



Southeast Louisiana Council - Family Program Fees FAQs

Five months ago, a committee made up of unit leaders, district volunteers, and board members was formed to address a budget deficit that the Southeast Louisiana Council has faced for the past few years. Their task was to identify areas where additional revenue could be generated to balance the Council's budget moving forward. In March the committee presented to the Southeast Louisiana Council Board of Directors their findings and recommended that the Council institute a program fee to offset the growing costs of Council and camp operations. The Board approved the program fee recommendation. Below are frequently asked questions about the Council's new program fee.

Q: Why a Council Program Fee?

A: The Council Program Fee is to cover the currently unmet costs of insurance, facilities maintenance, personnel, and other operating costs related to BSA programs. The net proceeds from events like camporees, trainings, and camps are not enough to cover all the fixed costs of the Council. Annual registration fees (\$60) paid in January are passed directly to the National organization. No registration fee currently supports local operations.

Q: Who is affected by the Family Program Fee?

A: The Family Program Fee includes Scouts in Cub Scouts, Scouts BSA, Venture Scouts, Explorers, and Soccer and Scouting. Adult Leaders without youth in the program will not be assessed a program fee. If a family has multiple youth in the program, they will only be charged once.

Q: What if I'm an Adult Volunteer but do not have any active kids in the Program?

A: Adults with no children in the program pay the \$36 registration fee (to the National Office) and the \$7 Insurance fee. No adult volunteers will be charged the program fee.

Q: What are the sources of income for the Council?

A: The Council must be self-sustaining, meaning it is responsible for earning all of the income needed for operations. We receive no money from government entities (federal, state, local) or BSA National. We raise money through the following sources: Friends of Scouting (annual giving) from corporations, businesses, and families; Product sales such as popcorn and camp cards; Special Events; Endowment interest; grants; foundations and now, the program fee.





Q: What cost reduction have been made over the last 5 years?

A: The personnel of the Southeast Louisiana Council has been reduced. The Council has eliminated four District Executive positions, a Finance Specialist, and a Program Specialist. These cuts amounted to more than \$300,000 in the Council budget. The Council has also cut back on travel expenses and kept a tight rein on office operations.

Q: Is the Council receiving United Way Funds?

A: The Council receives some United Way support through the annual grant allocation process. However, United Way support for Scouting programs has shifted over the past decade as more nonprofits compete for the same funding. In addition, the United Way has changed its funding model to place greater focus on basic community needs like food, shelter, and jobs. Contributions to the Southeast Louisiana Council have moved from over \$400,000 in total contributions with 4 United Ways to 3 United Way organizations contributing just over \$100,000 in 2019.

Q: What improvements have been made to program and facilities over the last 3 years?

A: The improvements at Salmen Scout Reservation that have been made over the last 3 years were done at little or no cost to the membership.

A shortlist of these improvements:

- New Flush Toilet Facilities at 4 of 10 V Bar Campgrounds
- First of two new HVAC units installed in the Dining Hall
- Five new security Gates installed
- Archery and Rifle Range Improvements
- Addition of Paddleboards to the Waterfront
- Swimming Pool re-surfaced and plumbing repaired
- New metal roof on Administration Building
- Second HVAC unit installed in the Dining Hall
- Swimming pool fence repaired
- Log wall rotten section repaired at the Training Building
- Electrical issues and A/C replaced in Staff Hill building





Q: How will Council Program Fees be used?

A: The program fee will be used to pay for the overall operation of the Southeast Louisiana Council. This includes:

Salmen Scout Reservation (Camp V Bar): Electricity, water, vehicles, gasoline, equipment rental, routine maintenance & repairs, Ranger services, Ranger quarters, telephone, security system, internet access, office supplies, equipment, property and liability insurance, etc.

Council Service Center: Council field staff and office staff, computers, internet, telephone, office supplies, copiers/printing, accounting services, website provider, data processing, recruiting and marketing materials.

Council Services:

- Processes all membership applications, files all records on membership, provides membership cards and charters.
- Provides recruiting materials, arranges school promotions, maintains relationships with 10 different school systems.
- Processes all advancements, Eagle applications, and maintains all records.
- Provides recognition to volunteers through banquets and special events.
- Employees a Professional staff, camp staff, office support staff available to help families, volunteers and donors with questions and or advise on all aspects of scouting.
- Oversees and provides training opportunities to Adult Volunteers.
- Advises committees tasked with program development including Camping, Training, Advancement, Properties, Day Camp, and Summer Camp.
- Maintains and or provides program materials and equipment.
- Provides two fundraising campaigns (Popcorn and Camp Cards) to all units with no liability to unit and assumes the cost of marketing materials and back end support.
- Provides council office for service to all scout members and volunteers, houses National Scout shop for member needs. The Council provides rent-free space for the National Scout Shop to operate locally. A small percentage of sales do benefit the local Council.
- Oversees board approved budget of Council.
- Oversees policies and procedures from local and National board.
- Maintains website and social media outlets for communication to members, volunteers and donors.
- Provides and maintains Camp V Bar camping facility and outdoor equipment used by all members and some outside groups. Ensures that facility meets all state and local health requirements and National BSA Accreditation.





- Supports volunteers in planning and putting on Council and District events for units to participate such as family camps, day camps, summer camp and winter camp.
- Provides support for training not available online such as NYLT, Wood Badge, and shooting sports, Basic Adult Leader Outdoor Orientation, Intro to Outdoor Leader Skills, etc.
- Guides volunteers in fundraising efforts to engage the community in supporting the cost of Scouting in our community.
- Produces annual audit and all documents in order to be in compliance with IRS, State of Louisiana and the National BSA.
- Provides accident and sickness insurance as a secondary policy to all members.
- Oversees Youth Protection guidelines and insures that adults are currently trained in Youth Protection.
- Administers all issues related to violations of BSA and Council policies to ensure the safety of Scouts and Volunteers.
- Provides guidance and logistical support to local scouts and leaders to help organize national trips to National Jamboree or National High Adventure Bases.
- Raises funds to help assist economically disadvantaged families to participate in scouting.

Q: Where do the National registration fees go?

A: The National registration fee is sent to the BSA National Office in Dallas Texas. The organization keeps all the registration fees to cover the cost of updating and supporting the BSA's programs. No Scout or Adult registration fees stay local. The National Council manages a large general liability fund to help insure Charter Organizations, Scouts, Parents, and Registered Scout Leaders. The National Office maintains all Scout registrations and advancements entered by local Council Staff. They also manage support websites like Scouting U, My.Scouting, Scoutbook and numerous other data systems to keep track of both youth advancement and safety. All training courses are designed and updated nationally. They provide all guidance on program health and safety, run background checks on all adult volunteers, maintain five national high adventure bases for Scouts' use, and provide general marketing support.

Q: Are other Councils charging program fees and how much?

A: There are several Councils that have been charging a program fee for the last two years and their fees run from \$27-\$150 per registered individual. More than 100 local Councils have decided to implement a program fee this year. The Istrouma Area Council (Baton Rouge) recently implemented an identical program fee of \$60.





Q: How is this Program Fee Collected?

A: In 2020, the program fees will be collected by the Units and paid to the Council Office by August 31st 2020. These fees will be prorated in 2020 at \$30/Scout Family. In 2021, the program fees will be collected by the Units during the normal re-chartering process at \$60/Scout Family.

Q: Is there help available to cover fees?

A: The Council popcorn sale and camp card sale are excellent ways for units to raise funding to cover the cost of Scouting at no up-front cost to them. The Southeast Louisiana Council will develop a system for families in need to request a reduction or waiver on the program fee. We want all families to have access to a Scouting program regardless of financial hardship.

*On behalf of the Southeast Louisiana Council, **Thank You** for your leadership in Scouting and for standing by the Boy Scouts of America.*

