

Local Council Fee FAQ

Q: Why is the Three Fires Council adjusting the Council fee?

The Three Fires Council implemented a local Council fee in August of 2020. At that time, the Council agreed to review and reevaluate the fee (and other council events/camp fees) after two years. Since that time we have experienced the pandemic and record inflation, both of which have impacted Scouting and the TFC.

This spring, the TFC assembled a small task force of unit-level volunteers to review the Council fee and discuss if adjustments should be made and, if so, what adjustments should be implemented. The taskforce discussed leaving the fee alone, as well as multiple variations of raising and lowering youth and adult fees.

Q: What is the Council fee going to be? (August 1, 2022- July 31, 2024 – next 2 years)

- \$75 for Cubs, Scouts BSA and Venturers. (12 months)
- \$12 for pack, troop, and crew volunteers. (12 months)
- \$12 for Exploring members and volunteers. (12 months)

The local Council fee will be in addition to the annual 12-month \$75 National BSA youth membership fee and \$45 adult leader/Exploring fee.

The Three Fires Council will continue to collect 12 months of fees with re-charter (November 1, 2022- October 31, 2023)

- Youth $\$75 + \$75 = \$150$ (\$12.50/ month)
- Adult $\$45 + \$12 = \$57$ (\$4.75/ month)
- Exploring $\$45 + \$12 = \$57$ (\$4.75/ month)
- Non-unit volunteers \$45 (\$3.75/ month)

Q: What is the “included” in the local Council fee?

- Insurance: accident, liability, property, auto etc.
- District activities: camporees, Cub-o-rees, Klondikes, Pinewood Derbies etc.
- Required Adult leader training and supplemental training, like “Training Academy”
- Overnight campsite camping at Camp Big timber
- ALL rank patches (Cub Scout, Scouts BSA and Venturing)
- Adult leader recognitions (knots and certificates)

Q: Why is the fee structure changing?

A modest price increase to the youth Council fee is necessary to help offset inflationary pressure. The Council adult fee is decreasing 50%; A large number of units pay the adult fees out of their operating budgets, and lowering this fee helps units with their overall budget and unit dues. The local Council fee is to ensure that Three Fires Council camps and programs have

the resources needed to support our 10,000+ Scouts and volunteers. A set Council fee allows the Council a dependable cash flow to plan and allocate resources to support units and volunteers throughout the program year.

Q: Could a Council fee discourage enrollment or make Scouting unaffordable for families?

We recognize that any change in pricing structure may influence a family's decision to enroll in Scouting; however, at \$12.50/month, (for local Council fee and BSA membership fee) BSA programs are a significant value compared to most other youth activities. The Council fee will also reduce the number of times during the year that families are asked to pay for Scouting events. Scholarships are available to Scouts and families based on financial need. The Council also provides units a no-risk fundraiser to help families/units underwrite the cost of Scouting (popcorn). Last year, the average Scout earned nearly \$200 through the annual popcorn sale to support his/her Scouting adventures.

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

The fee is for the calendar year and the fee is not refundable nor transferable.

Q: Are other Councils charging a Council fee or charging less?

Yes, however every council is unique and sets its own budget. We believe that the inclusion of insurance, district events, camping at Camp Big Timber, volunteer training, free cloth rank badges and staff support for membership, program and leadership development make the Council fee an excellent value. We choose to make as many services as possible available at no additional cost.

Q: Is there a family discount rate?

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?

Council fees will be pro-rated on a monthly basis, just as the BSA membership fee is pro-rated for members joining during the calendar year. The Council fee will be collected on an annual basis at re-charter time (October). Families will pay a pro-rated fee to the unit or Council at time of enrollment either online or by cash/check. Re-enrolling members will pay their unit during re-chartering. Units can pay online or to the Council office by cash or check.

Q: Can I pay in installments?

Not yet. The Council fee will be collected when a member joins or when the member re-charters. We hope to add a monthly subscription service in the near future. There are technology issues related to the BSA's online applications that need to be resolved to allow for this type of transaction.

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

Units may still charge dues but should consider why and how much. Since the BSA membership fee and Council 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 fee increase?

The Council intends to leave the local Council fee the same for two years and to re-evaluate in the spring of 2024. We expect that the local Council fee will parallel the National Membership fee and will be pro-rated 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?

Cub Scouting

- \$75 BSA Membership fee,
- \$75 Council fee,
- First year full uniform \$120,
- Monthly pack activities \$160,
- Day Camp/Resident Camp \$200,
- **\$630 annually.**

Scouts BSA/Venturing

- \$75 Membership fee,
- \$75 Council fee,
- First year full uniform \$120,
- Monthly troop activities \$200,
- Summer camp \$360,
- **\$830 annually.**

(Compare the Scouting fees to a typical band program at \$1,000; baseball or soccer program at \$2,500; hockey or cheer season at \$3,000.)

Q: What activities will be “no charge”?

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 (two 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 small fee.

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

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 may 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?

With this new model, the *Family Friends of Scouting* (FFOS) campaign has been retired and replaced with TFCGives. The Three Fires Council will still pursue donations under the TFCGives name, however, donations will be solicited via direct mail, email and invitation to special community events. Donor presentations at Blue and Golds, pack meetings, Pinewood Derbies or Courts of Honor have been retired.

Q: How will the money be spent?

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

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

All position-required training (IOLS, BALOO, Scoutmaster Basic) as well as events like Training Academy are included. 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: How do District events get added to the “no-charge” list?

Events will be added/deleted to the current menu of District activities for upcoming program years by the District Committee and approved by the TFC Board during the annual budget planning process (Sept-Nov each year).

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

Council Camping programs, such as: Day Camp, Family Camp, Resident Camp and Summer Camp as well as Merit Badge programs like MBU, and CBT Summer merit badge days, and 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.