



**May 5, 2020**

**To:** Unit Volunteers  
**From:** Clint Scharff, Scout Executive  
**Re:** Council Program Fee

In March, the Council Board adopted a Council program fee that will be implemented with new members joining this fall and with recharter this December. We've spent the last month working on details and are ready to communicate this change to our members and volunteers.

The Council program fee applies to all traditional Boy Scouts of America (BSA) youth members (Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA and Venturers) and volunteers. The program fee is in addition to the BSA membership fee. This fee does not apply to the Exploring program, to Lion or Tiger parents, or Merit Badge Counselors.

The program fee for youth will be \$60/year prorated to \$5/month at time of enrollment; the fee for volunteers will be \$24/year or \$2/month at time of enrollment.

The program fee will replace the current insurance fee (\$12) collected at recharter and new enrollments. It will also replace the Family Friends of Scouting campaign. No more presentations at pack meetings and troop meetings for donations. The Friends of Scouting campaign will take on a more professional "university" type feel through email, direct mail and invitations to community donor events, away from unit meetings and programs. This will "free up" thousands of volunteer and staff hours to focus on program, service and membership growth.

Moving forward, members and volunteers will no longer pay additional fees for District activities such as Camporee, Cub-O-Ree, Klondike, Winterall, or Pinewood Derby. In addition, all required BSA training will be provided to leaders at no additional charge. This will include BALOO/IOLS and supplemental basic training such as Training Academy and Training Expo.

Additional benefits of the Council program fee include free cloth rank badges at all program levels from Lion to Eagle and Summit. There will be no charge for tent camping at Camp Big Timber and Camp Freeland Leslie. The program fee will continue to pay for insurance costs, liability, auto, and camper accident/sickness for youth and adults. It will also fund volunteer recognition (awards, knots and certificates which are an important part of volunteer retention).

Keeping the cost of Scouting affordable for every family is a major concern. NO family will be left behind. Every family that wants a Scouting experience for their child will be included. The Council will be modifying its campership/scholarship request forms to ensure we are awarding need-based scholarships and to collect data that will help us further fund those scholarships.

*Experience  
Possibilities*

This week the Council will be launching a micro-website available from the Council homepage [www.ThreeFiresCouncil.org](http://www.ThreeFiresCouncil.org) with resources about the new program fee. There are still details to work out, but we wanted leaders and families to know as soon as possible so that units can plan budgets and program appropriately. Included on that site will be a FAQ, letters to parents, unit leaders and district leadership as well as a simple infographic and video message.

No one likes to increase cost, especially in this environment, and we all know that Scouting's cost and value is extremely competitive with other youth activities. We want to assure you that this change is unrelated to the National organization's financial situation. It is about the Three Fires Council's financial sustainability, creating a steady and dependable cash-flow model that will improve programming and facilities, and allow the Council to maintain and IMPROVE service and program to units, volunteers and members. These dollars will stay in the Three Fires Council to deliver quality program and service to our local members.

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