

# NOAC 2022 Focus Groups

At the 2022 National Order of the Arrow Conference, researcher James Delorey convened randomly-selected focus groups of youth and adults to better understand (among other things) how well the OA is engaging women. The project included separate groups of youths and adults, women and men.

## Key Recommendations/Considerations from Focus Group Participants

### **Inclusion requires forethought and logistical preparation.**

- Lodges sometimes fall short on doing the preparation needed to make sure new Youth Women are welcome and able to participate in full. Be Prepared.
- Take a moment when planning an event or drafting a speech or newsletter. Don't make inclusion seem like an afterthought or a burden.
- Recruit enough women leaders so that youth women can camp with their chapters. Youth Protection rules should not be used to justify a diminished program for young women
- Make sure your trading post is inclusive. Not all t-shirts are created equal.

### **Let Youth Lead**

- Coach advisers to enable youth leadership.
- Encourage both young men and young women to step up and serve.

### **Women OA members embrace the current lexicon, but be thoughtful about it**

- "Brotherhood" and "Arrowman" are acceptable at this time.
- Make sure that pronouns are updated in ceremonies and communications.

### **Have Expansive Inclusion Efforts**

- Foster a culture of welcoming and encourage participation. Discourage "cliques" and exclusive attitudes.
- Take action to promote religious inclusion (such as offering non-pork options at events and considering religious holidays when scheduling events).
- Recruit more Scouts of color and young women and let them shine in leadership roles.

### **Find Ways to Listen; Act on Learnings**

- Create a feedback loop so that lodges may learn from experiences of Scouts, take action to improve experiences, and communicate actions being taken

# Fall 2022 Focus Groups: Racial Diversity

In fall 2022, researcher James Delorey convened virtual focus groups of unit leaders (plus one 17-year-old youth) who serve Scouts of Color to understand their awareness and impressions of the OA and explore to their Scouts' participation in the OA.

## Key Recommendations/Considerations from Focus Group Participants

### Outreach to units of color must be more than about just elections.

- Develop relationships with unit leaders who aren't engaged with the OA and:
  - listen to understand their perspectives about the OA
  - communicate how the OA may benefit their youth
- Find additional ways to engage units to demonstrate the OA's value (invite youth at camp to attend a fun OA campfire night, show that there are leadership opportunities for Scouts of color in the Order of the Arrow)

### Remove Obstacles to Participation

- Consider ways to lessen the time commitment required of unit leaders (if parents are amenable, arrange for chapter leaders to provide transportation to events).
- Decrease costs so that more Scouts with financial need may participate

### Increase Representation of People of Color

- Scouting is less diverse than the country as a whole, and the OA is seen as even less diverse than Scouting. This is even more true post-pandemic.
- Partner with multiple units serving Scouts of color to welcome them into the OA (avoid "tokenizing" a unit)
- If possible, involve OA members of color in unit elections and unit visits for units serving Scouts of color (help the Scouts of color "see" themselves in the OA)