Membership Dues Increase: An Overview

An increase in annual membership dues from $15 to $25, effective fiscal year 2018, that our National Board recently approved, is an integral part of the long-term reinvestment in and transformation of Girl Scouts. After a thorough analysis, including looking at multiple membership dues options at various increments, and reflecting input from councils, GSUSA developed a recommendation that meets the financial requirements of our investments. The dues increase will also provide councils with the financial resources to offset some of the incremental costs associated with strategic plan implementation, including support for serving girls from low-income families.

Key Messages

- To ensure we have the resources to continue the great work of our Movement in support of all girls, our National Board voted to approve a $10 increase in membership dues effective 2018, based on significant input from the field.

- At just over $0.83 more per month, the increase will support our vision to serve as many girls who want to be Girl Scouts as possible—regardless of their means, neighborhood, or family background.

- With the extra funding, we will be able to sustain and develop programming and services for our membership. It will also allow us to provide our volunteers with the technological infrastructure and training they need to serve today’s girls.

- Through our more integrated, future-focused programs like Digital Cookie and our STEM initiatives, girls are empowered with the relevant skills and entrepreneurial know-how to lead and succeed in the industries of tomorrow, as they improve their communities through advocacy and service projects, tackling local and global issues such as poverty, illiteracy, and pollution.

- The dues increase aligns the cost of joining Girl Scouts with the value of our programming. As a youth-serving organization, Girl Scouts must keep pace with the marketplace and examine how it is meeting the needs of its customers. We have a long tradition of making the complex and difficult business decisions required to serve the current needs of girls.

- With this membership dues increase, Girl Scouts is keeping pace with the marketplace. As comparison:
  
  - The joining fee for teens (ages 12–18) at the YMCA in Edwardsville, Illinois is $40, plus a $30 monthly fee. At the Park Slope, New York YMCA, the joining fee for youth (up to 11) is $32, plus a $165 annual fee.
  - Membership in the orchestral performance groups at Douglas County Youth Orchestra in Castle Rock, Colorado is $150 for each season (fall and spring).
  - Boys & Girls Club annual membership in Austin, Texas is $30.
  - Weekly 30-minute “Music Fun Time” classes at the Omaha School of Music & Dance in Nebraska, which help under-7s develop a lifelong love of music and help children develop language, social, emotional, and physical skills, cost $89 a month.
An after-school coding program at Washington Elementary for kids in grades 2–5 costs $190 for ten hour-long classes.

On average, dance classes cost anywhere from $40 to $160 per month. Some studios also charge a registration fee.

According to the *New York Times*, the cost of youth sports is up to 10.5 percent of a family’s gross income. (A family bringing in $50,000 a year could be spending $5,500.)

Girl Scouts is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls; a Girl Scout membership is one of the most valuable investments anyone can make in a girl’s life. The FY2018 dues increase reflects the value of the unique and meaningful twenty-first-century Girl Scout experience we seek to deliver all girls.