

Introduction and Rational for Girl and Adult Membership Dues Proposals – October 1, 2024

This document includes a summary of information from the following Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) documents:

- Special 57th National Council Session Delegate Workbook
- Special 57th NCS Key Messages and Talking Points for General Membership Last Updated: September 20, 2024

Because this is a complicated issue and we want your most informed opinions, we highly recommend you take 15 minutes to [watch this video](#) of GSUSA's CEO, Bonnie Barczykowski, describing the proposals.

You can also share your opinions and thoughts with GSLPG Delegates by clicking this link.

Introduction and Rational:

There are 25 million girls aged 5 through 18 in the United States, but only about one million of them are Girl Scouts, and this proportion has been decreasing. In 2023, GSUSA conducted research among families to better understand what parents and caregivers want for their daughters and what girls want for themselves. Many girls struggle with confidence, self-esteem, and acquiring the skills needed to successfully navigate today's world and lead happy and fulfilling lives. Girl Scouting is the solution to the challenges facing today's girls. Through a variety of experiences and with the support of mentoring adults, Girl Scouting helps girls develop skills, build confidence and self-esteem, and be ready for life—both now and in the future.

In order to stay relevant and meet the needs of volunteers, girls, and families, we need to invest in our future together. GSUSA developed our Movement strategy with the help of foundational research, the work of the Strategy Working Group, and input from council leadership and national delegates.

To execute the strategy, initiatives were developed with focus areas in mind:


- Simplifying the volunteer experience and making it more rewarding,
- Making the older girl program more visible and engaging,
- Ensuring relevant programming for all girls, Daisy to Ambassador,
- Improving technology to make it easier for volunteers and girls,
- Ensuring that we are a welcoming organization where girls from all backgrounds belong,

- Ensuring financial assistance is available to those who need it,
- Publicly sharing Girl Scouting’s value and broadly communicating what Girl Scouts do and enabling more families to join and participate.

We need a strong and sustainable national organization that invests in where we are better together and prioritizes initiatives that support all—all girls, volunteers, and councils, and specifically in areas that councils could not do or afford to do on their own: None of this comes without a cost. GSUSA must increase revenue from all areas, including fund development, new and expanded partnerships, and membership dues. The national board called for a Special 57th National Council Session.

Proposals:

- The national board proposes an annual dues increase for girl members.
- The national board proposes an annual dues increase for adult members.
- The proposals are presented as fill in the blank.
- The national board recommends girl membership dues be \$85 and adult membership dues be \$45.



Proposals to be Presented to the National Council

National Board recommends annual membership dues be \$85 for girls and \$45 for adults.

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
Girl members pay annual dues of \$25.	Girl members pay annual dues of \$___.	Girl members pay annual dues of <u>\$(amount to be determined by National Council)</u> .
Adult members pay annual dues of \$25.	Adult members pay annual dues of \$___.	Adult members pay annual dues of <u>\$(amount to be determined by National Council)</u> .

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Board Resolutions (more details found in delegate workbook)

- The national board approved three board resolutions that outline:
 - Phased in dues
 - Financial support to councils
 - National Membership Dues Scholarship Fund

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Phased
Implementation

With girl membership dues of \$85 or more,* GSUSA will implement a discount on girl membership dues in the first two years.

Membership Year	Discount	Dues
2026	20%	\$68
2027	10%	\$77
2028	N/A	\$85

*Below \$85, the full amount will be implemented in 2026.

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GSUSA to Provide Councils With Revenue Support for Five Years
Based on a Percentage of Annual Girl Membership Dues

If the National Council sets membership dues at:

Councils will receive a percentage of girl membership dues:

\$85 or above

→

32%

\$75 to \$84

→

30%

\$65 to \$74

→

25%

GSUSA Financial Realities

- Despite taking steps to reduce expenses, including eliminating lines of work, and reprioritizing initiatives, GSUSA has been operating with deficits for the past 6 years.
- Costs have increased everywhere, and none of us—GSUSA, councils, or members—have been immune to this.
- The costs to operate essential services have increased dramatically and forced delays in improvements and enhancements.
- GSUSA cannot continue to reduce expenses. Further reductions will compromise their ability to deliver the services GSUSA provides for the Movement.
- To stay the same is to fall behind.

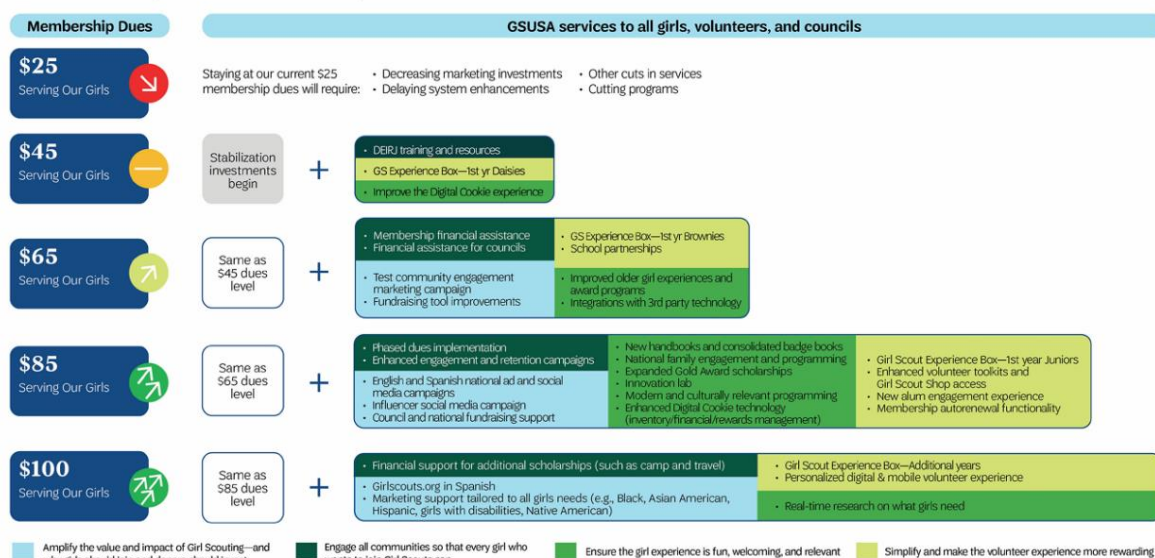
Future Together (see initiative chart)

With the additional revenue, GSUSA and councils will:

- Simplify and streamline the volunteer experience in every way possible and make it even easier and more rewarding to become a volunteer,
- Ensure that processes are easier, faster, and better streamlined, including more ‘turnkey’ trainings, recruitment tools, and programs,
- Clarify for families and communities the value and impact of the Girl Scout experience and why girls should join, and donors should invest,
- Eliminate barriers so that every girl who wants to join Girl Scouts is able to and that she has the opportunity to engage in all that Girl Scouting offers,
- Create new experiences, including opportunities to explore new places and better connect with our global sisterhood, and
- Make technology easier to use, with more integration between platforms, including integrating technology tools that some of you already use at your council.

We must invest in girls. Our choice is now.

Girl Scouting must invest today to better serve our current members and to reach girls who are currently missing out on the Girl Scout experience. These are a few examples of initiatives that would be possible with an increase in national dues:



Looking at the future possibilities we can create for girls, it is essential to focus on the investments that will make the biggest impact on our volunteers, our councils, and the girls and families we serve now and those we will serve in the future.

PROPOSAL 1*

Girl members pay annual dues of \$[amount to be determined by National Council].

Originated by

Girl Scouts of the USA

Proposal

To amend the *Blue Book of Basic Documents*, page 23, as follows:

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
Girl members pay annual dues of \$25.	Girl members pay annual dues of \$__.	Girl members pay annual dues of \$[amount to be determined by National Council].

* The National Council will use the “fill-in-the-blank” parliamentary process for this proposal.

RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL 1

Please also refer to the proposal introduction, which applies to both Proposals 1 and 2.

This proposal specifically addresses the financial amount of national annual girl membership dues.

In recognition of the value girl members gain from the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and of the need to increase resources to deliver our Movement strategy, the National Board will recommend that \$85 fill the blank for annual girl membership dues, effective for Membership Year 2026.

GSUSA research among families who were not yet part of Girl Scouting highlights the clear alignment between what parents and families want for girls and what girls themselves say they enjoy in Girl Scouting. Leaders supporting today’s Girl Scouts share the same sentiment. Raising girls of courage, confidence, and character in today’s world takes all of us—it takes a movement. Girl Scouting is that Movement.

For Girl Scouts to remain relevant, maintaining the status quo is not an option. Girl Scouts expect and deserve so much more! Girls evolve and change and so must our Movement—including the cost to be a member and the investments we secure from communities and donors. Girl Scouting grows and thrives when girls, families, volunteers, communities, and donors choose Girl Scouting. This exciting future is ours to shape as a place for girls who will change the world! We must continue to create new experiences, including opportunities for our youngest to oldest Girl Scouts. A girl is only five years old once; she is only ten once and only fifteen once. We cannot delay and miss a generation of girls. We have the potential and choice to act now to ensure Girl Scouting is possible for generations of girls to come.



FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

We know and we heard delegates emphasize that there must be sufficient financial assistance to meet the needs of current and future members. The additional revenue provided by national annual membership dues of \$85 for girls will enable all of us, together, to deliver our Movement strategy.

As you consider the opportunities available with increased resources, it is important to also consider what opportunities we forgo if the final approved girl membership dues are less than proposed. Nationally and locally, there are significant financial implications related to our ability to support girls today and improve for tomorrow, to grow membership, and to ensure that the positive impact of Girl Scouting is represented in every community. (Refer to chart on page 12.)

- Staying at our current \$25 membership dues will require dramatic cuts in services, passing technology costs on to councils, decreasing marketing investments, and delaying enhancements of the systems used daily to serve girls and councils.
- At a \$45 girl membership rate, we will only be able to maintain service levels, but there will not be funds for enhancements or innovation.
- At a \$65 girl membership rate, we will support councils with financial aid assistance and can maintain critical services. We will be able to make some improvements and innovations, including expanding the Girl Scout Experience Box to first year Brownies, improve and expand our older girl programs, and launch community-focused marketing.
- At \$85 and above, Girl Scouting's future is incredibly bright. Together with councils, we will prioritize initiatives and execute them in ways that work for all, including national marketing and social media influencer campaigns, consolidated handbooks and badge books, increased Gold Award Scholarship funds, and more. Regarding technology, we will be able to address the necessary enhancements, make our systems more user-friendly, and achieve connectivity to other systems. With these investments, we are confident our membership will grow as more girls and volunteers choose to join and fully engage with Girl Scouts.

Our Movement strategy reflects what you have been asking for, what our girls need, and what our families expect. We cannot do that without more financial resources. Increased fundraising is a critical priority locally and nationally, but it will never meet all our needs. For a membership organization, member dues are an essential part of the financial picture.

The dues opportunity that our National Council will consider is of great importance. Together, let's stand and invest in girls, their potential, and the promise of Girl Scouting.

ACTIONS TAKEN TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

While it is difficult to forecast membership changes, GSUSA has done extensive modeling and is working with councils to prepare for a wide variety of possible outcomes. This includes both membership growth and decline in the initial years following the dues increase.

In our July 2024 input sessions, delegates spoke with great compassion about not wanting the cost of Girl Scouts to leave anyone out. In response to this powerful advocacy, and recognizing this is a large increase, the National Board approved the following three resolutions to support girls and councils at its September 2024 meeting:

1. Council financial assistance

Recognizing that Girl Scout councils may require additional resources to execute the Movement strategy, including funding membership dues assistance, council financial support will be available if the National Council approves girl membership dues over \$65. For five years, GSUSA will provide councils a percentage of the total annual girl membership revenue at the following rates:

- a. If girl member dues are \$85 or above, 32% of this revenue will be provided to councils.
- b. If girl member dues are between \$75 and \$84, 30% of this revenue will be provided to councils.
- c. If girl member dues are between \$65 and \$74, 25% of this revenue will be provided to councils.

2. Scholarship fund

In rare cases, a council's financial assistance provided by the previous resolution may not fully cover a council's membership dues financial assistance needs. To aid councils, with the approval of a girl membership dues of \$65 or more, the National Board will create a membership dues scholarship support fund of up to \$5 million. Councils can apply for these funds if their incremental cost of membership dues financial assistance is more than the amount of council financial assistance (see #1) provided by GSUSA.

3. Phased implementation

Delegates indicated they would be more supportive of a significant dues increase if this occurred over time versus all at once. In response, the National Board approved a resolution that, with the approval of girl membership dues of \$85 or more, GSUSA will implement a 20% discount on girl membership dues in year one (Membership Year 2026) and a 10% discount in year two (Membership Year 2027). This means that, if the National Council approves an increase in girl membership dues of \$85:

- in membership year 2026, girl membership dues would be \$68,
- in membership year 2027, girl membership dues would be \$77, and
- in membership year 2028, girl membership dues would be at the approved \$85.

These measures will ensure that Girl Scouts can continue to thrive and serve more girls while addressing financial challenges and keeping the organization strong for future generations.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE NATIONAL BOARD TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

The National Board recommends approval of this proposal.

PROPOSAL 2*

Adult members pay annual dues of \$[amount to be determined by National Council].

Originated by

Girl Scouts of the USA

Proposal

To amend the *Blue Book of Basic Documents*, page 23, as follows:

Current Wording	Proposed Amendment	If Adopted, Will Read
Adult members pay annual dues of \$25.	Adult members pay annual dues of \$____.	Adult members pay annual dues of \$[amount to be determined by National Council].

* The National Council will use the “fill-in-the-blank” parliamentary process for this proposal.

RATIONALE FOR PROPOSAL 2

Please also refer to the proposal introduction, which applies to both Proposals 1 and 2.

This proposal specifically recognizes the value adult members provide in the Girl Scout Movement. Delegates are asked to consider dues amounts different (i.e., lower) than the amount girls may pay, which will support volunteer recruitment and retention as well as the financial investment a family makes when the adults choose to volunteer. **The National Board will recommend that \$45 fill the blank for annual adult membership dues, effective for Membership Year 2026.**

Raising girls of courage, confidence, and character in today’s world takes all of us—it takes a movement. Girl Scouting is that Movement. Caring adults who volunteer and support girls are a powerful and fundamental part of this. Our adult members contribute their valuable time, creativity, and expertise in many ways to make the Girl Scout experience happen.

Increasing Girl Scout dues will provide resources to strengthen our national organization (GSUSA) and the councils GSUSA serves. This will fund improved support for adult members who bring the Girl Scout experience to life. Volunteers are looking for simpler, more dependable, and exciting opportunities to actively participate in inspiring girls of courage, confidence, and character across the country. Nationally, Girl Scouts cannot do this without increased revenue. Investing more in volunteer support requires increased revenue on all fronts—through robust fundraising at the national level, additional membership dues, and comprehensive partnerships.

Why are we proposing differentiated pricing for adults? Local council leaders, delegate input, and the favorable sentiment expressed during delegate sessions in the summer of 2024 prompted the National Board to make this proposal. Delegates and councils asked us to consider a lower adult price that recognizes the value adult volunteers bring to our Movement while still providing an increase in dues revenue to invest in the initiatives needed to execute our Movement strategy and better engage, retain, and support our current and future adults in Girl Scouting.



FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

It is clear from national analysis and local, council, and delegate input that to meet the needs of current and future members, we must consider an increase in dues. The additional revenue provided through national annual membership dues of \$45 for adults will enable all of us, together, to deliver our Movement strategy.

As you consider the opportunities available with increased resources, it is important to also consider what opportunities we will forgo if the approved dues are less than proposed.

- Staying at our current \$25 membership dues will require dramatic cuts in services, passing on technology costs to councils, decreasing marketing investments, and delaying enhancements of the systems used daily to serve girls and councils.
- At \$45 adult dues, we will be able to maintain service levels, and with girls' dues at \$65 or more, as outlined in Proposal 1, there will be funds for enhancements and innovation.

Based on your choice to approve dues increases aligned with our Movement strategy, Girl Scouting will be able to address the needs delegates and councils have identified—support for volunteers, which is what our girls need and families expect. Working together, we can ensure that the Girl Scout Movement, in service to girls everywhere, has the strategy, focus, and resources to thrive.

ACTIONS TAKEN TO SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION

While it is difficult to assess the potential impact of a dues change on adult membership, councils and GSUSA are working together to prepare for a wide variety of possible outcomes, including both membership growth and decline in the initial years following the dues increase. Investing in Girl Scout volunteers across the country includes learning from proven practices that have been shown to effectively support adult members as well as reviewing national processes and tools to make volunteering easier. Movement strategy initiatives will be designed and developed with council and volunteer input. Additionally, the National Board has approved providing council financial support and an additional membership scholarship fund to aid families in paying membership dues should it be needed.

RECOMMENDATION OF THE NATIONAL BOARD TO THE NATIONAL COUNCIL

The National Board recommends approval of this proposal.