



Special 57th National Council Session

MEMBERSHIP DUES INCREASE – BACKGROUND, RATIONALE, EXPECTED IMPACT

Why did the National Board recommend increasing membership dues in the first place?

The National Board's recommendation to increase membership dues and call for a special session followed almost a year of discussions and gathering input from councils and delegates on our Movement strategy. This strategy has been informed by research, including clear expectations around what today's girls and families most want and need, and input from stakeholders across the Movement.

During those early conversations, councils and delegates expressed support for increasing all of our financial levers—including philanthropy, licensing, and membership dues—to successfully deliver our Movement strategy, more effectively serve our current members, and reach the 24 million girls who are not yet part of Girl Scouts.

What will this membership dues increase support?

While this membership dues increase will play a crucial role in strengthening our ability to serve our current community of families, it will also help us reach new families—those we know would benefit from all that we have to offer but either don't know us, don't understand the value we bring, or don't yet feel welcome in Girl Scouts.

We now have choices to make about the future of our organization and what potential it holds. And ensuring that Girl Scouts can be here for girls—both now and for generations to come—requires financial resources. We will continue to deliver programming that is engaging, relevant, and impactful for all girls including those we serve now and those we will serve in the future.

Have you considered how many members will be lost due to this membership dues increase?

We have considered the impact of a potential membership decline as well as our ability to attract more girls and their families based on the investments we can make in the Movement. If membership dips initially, at the proposed dues prices (\$85 and \$45), Girl Scouting will be



stronger in the intermediate and long term, specifically because the increased revenue will fund initiatives that will improve the girl and volunteer experience.

We also considered how membership would trend if we did not increase membership dues. Given the many years of steady membership decline before the pandemic and weak gains in recent years, we cannot continue the status quo of operating with a deficit budget and an inability to invest in priorities to better serve girls, volunteers, and councils.

Has increasing membership dues led to decreased membership in the past?

Although we reviewed the historical correlation between membership dues changes and membership counts, we did not rely heavily on this data point. At a national level, we did not see a clear correlation between prior membership dues changes and membership counts. However, given that the proposed dues change is anticipated to be larger than past increases, and that that we are in different economic times, we are not drawing the conclusion that the proposed dues increase would have zero effect on our membership counts.

To estimate the range of potential short-term membership decline, we evaluated this primarily at a national level. We considered girls and (non-lifetime member) adults differently, given that the proposed dues are different for each. We also differentiated between new and renewing members, because a new member may have a different response to updated pricing compared to a renewing member who is familiar with the current state.

What do you mean by "Membership Year"?

Membership Year 2026 runs from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026.

Membership Year 2026 renewal begins on April 1, 2025, which is when any new member dues go into effect.

Does this mean we won't have another membership dues increase for many years?

As all organizations do, we must regularly review our financial and membership models. To continue to maintain our core programming and make the necessary investments to provide an unparalleled experience for our current and future members and volunteers, we routinely need to reevaluate how we fund our mission.



Will this impact the price of lifetime memberships?

No. The proposal does not include a change to lifetime membership pricing.

FINANCIALS AND FUNDING

With costs rising across the board, will girls and families be able to support this increase?

Girl Scouts is an organization committed to serving all girls who wish to become members, regardless of their ability to pay. Options will be reviewed by the National Board and specifics will be shared as part of the education process if a Special Session is called. We are also exploring other membership dues options such as family plans, differentiated pricing for volunteers/adults, differentiated pricing by Girl Scout age, and multi-year memberships as part of our Three-Year Movement Strategy.

Have you considered financial aid options?

We remain committed to ensuring that every girl who wants to participate in Girl Scouting has the option to do so.

How many girls nationally receive financial aid?

This number may vary from year to year, but nationally approximately 25–27% of girl members receive financial aid.

Why can't philanthropy dollars just cover what a dues increase would?

Philanthropy alone will not provide the resources needed to make the crucial investments in our girls and volunteers needed to propel us into the future. Although it is an important element, it simply will not get us there.

If we do not take on these initiatives that our Girl Scouts, volunteers, and delegates are asking for, we will be unable to deliver a best-in-class experience for our current girls and volunteers, nor will we grow our membership. Investment in these initiatives will deliver many times the value to our girls and volunteers in terms of experiences and our ability to serve more girls.

Is GSUSA financially stable?



Yes. GSUSA has a strong balance sheet and a healthy level of reserves. However, the reality is that—in concert with our board—GSUSA has and continues to utilize reserves in a responsible manner to ensure that our service portfolio is properly maintained and, where needed, improved. This approach lacks sustainability, and we must drive changes to enable longer-term Movement financial health.

To carry out the work that our volunteers, council leadership, and GSUSA know is critical not just for our current Girl Scouts but also for the future of our Movement, we need to invest in initiatives that advance our strategic objectives and core capabilities.

Reexamining our financial models and membership pricing is a responsible fiduciary decision. All organizations review their pricing structure on a regular basis as we are doing now.

We know the right thing for our Movement is to make these important decisions for and with our councils, including investing in these crucial initiatives together through national philanthropy and membership dues.

How is GSUSA using their \$84M donation from MacKenzie Scott?

The bulk of Ms. Mackenzie Scott's generous \$84.5M donation (\$69.5M) went directly to 29 councils across the country.

The \$15M GSUSA received allowed us to continue to carry out the essential needs of our Movement. Without this generous gift, we would have felt more significant impacts from the pandemic as revenues had not yet rebounded and we would have been forced to make even more significant cuts to our service portfolio.

How do our membership dues compare with other youth-serving organizations, such as Scouting America, American Heritage Girls, etc. ?

A comparison with other similar organizations showed that most peer organizations raised their national dues since 2019, and some considerably: Scouting America (formerly BSA) to \$85, American Heritage Girls to \$60, and Frontier Girls to \$35.

Our current dues do not reflect the value that Girl Scouting offers. A membership dues increase would bring the cost of Girl Scout membership more in line with similar organizations, reflect our value, support our Movement's transformational initiatives, and enable future growth.



OTHER PROPOSED SOLUTIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Have you looked at ways to cut costs to create more funds?

GSUSA and our councils have taken many steps to streamline resources and staff, such as through shared services. However, this is not enough for us to grow our Movement. We cannot continue to cut our way to growth. True transformation requires investment beyond what our current membership dues and philanthropy will cover.

If we do not take these initiatives on, we will not be able to address the gaps our research has laid out for us. Nor will we accomplish the transformation we know is possible and necessary to continue to deliver an unparalleled experience.

SPECIAL 57TH—PURPOSE AND LOGISTICS

What is a special session and why did you hold one?

A special session can be called by the National Board or National Council delegates to discuss and take action on matters between regular meetings of the National Council. A special session does not replace a regular NCS. During a special session, only the business included in the call to meeting can be discussed.

On July 25, 2024, the National Board voted to hold a virtual special session to discuss a potential membership dues increase beyond the National Board's authority to approve (25% or \$6.25). This special session—the first one to be held since GSUSA was congressionally chartered in 1950—took place on October 19, 2024.

Why did you hold it virtually?

At the 56th National Council Session in 2023, delegates approved a proposal to amend the constitution to allow special sessions to be held virtually. The proposal recognized that improvements in technology enabled the National Council to convene virtually as needed to conduct the business of the Movement. Holding special sessions virtually are a more efficient and less resource-intensive way to conduct a meeting for a defined purpose. However, we do not intend for virtual meetings to replace our triennial in-person National Council Sessions.



Does this special session impact any plans for the National Council Session that will be held at the 2026 Girl Scout Convention in Washington, DC?

No. The National Council will still meet as planned as part of the 2026 Girl Scout Convention in Washington, DC. That session will now be known as the 58th National Council Session.

Why hold a special National Council Session? Why not wait until 2026?

We have engaged with delegates on exciting opportunities to better serve our current members and future Girl Scouts through the development of our Movement strategy. We cannot deliver these benefits with the resources that are currently available. A Girl Scout is only five years old—or 15 years old—once. For every year we delay in meeting the needs of girls and their families, a new group of girls misses out on the life-changing Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Our members, councils, and volunteers need notice to prepare for a membership dues change, and an increase does not become effective immediately. Members begin joining in April for the coming membership year. If we were to wait to act until the National Council Session in July 2026, the new rate of membership dues would not be effective until April 2027. This delay would mean we would limit our ability to serve current and future members for an additional two years.

We must act now to plan for MY26 renewals, beginning in April 2025.

Why was the topic of membership dues not brought up at the NCS in 2023? Why now?

We have undertaken significant research and prioritization to develop our Movement strategy since we last came together in 2023 at the 56th National Council Session in Florida. With input from council leaders and delegates, and with this road map, we can chart our way forward. A membership dues increase is part of the investment in our Girl Scouts that can get us to the future we know is possible.

To offer our girls an unparalleled experience, we must invest in them today as well as councils. GSUSA have been identifying what is needed from GSUSA, and now is the time to invest in these critical strategic initiatives.



What does the National Council do?

The National Council is the membership body charged with giving broad policy direction to the future of the Girl Scout Movement. The National Council convenes every three years, and is responsible for:

- electing the officers and other members of the National Board and National Board Development Committee;
- amending the Girl Scout Constitution as needed;
- establishing requirements for certificates of membership, council charters, and all other credentials; and
- acting on proposals to foster and improve Girl Scouting, receiving reports of the National Board of Directors, and giving guidance to the National Board upon general lines of direction of the Girl Scout Movement and Girl Scout program.

Who makes up the National Council?

The National Council is composed of delegates elected by chartered Girl Scout councils, delegates from USA Girl Scouts Overseas, members of the National Board of Directors, members of the National Board Development Committee, past presidents of GSUSA, and other persons as may be elected by the National Council.