CAPITOL AREA COUNCIL

JURASSIC POP! SITUATION CENTER

YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS, WE'VE GOT ANSWERS!

2026

POPCORN GUIDEBOOK

This Capitol Area Council Popcorn Guidebook along with the Trail's End Kernel Guide will provide units with the details needed to promote a strong and successful program.

The annual popcorn sale is the only money earning activity that allows Scouts to wear the uniform while raising funds. Scouts in uniform bring awareness to their community and demonstrate Scout Spirit in their actions.

In addition to this guidebook, our council provides program information through weekly P.O.P. emails, our council popcorn webpage, social media, trainings, and district popcorn teams.

SCOUTING AMERICA
CAPITOL AREA COUNCIL

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2026 Council Goal

1.45 Million

Details in this guide are subject to change without notice. To assure you have the most current version, check the date at the right footer.

This popcorn guide is specific only to the Capitol Area Council. Trail's End resources including items listed below will be available starting in June. Check our Council Popcorn page https://www.capitolareascouting.org/resources/popcorn/ for a link to those resources when they become available.

- Training Videos
- Unit Program Planner
- Kernel Guide
- Unit Kickoff Presentation
- Print at home materials
- Plus many more unit materials and Scout resources

KEYS TO SUCCESS

Help your Scouts succeed by organizing and managing your unit's popcorn sale to meet or exceed their goals.

1. **REVIEW THIS GUIDE**
2. **SET UP YOUR TRAIL'S END POPCORN SYSTEM ACCOUNT**
   - Go to https://www.capitolareascouting.org/resources/popcorn/ and click the Sign up for the 2026 Popcorn Sale.
     - Returning units: if your unit sold last year please register for the 2026 sale by logging in to portal.trails-end.com and completing the onboarding process. Instructions on completing this can be found in the "Unit Sale Onboarding 2026" document; click HERE to access the document.
     - New Units: if your unit is signing up to sell popcorn this year and did not sell last year, please click the orange "Sign up for the 2026 Popcorn Sale" button above, follow the prompt, and click Register. Our staff will need to approve your registration. Once approved, you can complete the unit onboarding process.
3. **GET TRAINED**
   - Log into your Trail's End account to view training materials and videos – Trail's End has many short videos that teach you everything you need to know in navigating the Trail's End system, managing inventory, motivating your Scouts and families, plus closing the sale.
   - Attend a Council lead training (see calendar on next page for training dates).
   - Read your Weekly P.O.P. informational emails.
4. **RECRUIT A PARTNER**
   - Find another leader you have a good relationship with and ask for a partner. A great unit popcorn program has more than one leader guiding Scouts towards their goals.
5. **SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW**
   - Teach the Scouts in your unit about goals, product line, and sale details.
   - Get them excited about everything they can do in Scouting.
   - Show them how this is possible through their popcorn sale.
   - Communicate Why, When, and How
     - Why are we raising funds?
       - Big trips, unit gear, or funding their annual program.
       - If funding their annual program – what percentage do they earn from their hard work?
     - When
       - Share dates and don't forget to include any already scheduled unit or district activities
     - How
       - All Scouts can participate online and in-person. All units should support every Scout with online, door-to-door and storefront booths.

2026 Popcorn Sale Schedule

Capitol Area Council — Key Dates & Milestones

Date	Day	Event / Description
5/2/2026	Saturday	Registration opens for 2026 sale
5/2/2026	Saturday**	Summer Kickoff 11am-2pm, Frank Erwin Fickett Center
6/3/2026	Wednesday**	Leader training 6pm, Zoom
7/19/2026	Sunday	Leader training 3pm, Zoom
8/1/2026	Saturday	Pre-sale opens, last chance to complete Unit onboarding to qualify for VIP
8/5/2026	Wednesday**	Last chance leader training 6pm, Zoom
8/24/2026	Monday	Auto-Hour Assignment for Storefronts
8/26/2026	Wednesday	Manual storefront selections begin & Unit Onboarding Deadline
9/9/2026	Wednesday	Zoom office hours-unit initial orders
9/11/2026	Friday	Initial order due in Trail's End system, budget worksheet submission deadline
9/18/2026	Friday	Unit Popcorn Kickoff Deadline
9/24/2026	Thursday*	Initial order distributions 12pm-6pm, Ward North American
9/25/2026	Friday*	Initial order distributions 12pm-6pm, Ward North American
9/26/2026	Saturday	Storefront sales begin
9/27/2026	Sunday***	Replenishment orders begin
10/1/2026	Thursday***	Replenishment distributions begin 12pm-6pm Ward North American
11/18/2026	Wednesday	Zoom office hours-sale wrap up and product returns
11/29/2026	Sunday	Sale ends (online, wagon and storefront)
12/1/2026	Tuesday	Return order due, unit payments open
12/3/2026	Thursday*	Product return from units to Council office
12/4/2026	Friday*	Product return from units to Council office
12/18/2026	Friday	Unit payment deadline

2026 Storefront Selections & Unit Onboarding

Each Unit will be required to complete Unit Onboarding during the registration process. During Unit onboarding you will set your sales goal, set your storefront settings including blackout dates and sales radius, and set your unit settings to help determine how many Scouts can sign up for each shift (Trail's End recommends 1 Scout per shift).

Complete Unit onboarding by 8/1 and your unit will be considered a VIP!

VIP Units receive auto storefront assignments based on their prior year sales, 2026 sales goal, unit selected blackout dates, and storefront radius.

Trail's End will determine if your unit is VIP Gold, VIP Silver, VIP Bronze, or VIP based on PY sales. Trail's End will send your unit an email on your VIP level benefits and what storefronts they are auto assigning you.

Manual storefront selections will begin on 8/26 and will allow units to select remaining hours needed to hit their goal.

Zoom office hours on how to reserve storefront booths will be on 8/19/26 at 6:00pm. See www.capitolareascouting.org/resources/popcorn/ for Zoom link.

Unclaimed StorefrontBooths

Unclaimed weekend (Fri-Sun) reservations will be auto-released by Trail's End each week on Tuesdays at 8pm ET.

Units with unclaimed shifts on a larger reservation will not lose the reservation as long as at least half of the shifts are claimed.

2026 UNIT COMMISSION STRUCTURE

Online

30% commission – no bonus options

Storefront and Wagon (app usage required)

30% base-options to earn up to 38% commission

1% Bonus Commission-Must Complete All Steps Below to Qualify

- Register Unit in Trail's End to participate in 2026 sale by **8/26**
- Submit Budget Worksheet-can be found on our website www.capitolareascouting.org/resources/popcorn/ by **9/11**

2% Bonus Commission-Must Complete All Steps Below to Qualify

- Recruit a Unit Popcorn Kernel
- Unit Kernel attends a Council lead training (see calendar on page 3 for dates)
- Unit conducts a popcorn kickoff by **9/18,** Unit Kickoff should include 3 elements from the Unit Kickoff best practices.
- Post pictures of the kickoff on the CAC Popcorn Facebook within **48 hours** of kickoff completion

5% Bonus Commission

- Unit must sell a minimum of $15,000 **OR** All Trail's End Registered Scouts (Trail's End roster will be pulled on 10/18) sell a minimum of $1,000 per Scout

12% Bonus Commission-All newly formed units and any units that did not place a traditional order in 2025 (could bring your total commission up to 50%).

Unit Kickoffs

A strong popcorn kickoff sets the tone for a successful fundraising season. These are the important steps to help plan and execute a high-energy event that motivates Scouts, educates parents and engages families. Following these steps and posting pictures on our Council social media can help earn your unit 2% bonus commission. For more details see the Unit Kickoff Best Practices sheet in the Popcorn Links on the Council website.

Unit Kickoff Deadline: 9/18

Unit Kickoff Guide

- Set clear goals for Unit and Scouts
- Promote the kickoff early and often
- Keep it fun and fast paced
- Highlight past success stories
- Motivate Scouts and parents by introducing Scout and Unit prizes
- Create a culture of engagement, recognize participation not just dollars sold
- Set the expectation that every member of the Unit will participate

A great kickoff creates buy-in, excitement and confidence. If Scouts believe they can do it, and that others believe in them, they will rise to the occasion.

Social Media

In addition to the Weekly P.O.P. emails, the easiest way to stay up to date on everything that is happening with popcorn is to follow our Council's social media.

When you post popcorn items on your social media, tag these pages and use the hashtag #CACPOP

Main Instagram

Popcorn Instagram

Main Facebook

Popcorn Facebook

2026 PRODUCT LINE

In addition to the products above, Trail's End offers a variety of other products, such as Chocolate Pretzels, through the Online Sale at www.trails-end.com.

All donations received must be tracked as Heroes and Helpers donations.

For more information on Heroes and Helpers donations and how to track them please see www.capitolareascouting.org/resources/popcorn/

UNIT ORDERS

Initial Order

Capitol Area Council does not require, and will not ask for, advanced payment from units.

To better prepare your Scouts, units should determine either a unit goal or Scout goals to assure you have enough product to reach your fundraising needs. If a unit and/or Scouts are unsure about their goal, we recommend ordering $500 per Scout in the unit to get started.

Zoom office hours on how to place your initial order will be on 9/9/26 at 6:00pm. See www.capitolareascouting.org/resources/popcorn/ for Zoom link.

Replenishment Orders

Many units find that during the sale they need more product. This can happen due to growth in membership, Scout goals increasing, heightened community support, or simply Scouts outperforming their own expectations. Replenishment orders will be offered each week of storefront sales and will be distributed every Thursday.

Zoom office hours on how to place replenishment orders will be on 9/23/26 at 6:00pm. See www.capitolareascouting.org/resources/popcorn/ for Zoom link.

- **Placing orders for additional product from our council:**

  >Orders must be entered by 11PM on Sunday to be fulfilled on Thursday

  >Unit invoices will list each order separately for easy viewing

  >Orders will be compared to current unit inventory and tracked sales

  >**Go into the Trail's End leader dashboard**

  - Click ORDER POPCORN
  - Click drop down for Choose Delivery
    - Select the option dated for the Friday you wish to pick up your additional product
  - Complete the order form and click submit

Distribution Day Details

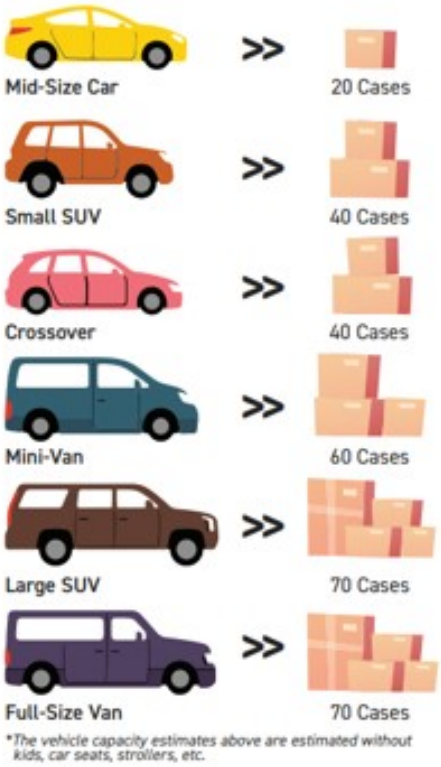
Initial Order Distribution Locations

Capitol Area Councils main distribution location is Ward North American. Information about additional locations for distributions will be on announced at a later date. Directions for your location will be sent to your unit prior to distribution day.

Ward North American-2251 Picadilly Dr. Ste. A100, Round Rock, TX 78664

Replenishment Order Distributions

Replenishment orders will be distributed every Thursday beginning 10/1 at Ward North American.



Tips and Tricks for a Seamless Popcorn Pickup

- Use the vehicle guide to determine the size vehicle that you will need to pick up your order.
- Remove any car seats, strollers, or other large items in your vehicle.
- Please remain inside your vehicle as you pull through the line.
- If you have more than one vehicle picking up for your unit please plan to arrive and go through the line together.
- We will not split orders and hold the remaining product until someone else arrives.
- We will have many sets of eyes counting and recounting the product as it is loaded. However, if a mistake is made please fill out a discrepancy form found on our website within 48 hours of distribution so that we can correct your order.

IN-PERSONSALES

Pre-Sale

Begins 8/1

Put on the uniforms and make Scouting seen in your local neighborhoods. Scouts can take pre-orders to deliver at a later date, or expand their products using the Online Direct portion in the Trail's End app and have the product shipped directly to the customer.

Storefront Booths

Begins 9/26

Every year storefront booths represent more than 70% of the total popcorn program as well as more than 70% of the money earned by Scouts. Scouts have reported great support from their patrons, interest from youth and parents, and lessons they have learned in public speaking and social skills. Popcorn storefront booths provide the most skills learned and money earned compared to any other Scouting fundraiser.

Locations are secured by our council's Popcorn Kernel team and Trail's End. **Unit leaders and individuals may not secure locations.** If you have a location that you wish to add, please reach out to your District Popcorn Kernel or District Executive and complete a storefront scheduling plan. The storefront scheduling plan can be found on the Council website.

RETURN POLICIES & DAMAGES

RETURN REQUESTS DUE 12/1-NO LATE RETURNS ACCEPTED

- Each unit may return **1 Full Case**
- Return to Council requests are submitted through the Trail's End popcorn system.
- Returned product must be in its correct case and in SELLABLE condition. Damaged products will not be accepted.

Once the return has been approved you will receive an email with when and where to take the product.

Zoom office hours on how to submit returns and physically return the product will be 11/18/26 at 6pm. See www.capitolareascouting.org/resources/popcorn/ for Zoom link.

Reporting Damages

Instruct your Scout families to report any damages to their Unit Kernel and to take the appropriate photos. Unit Kernels can report damages from manufacturers defect by going to www.capitolareascouting.org/resources/popcorn, clicking the REPORT DAMAGES link and following the instructions.
Below are some examples of what is considered damage caused by production.

- Split seams on bags
- Product that has not been properly sealed
- Bags that have busted open inside a sealed case

SCOUT REWARDS

CouncilPrizes

No Council prizes will be offered this year. Instead of Council prizes, Capitol Area Council has raised the max unit commissions to 38%. See page 5 for more details.

Trail's End Rewards

EARN 4X WITH CREDIT

4 POINTS PER $1 CREDIT & ONLINE SALES

1 POINT PER $1 CASH SALES

+3 BONUS POINTS PER $1 FOR CASH TO CREDIT®

PLUS

1 bonus point per $1 for Heroes And Helpers®

Earn ADDITIONAL bonus points for achieving sales levels below

NEW

Earn points on sales between levels!

With 100% credit sales, Scouts claim when ready!

Each point = $0.01 in gift cards; *minimum of $600 in sales is required for Rewards claiming to begin.*

CLAIM GIFT CARDS FOR ADVENTURES, FUN & GEAR!

Pick one or more:
Amazon eGift Card, Prepaid Mastercard®, and others!

WHY IS CREDIT IMPORTANT

72% of U.S. retail is credit — yet Scouts are only 51% credit from consumers. That's a missed opportunity, because **consumers spend 14% more with credit — helping Scouts hit goals 14% faster.**

Plus, **not handling cash is safer** for Scouts, Parents, and Leaders, and **credit means Scouts, Packs/Troops, and Councils get paid faster.**

DOWNLOAD THE TRAIL'S END APP® TO START EARNING

Here's what Scouts earn with all credit sales:

SALES LEVEL	BASE POINTS (4 POINTS PER $1)		LEVEL BONUS POINTS		TOTAL POINTS	$ REWARDS	WHAT YOU COULD GET
$25,000*	100,000	+	235,000	=	335,000	$3,350	Family Vacation
$15,000	60,000	+	140,000	=	200,000	$2,000	High Adventure
$10,000	40,000	+	70,000	=	110,000	$1,100	Canoe
$7,500	30,000	+	50,000	=	80,000	$800	3D Printer
$5,000	20,000	+	30,000	=	50,000	$500	Gaming Console
$4,000	16,000	+	21,500	=	37,500	$375	Day Camp
$3,000	12,000	+	13,000	=	25,000	$250	Hiking Backpack
$2,000	8,000	+	3,000	=	11,000	$110	Drone
$1,500	6,000	+	1,500	=	7,500	$75	Camping Tent
$1,000	4,000	+	500	=	4,500	$45	Video Game
$600	2,400	+	100	=	2,500	$25	Water Bottle

*Earn additional 45,000 bonus points for every $5,000 sold above $25,000

FINANCIAL BOOKKEEPING

Invoices

Units with Scouts participating in any in-person sales will have an invoice viewable in Trail's End under the Account Summary section. Unit invoices will be broken down into each order placed by the Unit: Show & Sell, Reorders, and Take Order. Unit invoices can be found in the Trail's End leader portal under Account Summary.

Managing Customer Payments

Over the course of the program, Scouts will receive payment in the form of cash, checks, credit cards, and online sales credit.

- Checks
  - Made payable to the receiving unit
  - Deposited into the unit bank account
  - Capitol Area Council will not accept personal checks for the popcorn program
- Cash
  - Deposited into the unit bank account
  - Ask Scouts to use the Pay Out feature in the Trail's End app to reduce Unit Kernel/Treasurer workload
- Credit cards and digital payments platforms like Apple Pay or Samsung Pay
  - Taken in the app during in-person sales
  - Processed by Square and deposited to Trail's End
  - Trail's End applies full dollar value as a credit against the unit invoice
    - Viewable on invoice under Transactions
    - Viewable online under Account Summary
- Online Sales credit
  - Trail's End applies 30% of retail amount as a credit against the unit invoice
    - Viewable on invoice under Transactions
    - Viewable online under Account Summary

Collecting Commission

Every year the amount of cash decreases as credit card or digital payments

Council Payment

You can remove the balance due by encouraging Scouts to accept credit cards in the app and using the Pay Now feature for cash they receive.

If the unit does have a balance due to our council please follow the steps below:

- View the unit invoice after 12/1
- Print your Trail's End unit invoice
- Review the Trail's End unit invoice for accuracy. Contact Bill Kohl immediately if you find a discrepancy.
- Submit ONE check from the unit bank account payable to the Capitol Area Council.
- Mail invoice and check to:
  Capitol Area Council – Popcorn
  12500 N IH 35
  Austin, TX 78753
- Capitol Area Council cannot accept credit cards or over the phone payments for popcorn invoices.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING:

✓ Your Scouts

✓ Your Unit

✓ Our Council