



2020 National Membership Fee 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. We care passionately about what is happening to kids and our communities – and are dedicated to supporting an exciting, quality program that builds better young people and our future leaders.

Here in the Crossroads of America Council Scouting continues to improve families and our community serving nearly 35,000 youth in 26 counties.

As we continue the Scouting mission, it is important that we keep pace with an ever-changing world. To ensure we have the resources to support our mission, the Boy Scouts of America has announced the following annual membership fees effective January 1, 2020.

- \$60 for youth members in Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venturing, and Sea Scouts
- \$36 for youth members in Exploring, and
- \$36 for adult members (includes cost of background check and *Scouting Magazine*).
- \$60 for unit charter fees

In addition, the Crossroads of America Council is increasing the fee for our annual accident and sickness insurance to \$12 per person annually, due with the unit's recharter.

The following FAQ's are designed to address many questions which may result.

Q – What is the current fee?

A – The 2019 membership fee was \$33. The Crossroads of America Council also charges an annual insurance fee of \$1 per member.

Q – Why is this happening now?

A – We recognize the timing of this fee increase creates challenges as units have already begun collecting fees for their 2020 registration renewal process, and we would not make this difficult decision if it were not absolutely necessary. The BSA has worked to keep the annual membership fee as low as possible to make Scouting available to as many young people as possible by subsidizing core costs, including liability insurance we must carry to cover all official Scouting activities. As the organization's financial situation has shifted over the past several months, it is no longer possible to subsidize at the same level as in the past, especially as the cost of insurance has increased dramatically.

Q – Who is guiding the process regarding membership fee changes?

A – A National BSA vision team consisting of both volunteers and staff from across the country worked to identify viable options and closely considered the best way forward as they evaluated the growing cost of delivering Scouting.

Q – Why is the national BSA membership fee increasing?

A – There are significant costs for National BSA to serve 2.2 million youth and, as a movement, we have seen a lot of changes that have taken significant investment. Costs continue to increase to fund program curriculum and safety standards, training, youth protection resources, criminal background checks, technology upgrades, and especially insurance coverage. This increase will get the national BSA membership fee more in line with the true cost of Scouting.

Q – Is this increase being implemented to cover the cost of the additional background checks?

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

Q – What does the national BSA membership fee cover?

A – Membership fees go directly to National Council to fund such things as program curriculum and safety standards, training, youth protection resources and criminal background checks, technology, and insurance to name a few.

Q – Is this increase to pay for the financial reorganization or law suits facing National BSA?

A – The increase was prompted because the cost of liability insurance we must carry to cover all Scouting activities has increased dramatically over the past several months, and the organization is no longer able to offset the cost of insurance. The national membership fee also enables us to continue program and training material development, to update youth protection and youth safety training and materials, improved IT/digital experiences.

Additionally, the National Council has taken measures to reduce operational expenses, including the reduction of 35 positions, salary freezes and ongoing consolidation of departments to keep this increase as low as possible.

Q – Why is the council raising the insurance fee, isn't that included in the new national fee?

A – No, the liability insurance that we need to carry for all Scouting activities at the national level is different from local fees that are collected to address local needs, which can include such coverages as property and accident/sickness insurance.

Q – What will the money be used for?

A – Every dollar of membership fees will go to cover the cost of essential services, including liability insurance for members participating in approved Scouting activities, background checks for adult leaders, program development and training resources, continuously updated youth protection and youth safety training, improved IT/digital experiences and services.

Q – Will the national membership fee continue to increase?

A – Although no decision about future increases have been made, the cost of operating our organization and services increase 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.

Q – Doesn't this make Scouting one of the most expensive youth activities?

A – No. Families enjoy Scouting because of its high value and historically low price. Even with an increase in the membership fee, Scouting will remain competitive with other most other youth programs in our area and certainly more impactful in the long-term.

For reference, the fees below are representative of other youth programs throughout Central Indiana:

- Three (3) months of many sports – Cost: \$165
- Ten (10) months of dance – Cost: \$700
- Twelve (12) months of music lessons – Cost: \$1,800

Q – How will this impact the current rechartering process?

A – The online rechartering process opened October 1. The process will go forth as usual with the exception of the “calculate fees” portion, which won't be functional until November 1 to allow time for the new membership fee information to be entered.

Q – What should units do if they have already collected membership fees?

A – Units will be asked to discuss the membership fee increase with families and to collect the additional fees. If the ability to pay that fee is in question, there will be an opportunity to participate in a special *Trail's End* popcorn sale where 75% of proceeds will be returned to units to assist with fees. Also, as donations and funds allow, there will be an opportunity to request financial assistance.

Q – What if a family cannot afford the increase?

A – Based on financial need, the efforts are being undertaken to provide registration assistance on a limited base. Please contact your District Professional for more information.

Q – How can my unit help offset these extra costs?

A – A special *Trails' End* popcorn sale will be offered from November 1 – December 15. Units will have the opportunity to sell a specially selected group of four products where 75% of proceeds will be returned to units to assist with fees. Details of this opportunity will be sent directly to units by October 25.

Q – Why is Scouting important for young people?

A – There are many benefits of Scouting: leadership training, character development, values-based learning, and life and work skill training to name only a few. The tenets of the Scout Oath and Law are simple words but collectively they become qualities for youth to live by. These principles make Scouting more than what children do—but rather who they are—and what they will be. There is no other youth program available that has the same impact as Scouting.