

National BSA Registration FEE Increase FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions:

Q: Why are the fees increasing now?

A: While costs increase every year, the Boy Scouts of America 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 required 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 level we have in the past, especially as the cost of insurance has increased dramatically.

Q: Does this apply to youth members and volunteers?

A: Yes, the new fees apply for youth and adult members. Effective January 1, 2020, the new fees are:

- \$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

Q: Is Scouting still a good value?

A: Absolutely! While most extracurricular activities are seasonal, Scouting is a year-round program that remains one of the most valuable investments we can make to support young men and women today so they can become the leaders we will turn to tomorrow. For most of our youth members, the new registration fee amounts to \$5 a month, which is an enormous value when you consider that many seasonal extracurricular activities often start at \$100 for programs that last a few weeks.

Q: Does the fee increase apply to council-paid memberships?

A: No. The cost for council-paid membership, sometimes known as ScoutReach, will continue to be \$24 for each youth member.

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 to our councils nationwide.

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

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

Q: Why is this being announced now?

A: While the timing of this fee increase creates challenges as units have already begun collecting fees for their 2020 registration renewal process, this difficult decision would not have been made if it were not absolutely necessary. Unfortunately, the cost of liability insurance required 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. Scouting is committed to supporting you through this process and are making necessary adjustments to the online rechartering system to ensure units can carry out the recharter process.

Q: How does this affect online charter renewal?

A: The 'calculate fees' section of online charter renewal has been suspended since mid-September when Samoset Council was notified of the pending fee increase until the new fee structure could be determined by the National BSA volunteer board and can be programmed into the system. It is anticipated that the online system will have the new fees and fully functional again by November 1, 2019.

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Q: Does this increase cover financial challenges the organization is facing?

A: The increase was prompted because the cost of liability insurance required 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 supports program development and training resources, continuously updated youth protection and youth safety training, improved IT/digital experiences and services to councils nationwide.

Q: When will this increase take effect?

A: The new membership fees will take effect starting January 1, 2020 for the 2020-21 program year. It does affect this fall's charter renewal process since Scouting units are collecting fees for 2020.

Q: Is financial assistance available?

A: Scouting is committed to ensuring that all youth can experience the character-building benefits of Scouting regardless of their financial situation. In addition to the many existing council and unit membership assistance funds, a donor-funded *Growing Future Leaders Fund* has been established to provide financial support to those who need it.

Q: What measures has the national organization taken to offset the financial challenges?

A: 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 recent elimination of more than 35 positions at the National Service Center and ongoing consolidation of departments for the most effective utilization of resources in support of Scouting.

Q: Will the national membership fee continue to increase?

A: Although no decision about future increases have been made, the cost of operating the 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.