

Special 57th National Council Session—October 19, 2024

Frequently Asked Questions—Social Media and Customer Care

NOTE: Any specific questions about the proposal, financials, GSUSA's role etc., should be directed back to the council. Please use the messaging below. If you are unsure, please check in with your supervisor before responding.

Thank you for reaching out to GSUSA. Please connect with your local council delegate to share your feedback. If you need assistance with that contact information, please connect directly with your local council. Here is our [Council Finder](#) to help you with that local contact.

Additional FAQs

Please feel free to utilize these as needed.

When will the Special 57th National Council Session take place?

The Special 57th National Council Session will be held virtually on Saturday, October 19, 2024. The technology check-in is at 11:00 a.m. ET with an official start time of 12:00 p.m. ET. We invite all delegates to log in beginning at 11:00 a.m. to test that their devices connect successfully to the platform and that they can see and hear the proceedings.

The Special 57th NCS will conclude when all items on the agenda are complete. It is our intention to complete our business on October 19. The delegate body or the presiding officer has the authority to extend debate. We therefore ask that you maintain flexibility should the delegates decide to reconvene on October 20.

Will Girl Scout members/non-delegates or the general public be able to watch?

We will provide a livestream for non-delegate members who want to watch the meetings. However, please remember that this is an official governance business meeting that is not open to the general public or members of the media. Details on how to register for the livestream will be made available by the week prior to the special session.

How can I receive news and updates on Special 57th NCS?

We encourage you to connect with your council and your council's delegates directly for information on the Special 57th National Council Session.

Is GSUSA recommending a membership dues increase?

Yes. GSUSA is examining various ways to invest in our Movement as part of our three-year future strategy work. One of the recommended options is an increase in membership dues.

With increased funding through philanthropy and membership dues, we would have the opportunity to accelerate important initiatives that improve the current Girl Scout experience, the Girl Scout brand, and our programming and engagement models. 24 million school-aged girls need us.

Why is GSUSA considering a membership dues increase?

Growing and sustaining our Movement requires consistent and prudent investment—and our Girl Scouts expect and deserve to be invested in.

Membership dues have not increased since 2018. During this period, we have seen unprecedented impact on our communities and membership, including COVID, a significant decline in membership, and national inflation. At our current rate, our membership dues have not kept pace with the rising inflation costs across the United States nor with those of our peer youth-serving organizations.

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.

What will a membership dues increase support?

Increased membership dues will support the current girls and volunteers we serve and provide us with the opportunity to reach the 24 million school-aged girls we do not yet serve—the girls in our communities who we know would benefit from being part of Girl Scouts.

With increased funding through philanthropy and membership dues, we would have the opportunity to accelerate important initiatives that will improve the current Girl Scout experience, the Girl Scout brand, and our programming and engagement models.

To offer our girls an unparalleled experience and to grow our membership, we must invest in crucial initiatives now. As part of our strategy process, council leadership, national delegates, and GSUSA have been identifying what is needed from GSUSA in order to evolve. This includes simplified tools for volunteers, enhanced older girl programming, national marketing, new engagement models for girls and families, improved technology to reduce costs while increasing the ease of accessing our programs and serving our families in the way they expect, and so much more.

Why does GSUSA need more funds for technology?

Technology supports everything we do, including registration, ecommerce for cookies, Girl Scout merchandise, council websites, and Girl Scout programming. This also includes less visible aspects of technology like security and data protection, analytics capabilities, and infrastructure such as networks and storage. Just like any technology you may utilize, there needs to be continuous investment to make sure we don't fall behind, including on those upgrades that are mandatory, like ~~on~~ cyber security and upgrades to stay in compliance with legislation. We also want to continue to enhance the digital experience that our technology can provide to our families, volunteers and councils. We must always invest to keep our platforms stable, and we remain focused on creating a better and more personalized experience for our volunteers, councils, and girls.

We know you want better technology than we have today, and this requires investment.

Who decides whether membership dues increase?

GSUSA's National Board has the authority to approve an increase of up to 25 percent in any single triennium. For the 2023–2026 triennium, this is limited to a membership dues increase of \$6.25. Prior to any decision, the National Board must seek input from local councils and National Council delegates. A decision to increase membership dues above that amount requires a vote of our National Council.

When would a membership dues increase take effect?

If a dues increase is approved by the National Board or the National Council, the new price would be implemented, at earliest, for membership year 2026 (membership that is active from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2026). The exact implementation date and the final dues price will be determined once the transition plan is solidified, but could begin as early as April 1, 2025, as that is the start of Membership Year 2026 renewals.

Will there be a change to lifetime membership fees?

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

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.

We are working with our councils to explore financial aid options that expand beyond membership dues. While we do not have exact options yet, we remain committed to providing every girl the opportunity to be a Girl Scout, regardless of financial ability.

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.

Has a rise in membership dues led to decreased membership in the past?

Although we reviewed the historical correlation between membership dues change 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.

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.

Is it possible to keep it at \$25 for Girl Scout staff, or otherwise consider a different Girl Scout staff rate than the proposed adult \$45 members?

At this time, there is no Girl Scout membership tier or rate specifically for staff. This is an option we can explore in the future.

Have we considered the costs of other youth serving organizations and activities?

Yes. As we considered dues changes, we also researched other youth activities. Girl Scout annual dues at \$85 or higher bring the cost of Girl Scout membership more in line with similar organizations and, compared with many activities, remains less expensive.

Girl Scouting offers a unique package: year-round, girl-centered, fun, skill-building experiences and a safe space with mentoring adults. Our programs evolve with a girl as she grows, and each moment is a possibility to create a lifelong, positive impact. Few, if any, other youth activities offer this value.