



GSWISE COUNCIL SERVICE FEE FAQs

What is the Council Service Fee (CSF)?

Girl Scout members pay an annual membership fee (\$25) that goes directly to Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), supporting the development of girl programs, research, and technology for the Movement. None of the annual membership fee stays locally in the council.

The new \$25 CSF will directly support the local operations and programs for Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast (GSWISE).

Total girl registration fees for the 2020 membership year will be \$50, which includes the \$25 GSUSA membership fee and the \$25 GSWISE council service fee.

The CSF will begin with the 2020 membership year. For the majority of members, this would mean that when they are registering girls in the fall of 2019, they would see the CSF applied. For those who elect early registration, the CSF charge would be applied in May 2019. For many families who register for camp and also register for the 2020 membership year, the fee would be applied to their registration as early as February 6, 2019.

Does the CSF apply to girls and adults?

The **\$25 CSF applies only to girls** who are the beneficiaries of our programming, and the fee stays within the council to support all the ways we provide services to girls in southeastern Wisconsin.

Why is the CSF fee only attached to the girl membership?

The recipients of the programming are girls. Therefore, the fees associated with providing this programming are only applied to girl memberships. We value the contributions of our adult members and volunteers and appreciate the efforts they make in helping to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Why does GSWISE need a CSF?

At GSWISE, the average cost to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is \$360 per girl. The CSF, along with product sales, philanthropic contributions, special events, program fees, and investment income, will help GSWISE with the resources needed to continue to deliver the highest quality programming and support for girls and volunteers.

A variety of financial factors drive the need for the CSF, including rising costs of goods and services for programming, and uncertain revenue outcomes from the Girl Scout Cookie Program (for example, unpredictable weather affecting sales).

We anticipate the CSF will provide a source of sustainable and renewable income that will support our local Girl Scout council.

Where can I find more financial information on why the CSF is needed?

Please review the letter from GSWISE's Chief Financial Officer on www.gswise.org.

How was the amount of the CSF decided?

In January 2019, the decision was made by the GSWISE Board of Directors to implement the CSF at \$25, beginning with the 2020 membership year. The Board decision reflects their conviction in the value of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, the need for a stable revenue source, benchmarking it against marketplace comparators, and parameters set by GSUSA.

How many Girl Scout councils have a CSF and what do they charge?

Since 2011, more than one-third of Girl Scout councils have implemented a council service fee. While the amount charged is determined by each council, GSUSA guidelines allow councils to implement a CSF not to exceed the annual GSUSA membership fee.

Is Girl Scouting still a great value for my girl?

We are confident that the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) our girls receive through their participation in Girl Scouting is an incredible value. Through our unique GSLE, girls discover their special skills and talents, connect with others, and take action to make the world a better place. For over 106 years, Girl Scouts has provided a safe space for girls to build their courage, confidence, and character. This is a wonderful value at a low cost.

While we are sensitive to what price increases can mean to family budgets, we believe that the value of programs and services provided to girls in our Council supports the new fee.

- Market research shows the CSF is not out of line with the cost of other organizational memberships or youth activities (dance, sports, Girls on the Run, etc.) in southeastern Wisconsin.
- Girl Scouting is an excellent value at less than \$5 per month per girl for membership access to unique and progressive girl-led, girl-only leadership experiences (STEM, outdoors, entrepreneurship, life skills).
- Girl Scouts is a wholly unique organization which has a proven track record of building girls who grow up to become leaders in their careers, communities, and lives.

What does my girl get as a result of the council service fee?

Our council subsidizes the cost of girl activities, events, volunteer leadership development, and council-sponsored programs. The CSF supports the operation of Girl Scouts of Wisconsin Southeast. This includes:

- Providing the quality customer care and service necessary to support a membership of 28,400 girls and 8,600 adults.
- Investing and delivering high quality, low cost, staff-led events for Girl Scouts. In 2018, more than 17,000 girls participated in STEM, outdoor, entrepreneurial, and/or healthy living programming.
- Offering year-round turn-key outdoor educational experiences for girls. GSWISE offers access to more than 1,000 acres on council-owned property for outdoor experiences. Girls can participate in a variety of offerings including GSWISE's summer overnight and day camps, family camping, troop overnight camping, and special events.
- Supporting technology initiatives such as online registration, e-newsletters, website, event calendars and support of other technological advances (Volunteer Toolkit downloadable lesson plans for troops, MY GS online resource to plan out their Girl Scout year, online Activities registration, training, etc.). GSWISE will continue to pursue technological advancements through 2025 in alignment with GSUSA and councils nationwide.
- Performing background checks of volunteers and staff for the safety of girls.
- Facilitating placement of girls in various membership pathways.
- Protecting girls and adults by providing liability insurance coverage for all council approved events, activities, and non-Girl Scout facility use.
- General operating expenses for all council properties, service centers, and camps including utilities, insurance, maintenance and capital expenses.

What if I can't afford the CSF? Will financial assistance still be available?

Yes. Families can request financial assistance (FA) for girls' membership registrations. GSWISE will review requests and award FA based on qualifying factors including household size and income. The current FA request form will be updated to reflect the CSF.

I am not sure if I qualify for financial assistance (FA), how do I apply?

We strive to ensure that every girl, regardless of her families' financial situation, has the opportunity to be a Girl Scout. Select one of the options below to apply for FA:

- Register her as a member on gswise.org. Beginning May 1, 2019, during the registration process you will have the option to complete the FA application.
- Contact Customer Care at 800-565-4475 or customercare@gswise.org and they will connect you with a staff person who can guide you through the process.

How do our 2020 membership fees compare to Boy Scouts of America (BSA)?

As two separate and distinct organizations with differing membership fee structures, we cannot accurately compare the total member expenses associated with Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) and Boy Scouts of America. We do know the 2018-2019 annual membership fee for GSUSA is \$25, and the 2018-2019 annual membership fee for BSA is \$33, with funding supporting the national organizations directly. There are also other local costs for members participating in either organization (uniforms, etc.). To help offset costs associated with Girl Scouting, our council offers the ability for troops to earn funds by participating in the product sales program, and we offer financial assistance to ensure every girl has an opportunity to be a Girl Scout.

Questions?

The GSWISE Customer Care team is here to help! Call 800-565-4475 or email customercare@gswise.org.