

The National Executive Board of the BSA Approves Increased Membership Fee

A message from the National BSA along with Frequently Asked Questions

For more than 100 years, Scouting has helped build future leaders by combining educational activities and lifelong values with fun and adventure in the outdoors. At the Boy Scouts of America, we are dedicated to developing leaders of character by preparing young men and women for life by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Scout Law. The timeless ideals of the Scout Law, such as being trustworthy, helpful, kind and brave, make up the foundation young people need to address and overcome challenges in their lives and the issues facing their generation.

As BSA continues the Scouting mission, it is important that we keep pace with an ever-changing world. While costs to the National Council BSA have increased every year, the organization has worked to keep the annual membership fee as low as possible by subsidizing core costs, including liability insurance the national organization must carry to cover all official Scouting activities. Unfortunately, it is no longer possible to subsidize at the level they have been in the past. The National Council has kept the fee low to make Scouting available to as many young people as possible but keeping the cost artificially low for many years now magnifies the impact of changes.

To ensure that the National BSA has the resources to fulfill the promise of Scouting despite increasing operating costs, the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America has made the difficult but necessary decision to increase the annual membership fee effective January 1, 2020 to:

- \$60 for youth members in Cubs, Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts (up from \$33),
- \$36 for youth members in Exploring (up from \$33), and
- \$36 for adult members (up from \$33)
- \$60 will be charged as the annual unit charter fee (up from \$40)
- \$12 per scout and adult for program, activities and insurance assessment (Greater Yosemite Council PAIA)

Every dollar of this increased national membership fee will go directly to the National Council to cover the cost of essential services, including liability insurance for Scouting activities, program resources, safety standards, youth protection and personal safety training, and services to councils nationwide to sustain Scouting. The National organization will also continue to develop and improve resources that support our volunteers and youth members such as online registration, Member Care and Scoutbook, which now includes the Den Leader experience to ensure the safe and consistent delivery of Cub Scouting; as well as improvements aimed at simplifying the annual renewal process.

Across the country we know that Scouting remains one of the most valuable investments that can be made to support young men and women so they can become the leaders of tomorrow. From once-in-a-lifetime adventures to merit badges that spark interests and future careers; from campouts under the stars to service projects that have lasting impact; Scouting's year-round program expands horizons and provides young people with a safe and welcoming place to learn, grow, and thrive.

The National BSA is committed to ensuring that all youth can experience the character-building benefits of Scouting regardless of their financial situation. The National Council has established a national Growing Future Leaders Fund, which is funded entirely through donations, to provide additional financial support to those who need it. Thank you for your continued role in empowering a generation of future leaders of character through Scouting programs.

FAQ

1. Why are the fees increasing now?

While costs increase every year, the National Council BSA has worked to keep the annual member fee as low as possible by subsidizing core costs, including liability insurance that the National Council must carry to cover all official Scouting activities. The national BSA's financial situation has shifted over the past several months, so it is no longer possible to continue these subsidies; the cost of insurance has increased dramatically.

2. Does this apply to youth members and volunteers?

The increased fees apply to youth and adults effective January 1, 2020. The new fees are:

- \$60 for youth members in Cubs, Scouts BSA, Venturing and Sea Scouts (up from \$33),
- \$36 for youth members in Exploring (up from \$33), and
- \$36 for adult members (includes cost of background check and Scouting Magazine) (up from \$33)
- \$60 for unit charter fees (up from \$40)

3. The Greater Yosemite Council implemented its own Program, Activities and Insurance Assessment program (PAIA) for units in late 2019; does this announcement change that program?

No. The Executive Board of the Greater Yosemite Council initiated the PAIA assessment program for units because of its own local rising cost concerns.

4. Is Scouting still a good value?

Absolutely! While most extracurricular activities are seasonal, Scouting is year-round and remains one of the most valuable investments we can make to support young men and women. For most of our youth members, the increased fee amounts to \$6 a month, which is a good value when you consider that many extracurricular activities often start at several hundred \$ and last only a few weeks.

5. Does the fee increase apply to council-paid memberships?

Your Greater Yosemite Council will continue, through its budget to support local outreach initiatives to ensure that all youth have the opportunity to be Scouts.

6. What will the money be used for?

Every dollar of the increased fees will be retained by the National Council to cover the cost of national services, including liability insurance, program development and training resources, continuously updated youth protection and youth safety training, improved IT/digital experiences and services to our councils nationwide.

7. Is this increase being implemented to cover the cost of the recently announced additional background checks?

No, the cost of background checks is not prompting the fee increase.

8. Why is this being announced now?

The BSA recognizes that the timing of this fee increase creates challenges as units have already begun collecting fees for their 2020 registration renewal process, and this difficult decision would not have been made if it were not absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, the cost of liability insurance that must be carried to cover Scouting activities has increased dramatically over the past several months. The national organization is committed to supporting units through this

process and is making necessary adjustments to the online rechartering system to ensure units can carry out the recharter process.

9. Does this increase cover financial challenges the organization is facing?

The increase was prompted because the cost of liability insurance that must be carried to cover Scouting activities; the organization is no longer able to offset the cost of insurance. The national membership fee also enables continued program development and training resources, continuously updated youth protection and youth safety training, improved IT/digital experiences and services to our councils nationwide.

10. When will this increase take effect?

The increased membership fees will take effect starting January 1, 2020 for the 2020-21 program year.

11. Is financial assistance available?

The National BSA has established the donor-funded Growing Future Leaders Fund to provide financial support to those who need it. [It is anticipated that information will be made available in due time.]

12. What measures has the national organization taken to offset its financial challenges?

In addition to ongoing efforts to streamline and simplify the organization, the national organization has taken a number of steps in addressing its financial challenges, including the eliminating more than 35 positions at the National office and ongoing consolidation of departments for the most effective utilization of resources in support of Scouting.

13. Will the national membership fee continue to increase?

Although no decision about future increases have been made, the cost of operating our organization and services increases every year. Should it be necessary to increase fees in the future, the National Executive Board of the Boy Scouts of America has agreed to evaluate the needs and make such decisions, whenever possible, at the National Annual Meeting in May or early in the summer so that they can be announced with as much lead time as possible to allow for councils and units to be able to plan accordingly.

14. Boy's Life Magazine

At this time, we have not been notified of any fee increases. It remains at \$12 per year per scout.

15. Youth Needing Financial Assistance

If you have a youth who needs financial assistance, the Greater Yosemite Council has left over popcorn that can be sold to help with the registration fees. Please contact the office for further information.