

Fee Increase Communications

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 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 we continue the Scouting mission, it is important that we keep pace with an ever-changing world. While costs to the organization have increased every year, the National Council Boy Scouts of America has worked to keep the annual membership fee as low as possible by subsidizing core costs, including liability insurance we must carry to cover all official Scouting activities. We kept the cost 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 we have 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 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

Every dollar of the national membership fee will go toward the cost of essential services, including liability insurance for those participating in approved Scouting activities, program resources, safety standards, youth protection and personal safety training, and services to councils nationwide to sustain Scouting. The Buffalo Trace Council will not receive any funds associated with the National fee increase.

Families enjoy Scouting because of its high value and reasonable price. Even with an increase in the membership fee, Scouting will remain significantly less expensive than most youth programs in the area, and certainly more impactful long-term. National BSA will continue to take every measure to reduce operational expenses and the Buffalo Trace Council will continue to fundraise locally to support our program and provide assistance when needed.

Starting August 1, 2020, councils can choose to charge a local program fee. This local program fee can include local insurance costs (i.e., accident, property, etc.), as well as cost to administer unique local programming efforts. **Please note that the Buffalo Trace Council currently has no plans to implement a program fee, however, this is contingent on the continued success of the council's FOS campaign, Special Events, Popcorn Sales, Scouting events and Old Ben Scout Reservation utilization and local Cub Scout Day Camps.**

In support of our units and families that may need additional funds to pay for the newly announced BSA fees, the Buffalo Trace Council is offering an opportunity for units to sell popcorn in December through a special sale:


- Special Popcorn Sale runs from December 6th – December 27th.
- Contact the council office at administration@buffalotracecouncil.org to determine the consignment of remaining inventory available for sale. This will be done on a consignment basis, and all account must be settled prior to year-end 2019.
- Wagon Sales will be the focus. If inventories in the office need to be increased, we will work the Trail's End Popcorn Company to accept additional product to assist your unit.

- This will be a cash only sale, i.e., no prizes; rather, units will receive an increased 37% commission to help with BSA registration costs. This will bring the total commission to 67%.
- For more information, or to register for this special sale, please contact us at the Eykamp Scout Center by December 10 if your unit is interested.

We are committed to ensuring that all youth can experience the character-building benefits of Scouting regardless of their financial situation. In addition to our existing council and unit membership assistance, 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.

We appreciate all that you do for our youth,



John G. Harding
Scout Executive

FAQ**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 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 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: 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: 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. Unfortunately, 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. We are 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: When will this increase take effect?

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

Q: Is financial assistance available?

A: We are committed to ensuring that all youth can experience the character-building benefits of Scouting regardless of their financial situation. In addition to our existing council and unit membership assistance funds, the National Council has established the donor-funded *Growing Future Leaders Fund* to provide financial support to those who need it. The Buffalo Trace Council is also providing a brief extra popcorn sale of all remaining inventory in December, if your unit has interest please let us know by December 10.

Q: Does the Buffalo Trace Council charge a fee to cover insurance?

A: The Buffalo Trace Council leadership team has been considering charging a fee to address local needs, which can include such as local property and accident insurance, this decision has been delayed, due to this recent announcement. Please note that the Buffalo Trace Council currently has no plans to implement an insurance or program fee, this is contingent on the continued success of the council's FOS campaign, United Way support, Special Events, Popcorn Sales, utilization of Old Ben Scout Reservation and attendance at Cub Scout Day Camps.

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 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.