

**Membership Dues Increase Proposals
for 57th Special National Council Session
Frequently Asked Questions**

General FAQs

What is a special session of the National Council and why is one taking place?

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 session. During a special session, only the business included in the call to meeting can be discussed.

The Special 57th National Council Session will be the first special session to be held since GSUSA was congressionally chartered in 1950.

On July 25, 2024, GSUSA's National Board voted to hold a virtual special National Council Session to discuss a potential membership dues increase beyond the National Board's authority to approve (25% or \$6.25). This special session will be named the Special 57th National Council Session and our national council will discuss, debate, and vote on a proposal from the National Board regarding an increase to membership dues.

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 from 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 19th. 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 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 public or members of the media. Details on how to register for the livestream will be available soon.

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 in the United States. 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,
- 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 is part of 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.

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 5 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 miss 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.

Council National Delegates FAQs

Which delegates will attend this meeting?

The delegation elected for the 56th National Council Session, which took place in July 2023, serves for the term 2022–2025 and should attend the Special 57th National Council Session on October 19, 2024.

How many delegates is each council allowed to send to this Special National Council Session?

The delegate allotment is that same as for the 56th National Council Session which took place in July 2023. Each council is entitled to:

- two (2) delegates;
- one (1) additional delegate for up to 1,500 girls;
- one (1) additional delegate for every 1,500 girls thereafter

Our Council

Girl Scouts South Carolina – Mountains to Midlands is represented by a national delegation of 5 individuals consisting of volunteers, girl members, and staff. They have participated in several educational webinars and meetings to discuss the proposals and prepare for the meeting.

Membership Dues Increase FAQs

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.

Since January 2024, we have been working on our Movement strategy, and the urgent need to invest in our girls and volunteers has been heard. Our current strategic objectives include:

- attracting new members;

- retaining existing members;
- growing revenue;
- strengthening technology; and
- advancing our core capabilities, which include our commitment to DEIRJ and ensuring that Girl Scouting reflects the communities that make up this country.

Increased membership dues would support the initiatives that align with each of these strategic objectives.

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 on cyber security and compliance with new legislation. We also want to continue to enhance the digital experience that our technology can provide to our families, volunteers and councils.

Over the last five years, the core GSUSA offerings have largely achieved stability targets. Even as we get to stabilization, there will always be room to improve and make sure we have strong availability during peak times. We are also always working to provide the best user experience and deliver the necessary processing power to handle the volume of transactions of a movement of our size.

The platforms are stable today, we will always invest to keep them stable, and we remain focused on creating a better and more personalized experience for our volunteers, councils, and girls.

Our future technology roadmap will provide a more seamless user experience for families, volunteers, and our councils to deliver and enjoy the Girl Scout experience. We know you want better technology than we have today, and this requires investment.

Who decides if 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.

How does the National Council consider and vote on a dues increase?

An increase can be considered at a regular session of the National Council or a special session. Special sessions can be held in person or virtually, and the National Board can call a special session with 30 days' notice to delegates.

First, the National Board must propose an increase to the National Council. Delegates then participate in delegate education activities to understand the proposed changes before debating and, finally, voting on the proposed increase.

What would happen without these increases?

Our Movement has reached the moment where we have choices and thoughtful business decisions to make. While a membership dues increase will allow us to continue to serve our current community of families, it will also help us reach families who we know would benefit from all we offer but either don't know us, don't see how they fit in Girl Scouts, or don't yet feel welcome.

It will also allow us to ensure that our programming continues to be strong, relevant, and impactful for all our Girl Scouts.

Without a dues increase, GSUSA would be forced to reduce the Girl Scout experience for many of our members and volunteers by either scaling back or eliminating services. Some examples of services that have been reduced in the past include research, alum engagement, marketing efforts, etc.

When would a membership dues increase take effect?

If a dues increase is approved by the National Board or the National Council (see below), 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.

Does this mean that we won't have another increase in membership dues 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 there be a change to lifetime membership fees?

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

National Board Proposed Membership Increases

Proposal 1: Increase in Annual Dues for Girl Members

The National Board is recommending an increase in annual membership dues for girl members to **\$85**, effective for Membership Year 2026. This increase reflects the value gained from the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and the additional resources required to implement and support our Movement strategy effectively.

Proposal 2: Increase in Annual Dues for Adult Members

For adult members, the National Board will recommend an increase in annual dues to **\$45**, effective for Membership Year 2026. Recognizing the critical role that adult members play in bringing the Girl Scout experience to life, the Board is recommending a lower dues amount for adults to support volunteer recruitment and retention, while also acknowledging the financial investment families make when they choose to volunteer.

National Board Resolutions

Recognizing this is a large increase, the National Board approved the following three resolutions to support girls and councils:

1) Council financial assistance

GSUSA will provide councils with revenue support based on a percentage of annual girl membership dues.

If membership dues are set at:	Councils will receive a percentage of girl membership dues
\$85 or above	32%
\$75 to \$84	30%
\$65 to \$74	25%

2) Scholarship fund

With the approval of a girl membership dues increase 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 provided by GSUSA.

3) Phased Implementation

With the approval of 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

Will the National Board increase dues even if we are in a three-year phase-in process with this proposal?

The National Board has not discussed future increases to annual dues. Additionally, pursuant to the Blue Book, the National Board cannot increase annual membership dues more than 25% in a single triennium without National Council approval. This means that if the National Council approves an increase of more than 25%, the National Board cannot approve an additional increase in the 2023-2026 triennium.

Financials and Funding

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.

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.

Does our current pricing reflect our value in the marketplace? (e.g., are we undervaluing ourselves? Strategically, do we want to be the low-cost provider?)

This is one of our considerations as we discuss the possibility of raising membership dues. We want to ensure that we are competitively priced to reflect our value in the marketplace.

Is GSUSA and the Girl Scout Movement 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 else will the Movement grow revenue in addition to membership dues?

GSUSA will continue to strive for growth across all revenue streams, including investing in growing philanthropy, product program, merchandising, and licensing.

Is there additional data on GSUSA's investment income?

GSUSA draws from some investments to support the operating budget. With the board's approval, GSUSA takes a 4% spend rate on our investment portfolio (approximately \$4-5M per year). The spend rate is below the long-term return rate of our investments, allowing them to continually grow. The 4% spend rate on investments typically represents 5% or less than GSUSA's total annual revenue.

Will members be able to pay membership dues in installments – for example, half at the beginning of the year and half later?

We are exploring these options, including technical feasibility, timeline and incremental costs that would be required to build this into the registration process. We do not expect this option to be available initially.

Can you share more details about how the financial support from GSUSA to councils would work?

GSUSA will provide financial support to councils based on a percentage of annual girl membership dues with:

- 32% of total annual girl membership dues when girl membership dues are \$85 and above.
- 30% of total annual girl membership dues when girl membership dues are \$75 to \$84, or
- 25% of total annual girl membership dues when annual girl membership dues are \$65 to \$74.

This support from GSUSA to councils will be for five years and may be used by councils to carry out our Movement strategy, support today's members, recruit new girls, and provide membership dues assistance to their members.

In addition, with the approval of annual girl membership dues of \$65 or more, the National Board will create a membership dues scholarship support fund of \$5M.

Councils may apply for these funds if their incremental membership dues financial assistance need is more than the financial support provided by GSUSA.