

## Council Program Fee FAQ

### **Q: Why is the Three Fires Council implementing a Program fee?**

A: To provide more program and be more efficient. For several years, Three Fires Council has been exploring better methods to deliver the program and activities to our Scouting Families. This new funding model called a Council Program Fee allows us to be more efficient with fundraising instead of putting effort to the Family Friends of Scouting campaign. As a result, Council staff and district volunteers will be able to spend more time on unit service, program delivery, membership recruitment and leadership development.

### **Q: What is the Council Program fee?**

A:     \$60 for Cubs, Scouts BSA and Venturers.  
       \$24 for pack, troop, and crew volunteers.  
       \$0 for Exploring members, volunteers or for non-unit volunteers.

The Council Program fee will be in addition to the \$60 Boy Scouts of America (BSA) youth membership fee and \$36 Adult Leader fee

The Council Program fee replaces current annual insurance fees and, the annual Family Friends of Scouting fundraising campaign. With the Council Program fee, traditional district activities such as Camporees, Klondikes, Cub-o-rees, Cub-Day-Ones, District Pinewood Derbies and adult leader training such as Training Academy and Training Expo will no longer charge a participation fee. The Council Program fee includes all insurance, free cloth badges of rank for all members, Eagle Scout recognition kits and adult leader recognition. The fee also includes free tent camping at Three Fires Council properties, Camp Freeland-Leslie and Camp Big Timber.

### **Q: Why is the fee structure changing? The old system seemed to work for me.**

A: The Council Program fee is to ensure that Three Fires Council camps and programs have the resources needed to support the 13,000+ Scouts and 5,000+ volunteers without asking for more money every month. The Family Friends of Scouting (FFOS) campaign demands a significant amount of time from both volunteers and staff – eliminating this campaign will provide time that can now be spent on program, outreach, leadership development and unit service. Over the past decade, the Council has posted annual budget losses and has had to borrow from unrestricted reserves. That is no longer possible or financially sustainable.

### **Q: Could a Council Program fee discourage enrollment/make Scouting unaffordable for families?**

A: We recognize that any change in pricing structure may influence a family's decision to enroll in Scouting, but at \$10/month, (for Council Program fee and BSA membership fee) BSA

programs are a significant value above other youth activities. The Council Program fee will also reduce the number of times during the year that families are asked to pay for Scouting events. Scholarships will be available to Scouts and families based on financial need. The Council also provides units a no-risk fundraiser to help families underwrite the cost of Scouting (popcorn). Last year, the average Scout earned nearly \$200 through the annual popcorn sale to support their Scouting adventures.

**Q: What happens if we move or leave the program? Will we get refunded?**

A: The program fee is for the calendar year and fees cannot be refunded; however, Scouting families that move can have their program fees transferred to a new unit or new council.

**Q: Are other Councils charging a Program fee or charging less?**

A: Yes, however every council is unique and sets its own budget. We believe that the inclusion of insurance, district events, camping at Council properties, volunteer training, free cloth rank badges and increased staff support for membership, program and leadership development make the Council Program fee an excellent value. We choose to make as many services available at no additional cost. By setting the fee at this point, we will avoid the need to make frequent adjustments.

**Q: Is there a family discount rate?**

A: Currently, neither the BSA nor the Three Fires Council has a family membership option; however, this is being considered and may be implemented in the future.

**Q: When/how will fees be collected?**

A: The Council program fee will be pro-rated on a monthly basis just as the BSA membership fee is prorated for members joining during the calendar year. The Council Program fee will be collected on an annual basis at recharter time (December). Families will pay a pro-rated fee to unit or Council at time of enrollment either online or by cash/check. Re-enrolling members will pay their unit during rechartering. Units can pay online or to the Council office by cash or check.

**Q: Can I pay in installments?**

A: Not yet. In 2020, the program fee will be collected when a member joins or when the member recharter. We hope to add a monthly subscription service before the end of fiscal year 2021.

**Q: Will units still charge dues above and beyond the BSA & Three Fires Council fees?**

A: Units still may charge dues but should consider why and how much. Since the BSA Membership fee and Council Program fee cover many of the unit costs previously covered, units should carefully consider Council-sponsored fundraisers like popcorn to further reduce the need for unit dues.

**Q: How often will the Council Program fee increase?**

A: The Council Program fee will be matched to the to the National Membership fee and will be prorated to the month the member joins. Membership enrollment is the calendar year (January-December).

**Q: What can a family expect to pay for a full year of Scouting?**

A: Cub Scouting-

- \$60 Membership fee,
- \$60 THREE FIRES COUNCIL Program fee,
- first year full uniform \$120,
- Monthly pack activities \$160,
- Day Camp/Resident \$200
- **\$600 annually.**

Scouts BSA/Venturing-

- \$60 Membership fee,
- \$60 THREE FIRES COUNCIL Program fee,
- first year full uniform \$120,
- monthly troop activities \$200,
- Summer camp \$360
- **\$800 annually.**

**Q: What activities will be “no charge”?**

A: District activities such as Camporees, Cub-o-rees, Klondikes, and Pinewood Derby will no longer charge a registration fee if the participant’s registration is received prior to the deadline (2 weeks in advance). This allows the volunteer leadership planning and leading these events to confirm supplies and staffing for those events. Registering within the two-week window may incur a \$5-\$10 fee.

**Q: Now that District events and trainings are “no charge” they will most likely become more popular; how will council change them accommodate more people to control costs?**

A: A strict pre-registration window of two weeks will be enforced. In addition, the single largest cost for single-day events is food expense. Therefore, participants will be asked to bring their own lunch for all single-day events. This will also free up more volunteers for program support vs. food services.

**Q: What if families still want to donate to the Three Fires Council? What will happen to the Family Friends of Scouting campaign?**

A: With this new model, the Family Friends of Scouting (FFOS) campaign will be retired. The Three Fires Council will still pursue donations under the Friends of Scouting name, but donations will be solicited via direct mail, email and invitation to special community events. No

more donor presentations at Blue & Golds, pack meetings, Pinewood Derbies or Courts of Honor. The thousands of hours dedicated to FFOS will be freed up to focus on program delivery and membership/leadership development.

**Q: What trainings will be included in the Council Program fee?**

A: All position-required training (IOLS, BALOO, Scoutmaster Basic) as well as events like Training Academy and Training Expo. Attendees will be required to register in advance. Those registering within the 2-week window will be charged a small fee. Training requiring a third-party vendor will still have a small fee (for example CPR).

**Q: Why require a two-week pre-registration window?**

A: Registering for an event in advance allows the volunteers who are running an event/training course to plan in advance.

**Q: How do District events get added to the “no-charge” list?**

A: No new events will be added to the current menu of District activities for program year 2021 and 2022. After this evaluation period, district committees can make a proposal to the Council Program Committee for additional events to be added to their district calendar.

**Q: What events will not be included in the “no-charge” list?**

A: Council Camping programs such as Day Camp, Family Camp, Resident Camp and Summer Camp as well as Merit Badge University (MBU), advancement & STEM activities will continue to charge a participation fee. Advanced leader training such as NYLT, Wood Badge, Powderhorn, Wilderness First Aid, and Okpik will also continue to charge a fee - prices will be locked into 2020 prices for 2021 and 2022.

**Q: How will the money be spent?**

A: Council Program fees will remain local and be used by the Three Fires Council to support local programs, camps, scholarships, volunteer training, insurance and unit service.