards, per se, but rather are awarded by the organization to which the Scouter belongs. They are, however, entered in the Scouters file. There are even awards for Scouting activity such as the 50-Miler Award, given for a 50-mile excursion, and the Philmont Scout Ranch Bull, worn on the left shoulder of a jack shirt, which is presented for specific activity at Philmont.

This is not intended as an exhaustive list. First, there are far too many different types of awards to list all of them. And they are subject to change, and to be both either added or removed as awards. Attempting to include all awards would simply allow this Guidebook to be outdated much more quickly. The examples that are given are just that—examples. They are intended to give the reader some direction in how an award might be processed. In some cases, it is recommended that the details of how an award is processed should be researched to ensure that the Scouter gets the appropriate credit.

Scouting America provides a page with the different types of awards that can be earned. The following link will take you to that page: <https://www.scouting.org/awards/awards-central/>. Note there are a significant number of awards that are not addressed in this guide, which run the gamut from outdoor adventure and conservation awards to new unit organizer and Veteran awards.

The following sections discuss the different categories of awards. Again, not a complete list, but rather types of awards. You'll see the similarities in each of the categories of awards.

Training Awards

- **Scouter's Training Award** – The Training Award can be earned by many volunteer Scouters. Its focus is on encouraging the position-specific training required, and some additional training such as participating in Round Tables or attending a Scouting University. The end result is a leader with a better understanding of their role in Scouting, and a stronger basis to move forward with additional, more advanced training. The importance of this award is that it enhances the leaders' capabilities and provides a better-trained leader for the Scouts.
- **Den Leader Training Award** – Very similar to the Scouter's Training Award, it focuses on the role as a Den Leader in the Cub Scouting program. This award recognizes den leaders who have completed training, tenure, and performance requirements. It is available for Lion, Tiger, Wolf, Bear, and Webelos den leaders and can be earned in each position, but tenure must be completed separately for each award.
- **Arrowhead Honor Award** – The Arrowhead Honor Award is presented to commissioners who have met certain standards within their role as a commissioner. It is awarded in lieu of the Scouter's Training Award. Regardless of the role in which the commissioner is volunteering, the Arrowhead Honor Award is structured to expand the commissioner's

knowledge of their role and to broaden their experience as a commissioner. It also requires the commissioner to perform their role at a certain level of performance. The Arrowhead Honor Award is only awarded to commissioners, and is the commissioner-specific version of the Training Award.

- Wood Badge – Wood Badge is a unique training opportunity that is designed to bring Scouters' knowledge concerning Scouting up considerably. It provides a view into Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA and gives the Scouter an opportunity to see how these organizations can and should be run. It is unique in its depth. Wood Badge trained Scouters should have a much better understanding of their Scouting programs, with the predictable results of a better run youth program. The ultimate payback is that while working their Wood Badge ticket, the Scouter will provide services for their unit, district, or council.
- Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award – The Doctorate of Commissioner Science (DCS) Knot Award is awarded to commissioners who have completed a broad-based series of training activity, performed as a commissioner during a five-year period, earned the Commissioner's Key, and completed a project or thesis that is oriented toward service, which is approved by a Review Committee. Completion of the DCS itself is not sufficient to earn this award. As the Commissioner can be the glue that brings many units together, having a more thorough understanding of their role as a commissioner and having completed a research study or project to enhance their service to Scouting, is a win for all.

Professionalism Awards

- Unit Leader Award of Merit – An award for outstanding performance as a unit leader, this award signifies that the Scouter has been heavily engaged in their role as a leader. They have met certain training standards, and have performed for a specified period of time, typically two to three years. Formerly only for Scoutmasters, this award is for Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, Venturing Crew Advisors, and Sea Scout Skippers.
- Scouter's Key Award – Scouter's Keys may be awarded to a range of Scouters. The Key is awarded for performance in the Scouter's volunteer position. As with the Training Award, the Keys typically take two to three years to earn. It can be earned by Cubmasters, Scoutmasters, Venturing Crew Advisors, Commissioners, and District Committee Members.

Exceptional Service Awards

- District Award of Merit – The District Award of Merit, or DAM, is awarded by the Scouter's District for exceptional performance at the district level. There are no set criteria for the award, but there are limitations to how many may be awarded, based solely on the number of Scouters in the District. The District is allowed to award one DAM per 25 traditional units, or fraction thereof. It is an important acknowledgement of the level of effort dedicated by the Scouter. It may be awarded to a Scouter once.

- Silver Beaver – Awarded by the Scouter’s council, this award is the highest-level award that can be presented at the council. It acknowledges a significant level of effort on the part of the Scouter. As with the DAM, there are no set criteria for the Silver Beaver, but it is limited based on the number of units in the council. Also like the DAM, it is voted on by an awards committee, with the most deserving Scouter being awarded. It may be awarded to a Scouter once.
- OA Distinguished Service Award – One of the least awarded recognitions in Scouting, the OA Distinguished Service Award is given for exceptional service to the Order of the Arrow. It requires a significant level of service to the OA, which means a significant level of service to Scouting. The ultimate payback is to the youth members who are members of the OA, in that the service to the OA is directly for the youth.
- Distinguished Commissioner Service Award – The Distinguished Commissioner Service Award is also one of the less-awarded recognitions in Scouting. The award requires a high level of involvement in the Commissioner role. Simply being registered as a commissioner will not meet the requirements. This award is presented at the council level, and requires approval by a committee.
- Professional Circle Award – Unique among the awards in this section, this is awarded to Professional Scouters who meet performance and training expectations. They must meet certain specific performance metrics in their jobs as Scouting professionals, and considerable tenure on the job. This helps ensure that all executives that have been awarded this square knot have been performing at a high level and have done their utmost to be fully trained in their respective jobs.

Bravery and Meritorious Action

- Medal of Merit – The Medal of Merit may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has performed an act of service of a rare or exceptional character that reflects an uncommon degree of concern for the wellbeing of others.
- Heroism Awards – Both the Honor Medal and the Honor Medal with Crossed Palms are awarded for acts of bravery by both Scouts and Scouters. They are given in different levels to recognize the level of person risk that the Scout or Scouter underwent. The Honor Medal with Crossed Palms may be awarded in exceptional cases to a youth member or adult leader who has demonstrated unusual heroism and extraordinary skill or resourcefulness in saving or attempting to save life at extreme risk to self. The Honor Medal may be awarded to a youth member or adult leader who has demonstrated unusual heroism and skill in saving or attempting to save life at considerable risk to self.

Non-Scouting Awards

- Religious Emblem Award Program – Duty to God is a fundamental component of the Scouting America religious program. The program is completely non-sectarian. The religious emblem reward program for Scouting America is about both Scouts and adult Scouters involvement with their religious organizations. The involvement begins with

Cub Scouts, and continues through adulthood. Religious awards are from the Scout's or Scouter's house of worship, and are not awarded by Scouting America. However, these awards are represented by knots that are worn on both the youth and adult uniforms, and are the same regardless of the faith in which the award was earned.

- Organizational Awards (e.g., American Legion, VFW) – These awards are to recognize members of the organizations who are actively involved in the Scouting program. The awards are made by the organizations themselves, but are recognized by a square knot that can be worn on the Scouter's uniform. Each organization has their own set of requirements; however, they all align in the requirement to serve the Scouting program.

APPROVING, PRESENTING, AND DOCUMENTING AWARDS

Award Recommendation and Approval

The approval process depends on the level of the award. In the case of some awards, such as the Silver Beaver, the award is approved by the Council Awards Committee. The Training Award is approved by the district. The Commissioner's Key is approved by the Council Commissioner. It is the variation of who approves that can slow down the award process. Because of this variation, the processing time can vary, especially in the case of unusual or not-often-awarded awards. The best scenario is to use the forms that are created by Scouting America, and follow the process detailed on the form.

While many awards are submitted in a paper format, several of the Indian Waters Council awards are recommended through the IWC "Awards" web page, which can be found at <https://indianwaters.org/awards/>. This page manages the award recommendation process for these awards, ensuring the information is correctly captured, and that it is processed by the proper committee. This process provides a more consistent review process, and reduces the possibility of a misplaced recommendation.

Training Awards

- Training Award – The Training Award is typically submitted by the adult leader who is responsible for the level of training. For example, the Scouters Training Award is usually approved by the Troop Committee Chair. The Training Award for members of the District Committee is initiated by the District Committee Chair. This award, which is tied directly to the Scouter's primary registered position, provides a framework for the appropriate training for the Scouter. It helps track actions that the Scouter should be taking to enable them to operate at the "journeyman" level. This award is finalized by the District or Council Training Committee Chair.
- Arrowhead Honor Award – The Arrowhead Honor Award is only earned by Commissioners, regardless of the position in which the Commissioner volunteers. Commissioners do not earn the Training Award (unless it is earned in another Scouting position, or was earned previously). The Arrowhead Honor Award is typically approved for the Commissioner by the Commissioner's immediate level above them. For example, a Unit Commissioner would have their Arrowhead Honor Award approved by the District Commissioner. As with the Training Award, it establishes that the Commissioner is operating at a "journeyman" level. In Indian Waters Council, earning the Arrowhead Honor Award goes hand-in-hand with the Commissioner getting on-boarded into their new position.
- Wood Badge – Wood Badge is a unique award. It is a five-day training course that teaches the Scouter how both a Pack and Troop should operate. It helps leaders—from new to seasoned—to better understand the dynamic of leadership as it applies to Packs and Troops. The process for finalizing Wood Badge requires that the Scouter complete a "Ticket," which they have created as part of the course. Once the ticket has been

completed, Wood Badge can be recorded as any other training event in the Scouter's training record. However, the presentation of the Wood Badge regalia *may* be different from other Scouting awards. As addressed in the Presenting of Awards section, Wood Badge will be discussed at some length because of its somewhat unique place in Scouter training. Completion of the Wood Badge award is approved by the Wood Badge Course Director.

- Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award – As with Wood Badge, the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award is somewhat unique. The Doctorate of Commissioner Science training can be entered into the Scouters training records by a number of people. The award requirements include 24 classroom sessions, and the creation of either a research paper or a project, both of which are about unit service. The Knot Award is unique in the amount of time it takes to complete the requirements, the amount of training required, and the number of actions that need to be completed. The DCS Knot Award is ultimately approved by the Council Commissioner (or designated representative) and is then coordinated with the Council Registrar to entry into the Scouter's award file.

Professionalism Awards

- Scouter's Key Award – Scouter's Keys are part of the process to provide a higher degree of professionalism to adult leaders in multiple positions. All require that the adult leader be fully trained in their position. It also requires that the adult participate in training and activities outside of their specific position, e.g., attending additional training and events. It is approved by the unit Committee Chair.
- Unit Leader Award of Merit – Unique among awards, this award has to be submitted with a letter by the senior *youth* leader. The nomination is certified by the unit commissioner. This award recognized the hands-on involvement of the unit leader. Certain requirements, such as advancement of 60% of the youth members, are there to demonstrate the unit leader is helping move the unit's youth forward in the Scouting program. The application form requires multiple checks by the Unit Committee Chair, who nominates the Scouter. The award is certified by the Unit or District Commissioner. (Note on the letter by the senior youth leader: Should the senior youth leader be related to the unit leader, it is appropriate to have the letter written by the next level youth leader, e.g., the Assistant Senior Patrol Leader. This avoids potential conflicts of interest.)

Exceptional Service Awards

- District Award of Merit – The DAM is normally recommended at the district level by a Scouter familiar with the recommended person. It is voted on by a local committee, and then processed through the DE to the Council. Only a certain number of DAMs may be awarded within a District. This is based entirely on the number of units in the district. The Council pays for the award, to include the plaque, and coordinates with the DE. Once approved, it will be provided to the Council Registrar to be entered into the Scouter's award record.

- Silver Beaver – As with the DAM, the Silver Beaver is based on a recommendation by another Scouter. The recommendation is forwarded to the Council Awards Committee, and voted on. As with the DAM, the Silver Beaver is limited based on the number of units in the Council.
- OA Distinguished Service Award – The OA Distinguished Service Award is for those youth or adults who have rendered service beyond the Lodge level. The recommendation for the award is made at the OA online submission portal. This ensures that all approving entities have access to the recommendation, which eliminates issues such as misplaced paper versions of the recommendations. The award is presented at National Order of the Arrow Conferences. Since the time the first awards were presented, fewer than 1,200 Distinguished Service Awards have been awarded.
- Distinguished Commissioner Service Award – The Distinguished Commissioner Service Award is, like the OA Distinguished Service Award, infrequently awarded. The Distinguished Commissioner Service Award is the highest recognition that can be given to a commissioner. The recommendation will be forwarded to the Council Commissioner for ultimate approval. There is not a cap on the number of commissioners that may receive the award in a year.
- Professional Circle Award – The Professional Circle Award requires a significant level of training and tenure to qualify. This award is presented to professional Scouters only, and recognizes a very high level of performance on the part of the Scouter. They must meet certain specific performance metrics in their jobs as Scouting professionals, and considerable tenure on the job. This helps ensure that all executives that have been awarded this square knot have been performing at a high level and have done their utmost to be fully trained in their respective jobs.

Lifesaving and Meritorious Action Awards

- Heroism Award – Nomination is made to the local council, which nominates someone to the National Court of Honor. The Council shall establish a Council Meritorious Action Awards Committee for the purpose of considering applications for award for the National Certificate of Merit or Medal of Merit for individuals registered with the Boy Scouts of America and residing within the council. The National Court of Honor makes the final determination of the level of the awarded and sends award and certificate back to the local council for appropriate presentation.
- Honor Medal and Honor Medal with Crossed Palms – Nominations are made to the local Council, which through the Meritorious Action Awards Committee makes a determination on the possible level of the award. Councils can award a Medal of Merit or Certificate of Merit. The Certificate of Merit goes to a youth or adult who has performed a significant act of service that deserves special recognition. A Medal of Merit may be awarded to a youth or adult who has performed an act of service that reflects an uncommon degree of concern for the well-being of others. However, if the meritorious action awards committee and the council's executive board feel that the nominee should be considered for a National Council award, they can submit it for consideration.

Non-Scouting Awards

- Religious Award – Religious awards are awarded through the Scouter’s religious organization. The requirements vary considerably, but are generally approved by the local religious leader that has recommended the individual for the award. Required service, and tenure, vary significantly, but are based on the desires of the religious body.
- Organizational Awards (e.g., American Legion, VFW) – As with religious awards, the requirements vary considerably. They can involve multiple years of service, and direct involvement with Scouting. The awards are approved and presented by the respective organization.

Ordering and Paying for Awards

Typically, the local District Executive will be responsible for ordering and arranging payment for awards at the district level. This is to ensure that funding is coordinated with Council, and that the awards are procured in a timely manner. In most cases the award will be part of a training or event and the cost of the award will be covered within the budget of said event. Council level awards such as the Silver Beaver will be ordered and paid for with Council funds following approval by the Awards Committee. Awards presented by the unit at unit level events will be covered by the unit. Once approved, awards will be forwarded to the Registrar for inclusion in the Scouters award record.

To facilitate this, the ideal scenario would be for the final approver of the district-level award to forward it on to the District Executive for processing. This ensures that the approved award will also be forwarded to the Council Registrar for inclusion in the Scouters file, and that an award is available for presentation to the Scouter. With the exception of certain awards, several of which are addressed above, only one Square Knot is procured for, and awarded to, the Scouter, along with a certificate. Additional copies of the Square Knot can be purchased by the Scouter from the Scout Shop.

Presenting the Award to the Scouter

This depends on several variables. Some awards are appropriate to be given at the unit level, and others might be given at a Round Table. Still others might be given at a Council Award Banquet, and others might be given at the National level. None of these are absolute, as situations may change the nature of the presentation. For example, a person may have relocated since completing an award, necessitating that it be mailed to them. For some awards, such as Wood Badge regalia, the recipient may wish to be “beaded” with members of his or her patrol. The following are “typical” approaches for making presentations. Use these as guidelines rather than absolute requirements. Much the same as the Eagle Court of Honor, the recipient can make the decision where the award should be given.

As noted earlier in the Guidebook, awards are not just for the recipient. They can energize other Scouters and demonstrate to youth members that the adult leader is also working toward goals in

Scouting. By the recipient taking the opportunity to show what can be earned as a Scouter, others can benefit from the presentation.

Different awards are typically awarded in different venues. The following are just examples of where these awards might be presented. These should not be thought of as the only training awards that can be earned.

Training Awards

All of these “training awards” focus on improving Scouting, which ultimately benefits the youth members. The path to get there is very different, but the end goals are the same.

The receipt of a Training Award may be one of the first awards received by a Scouter. The requirements are focused on becoming better in the role in which the Scouter volunteers. This award might be presented at a Round Table, which oftentimes has Scouters from around the district. This is a good opportunity to demonstrate what can be earned by a Scouter. The value of the award should be highlighted as part of the presentation. The award may also be made at a unit meeting, which has the advantage of highlighting the adult’s involvement in the Scouting program with the youth.

Wood Badge is a unique experience in the Scouting sphere. It is a training experience, but it is started as a Den, then quickly becomes a Patrol, and then requires independent work to complete the “Ticket.” This shared experience is what can make the presentation unique. The Scouter may wish to have other members of his or her Wood Badge patrol present, and possibly a spouse or partner. The presentation is excellent at a Round Table, as it recognizes the completion of a significant level of effort and can excite other Scouters to participate in the Wood Badge at a future date.

Somewhat like the Wood Badge, which is started as a Patrol, the Doctorate of Commissioner Science Knot Award starts in classrooms with other students. These same students may work as a cohort, going from year to year in a group. Or the candidate may work in a completely independent manner. The requirements for the program include an extensive level of effort in the completion of a thesis or project. An ideal location for the recognition of the award would be at a Commissioner College, so that other students can see the light at the end of the tunnel.

Exceptional Service Awards

Awards for exceptional service are for service at all levels in Scouting. Whether at the unit, District, Council, or National level, all are awarded as recognition for performing “above and beyond.” It is always good to present these awards to the Scouter in a public setting. Whether presented at the unit level, or at a Roundtable for District awards, or an annual awards ceremony for Council level awards, the award is to recognize a Scouter who is performing at a high level. These awards can also energize other Scouters and provide an incentive for performance.

Another award for “exceptional service” that is normally not included is the Unit Leader Award of Merit. This award, more than any of the other “exceptional service awards,” should probably be made at the unit level. This is an opportunity for the members of the unit to see what their unit leader is doing, and participate in the presentation of the award.

Other Awards

There are multiple other types of awards that can be earned in Scouting. Awards for bravery, non-scouting (e.g., religious) awards, organizational awards, such as from the American Legion or VFW, are all available. These awards recognize the breadth of the involvement in Scouting and show that the Scouter is involved in Scouting, their place of worship, and the community at multiple levels. The variety of awards also creates a variety of opportunities to have these awarded. Religious awards may be given at the religious organization where earned. Organizational awards such as those given by the American Legion, may be presented there. There is no set direction.

Documenting the Award in the Scouters Records

The Council Registrar can make additions, along with Council Training Committee members, for training events. That would include training events such as Wood Badge, and the various Commissioner Degree programs, both of which are “training” events.

However, for an award such as a Scouter’s Key, District Award of Merit, or Silver Beaver, there is no “training” component to the award, so these must be entered into the Scouter’s award record by either a Council Registrar, or somebody with the same level of permission. This will typically be a Scouting professional. There are also some awards that are presented by National, and those must be recorded at that level. The Council cannot make changes to those entries.

So, what does that mean for the approver of the award? The award must be forwarded to the Council Registrar (if not awarded at National), with a request to update the Scouter’s award file. This will ensure that the award stays with the Scouter, especially if they should ever change Councils. It also means that when a Scouter is being considered for another award that there won’t be an inadvertent duplication. For example, the District Award of Merit may only be earned one time. Submitting a Scouter who already has the DAM will not recognize them again for work at the district level.

Conclusion

Unlike the *Guide to Safe Scouting* and the *Guide to Advancement*, which are Scouting America policy, this Guidebook is just that—a *guide*. This Guidebook is not intended to provide a comprehensive list of awards, nor does it provide absolute direction how they should be handled. Rather, it is intended to give examples of the different types of awards which might be earned by Scouters and give the reader examples of how those awards should be processed and approved. Even the presentation of certain awards should be considered in terms of who might benefit from seeing and being involved with the presentation.

The processing of awards, and the payment for the award and documentation in Scouters’ records, however, should be followed. Failure to follow these processes may result in the Scouter not receiving the award, or the award not being recorded in the Scouter’s personal record.