

Essex International 2027 FAQs – January 2026 Update – NORTH AMERICA

Some older questions about the application form and selection process have now been removed and updated with questions that have arisen at the Welcome Gathering on 25th January 2026.

General Questions & Updates

On 25th January 2026, all young people received an envelope containing details of the first payment, including its deadline. All monies will be paid into the County bank account using the unique reference code as outline in the letter. Each unit has a finance lead who will make contact in the first instance if a payment is missed.

Please make sure that if you have a problem with making a payment that you inform your unit leader as soon as possible. We want to support and help you but we can only do this if we know your situation.

We encourage you to begin thinking about fundraising and contact your groups and districts in the first instance to see how they can support. If you are having financial difficulties some districts will have funds to help support so these expeditions can remain open to all. County also has a support fund if these first steps do not help.

There is a fundraising document which will be published shortly including over 100 ideas of how to fundraise for your trip. There is important information to read in there about the rules of fundraising – participants need to keep a record of where fundraising monies have come from, including any grants/sponsorships they may have received. This is so that if a participant withdraws the money can be returned to the donor.

1. If we raise £100, can we claim gift aid?

Check the rules in the fundraising document when it is published and talk to groups and districts. The likelihood is that this would not be allowed if it is for the benefit of an individual only.

Past Questions from Selection Weekends:

1. When will the dates for the training weekends be released?

There will be at least 3 weekends and this is the chance for the young people and adults to get to know each other, build bonds with their patrol and upskill where necessary to help prepare for the expedition.

It is imperative that you keep these weekends free for your young person to attend. The dates will aim to avoid GCSE/A-Level exams and County events.

Unit leaders will be in touch via email in the next week or so to share the dates so these can be put on calendars.

2. What is the schedule for payments and where will it be paid to?

All money for the expeditions will be paid into the county bank account. You will be allocated a unique code to use as your reference when paying.

For World Scout Jamboree, the monies will then be passed to HQ for the jamboree fees. The payments will be split into HQ fees and Essex Levy. The Essex Levy covers the cost of the training weekends and any equipment needed for the expedition.

A payment schedule will come out in the next couple of months. Please remember to be on time with making the payments. If there is an issue, it is important you let us know so we can support if necessary. Scouting is inclusive and we do not want cost to be the reason a young person cannot attend one of these expeditions.

If you need financial support, contact groups and districts in the first instance. There is also an inclusivity fund.

As part of the trip, young people are expected to fundraise at least 30% of the fees. A fundraising guide is currently being finalised with past and new ideas of how to make the most of fundraising opportunities. It also outlines the rules around this which need to be followed with any fundraising that takes place.

UPDATE AS OF JANUARY 2026: Young people now have a document outlining the first payment and deadline along with their reference code.

3. Will we have a kit list?

There will be a kit list but it will be nothing out of the ordinary. Any specialist equipment will be provided as part of the expedition fee.

A pack of equipment will be provided and is likely to include:

- Roller Bag
- Day Sac
- Zoodie
- Polo Shirt
- Neckerchief
- Woggle
- Water Bottle

4. When will the final costings be released?

North America and Iceland are entirely Essex based expeditions. The cost is largely dependent on the flight prices which can only be gained 10 months before flying.

UPDATE AS OF JANUARY 2026: Details received at welcome gathering share an outline of the projected costs. Much is dependent on cost of flights which cannot be obtained until much closer to the time.

5. A note on uniform

Uniform is important when travelling abroad. We will not just be representing Essex but the United Kingdom Scouts as a whole. We will be strong on the smartness of uniform. It makes us presentable but also means we can easily catch sight of those in the group when travelling through the airport for example. We will make it clear what is required – for example, activity trousers or activity shorts should be worn.

North America Specifics

The travel agent is working on the itinerary. We are looking at flying with Virgin Atlantic into JFK, New York and then out of Toronto at the end to avoid the 13 hour coach ride back to New York.

Both units are working closely together as it is the same expedition. They will be separate for the time on Camp America but the rest of the expedition will be mirrored.

1. Is there a plan to visit New York this time?

It is not on the current outline of the programme but we do not know exact timings of the trip yet so is something that potentially may be added if time allows.

2. How long is the North America Expedition?

North America will be 17/18 days. It will fly to New York (potentially some time spent there), followed by the Scouts America Camp and kayaking/canoeing/hiking expedition. The second part of the trip will involve visiting Niagara Falls and then some time in Toronto. We are working to factor in some time in New York at the beginning.

UPDATED AS OF JANUARY 2026: The likely departure date is Thursday 22nd July 2027.

3. Will they need a Visa?

They will need to complete an ESTA for USA and something similar for Canada which will be dealt with much closer to the time.

You can start checking that your passport is and will be valid for the entirety of the expedition so you have plenty of time to renew if necessary.

With the news of the USA looking at plans to request social media history, we need to remind young people to be careful with what they post online. They will have to record what social media they have on the ESTA.

4. Can we use air miles?

As it is a group booking, the likelihood is that this will not work.

5. How many leaders on the expedition?

There are 66 young people with 14 leaders.

It is imperative that if you have any concerns or worries that you contact your unit leaders using the details given on the letter from the Welcome Gathering. They will be able to help you as long as they know you need it!

In the case you are not satisfied with the response, you can contact Graham Monk on international@essexscouts.org.uk.