

2017-2018 Council Service Fee & Membership Dues Increase Overview and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Overview

Girl Scouts is the first and largest girl-led organization in the world, and has been preparing girls in grades K-12 for every day leadership, for over a century, by providing rich experiences for them to explore new interests, face challenges, form friendships, and make lasting community contributions.

As we continue the Girl Scout mission in our second century, it is important that we keep pace with an ever-changing world. We're evolving and enhancing our unique leadership program and implementing new technologies and ways of work to enhance the Girl Scout experience for more girls, volunteers, and parents. To ensure that we have the resources to support this work, Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) proposed (and the National Board of GSUSA approved) the recommendation to increase the annual membership fee from \$15 to \$25 starting October 1, 2017, for both girl and adult members. The increase is effective for the 2017-2018 membership year (Fiscal Year 2018).

Every dollar of membership dues is directed to GSUSA to cover the cost of fundamental services supporting the Girl Scout Movement. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Accident insurance for members participating in approved Girl Scout activities
- Program development
- Research, resources, training, technology, services to councils, and protection of the Girl Scout brand.
- The implementation of new technologies to improve the Girl Scout experience for girls, volunteers, and parents.

With no portion of the National Membership Dues directed locally, our Council is increasingly challenged to cover the rising costs of all we offer. To support our programs and volunteers, and to ensure the future of Girl Scouting in Orange County, the Council Service Fee will increase from \$5 to \$10, beginning with the 2017-2018 membership year. This increase will help support:

- High quality programs for nearly 21,000 girls representing every zip code in OC
- Volunteer development, support, and services for 10,000 volunteers
- The Girl Scout Shop
- GSOC's many facilities, including Girl Scout program centers across Orange County and Camp Scherman
- And much more!

FAQ

Q: Why is the Council Service Fee (CSF) increasing at this time?

A: Economic realities affect us all. Girl Scouts needs sustainable income to ensure the quality of service to-- and the safety-- of girls. With no portion of the National Membership Dues directed locally, our Council is increasingly challenged to cover the rising costs of our programs and services. GSOC introduced the Council Service Fee four years ago. During

that time, feedback from our members supported its introduction for girl members only, to ensure quality programming and secure the future of Girl Scouting in Orange County. We also heard from members that they wanted any such fee to start small and increase gradually. And we listened.

Q: Why are dues increasing? What is this money being used for?

A: As a youth-serving organization, Girl Scouts constantly examines how it is meeting the needs of its customers. With the extra funding received from additional membership dues, Girl Scouts nationally will be able to sustain and develop exceptional leadership programs, implement digital innovations and technology to enhance the girl and volunteer experience nationwide, maintain services for our 2.7 million members (1.9 million girls and 800,000 adults), and engage our 59 million alumnae around the world. It will also enable GSUSA to continue to deliver best-in-class services and support for our Movement's 112 councils nationwide and provide thousands of volunteers relevant resources, tools, and training they need to best serve today's girls.

GSUSA has taken many measures to reduce operational expenses and is collaborating with councils across the nation to focus on developing new revenue streams to support our Movement. The increase in membership dues, along with other efforts to secure external funding, will help GSUSA make important investments in our programming and technology and maintain a strong financial position to grow our Movement and continue to deliver on our mission for future generations.

Q: Will financial assistance be available to cover Membership Dues and the CSF?

A: We firmly believe that Girl Scouting should be accessible to all girls. Therefore, financial assistance will continue to be available to qualifying families. Financial assistance is determined independently by local Girl Scout councils.

Q: Is Girl Scouting still a good value?

A: Absolutely! As the first and largest girl-led organization in the world, a Girl Scout membership is one of the most valuable investments one can make in a girl's life. This dues increase brings the cost of joining Girl Scouts into line with the value of its programming and the unique leadership opportunity it provides girls, not available through any other organization.

The Girl Scout DNA—Girl Scouts are more likely than non-Girl Scouts to:

- Set ambitious goals and think about the future.
- Be more financially literate and negotiate for themselves.
- Advocate for herself and others.
- Self-identify as leaders and take on leadership roles.
- Practice empathy and emotional intelligence.
- Care about (and take action against) social injustices.
- Be more solution oriented and less likely to be a bystander.
- Embrace new experiences and overcome failure.

Girl Scouts join troops, earn badges, hike, camp, and participate in the entrepreneurial skill-building cookie program, as well as explore careers in science and technology, travel the world, and take on projects that transform their community. From a young age, girls not only learn to take the lead in their everyday lives, they also build a strong female network that will fuel their own career paths.

Q: How does Girl Scouts compare to other youth organizations?

A: With this membership increase, Girl Scouts is keeping pace with the marketplace.

On average, nationwide, dance classes cost anywhere from \$40 to \$160 per month. Some studios also charge a registration fee.

According to the [International New York Times](#), the cost of youth sports is up to 10.5 percent of a family's gross income, meaning that a family with an income of \$50,000 a year could be spending \$5,500 per year.

Q: Does the Council Service Fee apply to both girls and adults?

A: No. The CSF applies only to girl members. The total cost for girl participation (not including any troop-level dues, uniform, or event expenses) will be \$35 for the 2017-2018 membership year (\$25 Annual Membership Dues to GSUSA and \$10 CSF that supports Girl Scouts of Orange County).

Q: Does the increase to membership dues apply to girls and adults?

A: Yes. The annual membership dues will increase from \$15 to \$25 for both girl and adult members beginning with the 2017-2018 membership year.

Q: How will the CSF increase help girls?

A: The Council Service Fee supports the operation of our local Girl Scout council as we provide high quality programs and services for nearly 21,000 girls, volunteer support and services for more than 10,000 volunteers, membership recruitment, the Girl Scout Shop, and maintenance of our many facilities, including Girl Scout program centers across Orange County and our award-winning Camp Scherman.

Q: How will the Membership Dues increase help girls?

A: The additional funding GSUSA receives through membership dues will support our vision to serve as many girls who want to be Girl Scouts as possible—regardless of their means, neighborhood, or family backgrounds. This increase reflects the value and impact of the unique and meaningful 21st century Girl Scout experience we have envisioned delivering to all girls.

Through our enhanced program experiences in STEM, entrepreneurship, outdoor, and life skills, girls are empowered with the skills and entrepreneurial know-how to lead and succeed in the industries of tomorrow. At the same time, they also help improve their communities, develop their own advocacy and service projects, and tackle local and global issues such as poverty, illiteracy, and pollution.

Additional dollars will also enable us to develop and implement digital innovations and technology—like our Digital Cookie Program—to enhance the girl experience and provide a safe digital space for girls to share, explore, connect, and learn.

Q: How will the Membership Dues increase help volunteers?

A: Our volunteers are the lifeblood of Girl Scouts and critical to the success of our mission in reaching girls and changing lives. The additional funding received through membership dues will help us ensure that volunteers receive the support and resources they need to deliver a high quality Girl Scout experience and assist us in bringing Girl Scouting to even more girls.

We are making significant investments to advance the resources, training, and technology needed to deliver an exceptional girl and volunteer experience. Volunteers are now able to

complete the recruitment process in a matter of days (instead of weeks or months), and the number of girls on waiting lists has been significantly reduced. Our digital Volunteer Toolkit makes forming and maintaining a troop easier than ever, which means more time spent with girls and less time on administrative tasks. Volunteers can plan an entire year of impactful activities to ensure their girls receive the best Girl Scout experience possible.

Nearly half our members are already experiencing the benefits of a more advanced online system, and with the additional funding from membership dues, we hope to equip the majority of our membership with these digital resources by 2017.

Q: When will the CSF and Membership Dues increase take effect?

A: The increase in membership dues and CSF will be implemented for the 2017-2018 membership year, effective October 1, 2017. It will begin to be collected during spring renewal registration starting in April 2017.

Q: Does GSOC believe the CSF and Membership Dues increase will cause a decrease in girl membership?

A: Girl Scouts of Orange County ranks among the highest nationally in retaining girls year to year. We encourage participation by all Orange County girls and provide financial assistance when needed. Cost has not been a leading factor in girls leaving.

Q: Will the CSF amount change each year?

A: Based on feedback received from members attending past Strategy Cafés, the CSF will likely slowly increase over time, but never exceed the amount of National Membership Dues.

Q: Will Membership Dues change each year?

A: The last increase occurred in Fiscal Year 2014. At this time, GSUSA has not made a determination for future years.

Q: Will there still be an annual Fund Her Success Campaign?

A: Yes. The CSF, along with income from product sales, corporate and foundation support, and gifts from families and friends to the Annual Fund Campaign, move us closer to the approximately \$400 needed to deliver one year of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to each Orange County girl.

Q: What will the income from the CSF support?

A: The CSF will support the delivery of high quality programs and services to nearly 21,000 girls and volunteer support and services for more than 10,000 volunteers.

Q: Don't my troop dues support Girl Scouts?

A: Troop dues are determined by each troop and vary in amount and frequency. They often cover uniforms, books, materials, and outings, but do not support Girl Scouts of Orange County in providing girl programs available throughout the year to Girl Scouts at every level, volunteer support and services, membership recruitment, the Girl Scout Shop, and maintenance of our many facilities, including Girl Scout program centers across Orange County and Camp Scherman.

Q: Can I use Cookie Dough/OC Bucks/Juliette Dollars to pay for Membership Dues?

A: No. But you can use Cookie Dough/OC Bucks/Juliette Dollars to pay for the Council Service Fee (CSF).

Q: Can I use Cookie Dough/OC Bucks/Juliette Dollars to pay for the CSF?

A: Yes. Renew by April 30th and you can redeem your Cookie Dough/OC Bucks/Juliette Dollars for the CSF.

Q: How can I redeem Cookie Dough/OC Bucks/Juliette Dollars for the CSF?

A: Troop or parent completes online Membership process and Council Service Fee payment. Girl submits receipt and card to Troop Leader. Troop submits for reimbursement using the online Cookie Dough/OC Bucks/Juliette Dollars [Reimbursement form](#).

Cookie Dough/OC Bucks/Juliette Dollars and receipts must be submitted to Troop Leader prior to April 30 expiration date. More details can be found [here](#).

Q: Can I use Troop Proceeds to pay for my troop's Membership Dues and CSF?

A: Yes. Troop proceeds from product sales are a great way to cover membership costs for your troop. If the troop has decided that parents will register individually, each parent can be reimbursed for Membership Dues and the CSF by the Troop Leader.

Q: Will the increase affect membership dues for lifetime members?

A: Lifetime membership dues are currently \$375.00 and a special lifetime membership, at the current reduced cost of \$195.00, is offered to girls who are registered Girl Scouts at the time of their high school graduation. In accordance with Girl Scouts of the USA's Blue Book of Basic Documents, lifetime members pay 25 times the annual membership dues at the time they become lifetime members. Girls who are registered Girl Scouts at the time of their high school graduation pay 13 times the annual dues, provided they apply for lifetime membership before their current annual membership expires.

We are considering the effect that the annual membership dues increase will have on the cost to become a lifetime member. Girl Scouts of the USA will make an announcement as soon as a decision is made.

Q: What if I have other questions?

A: If you have questions that have not been addressed here, please contact us at CustomerCare@GirlScoutsOC.org