



Special 57th National Council Session Proposal Forums: Questions and Answers

Updated October 11, 2024

About this document

- This document captures and addresses questions that delegates submitted throughout the delegate education process¹ about the membership dues proposals.
- This version includes questions asked during the third and final proposal forum held on October 8.
 - Those newest questions have been added to their relevant sections (beginning on page 15) and are marked in **green bold**.
 - Questions that were addressed previously and asked again on October 8 are marked with an asterisk (*).
- We’ve bundled similar and duplicate questions.

For more information

- Please be sure to view the [proposal video](#) (passcode: @vHeA5x0) to learn more about why the board is making the membership dues proposals at this time.
- You can also view the recording of the [October 8 proposal forum](#) (passcode: Tc=Nft%V).
- Throughout this document, we’ll link to resources posted to the delegate website where you can find more related information.

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¹ Delegates submitted questions before and during the State of the Movement live webinar on September 16 and during the three proposal forums on September 24, September 30, and October 8, 2024.

COMMUNICATION


***Can GSUSA share the value of Girl Scouting and the reasons why it's important to belong to and volunteer with the national organization? Perhaps, if they see all the ways that they benefit, a raised membership dues will go over better.** (Compiled from similar questions.)

Being part of Girl Scouts means being part of something so much bigger than each of us—111 councils and USA Girl Scouts Overseas; 3.8 million badges earned each year; a network of 50 million alum. Delegates may wish to share this [Girl Scout fact sheet](#) about the size and scope of our Movement.

The value of our volunteers is immeasurable, and it is a top priority to support them through GSUSA—provided national resources. Our volunteers are the people who listen to, inspire, and support new generations of Girl Scouts. When someone volunteers with Girl Scouts, they provide a safe space for kids to discover themselves, try new things, build each other up, and make unforgettable memories through fun, laughter, and connection.

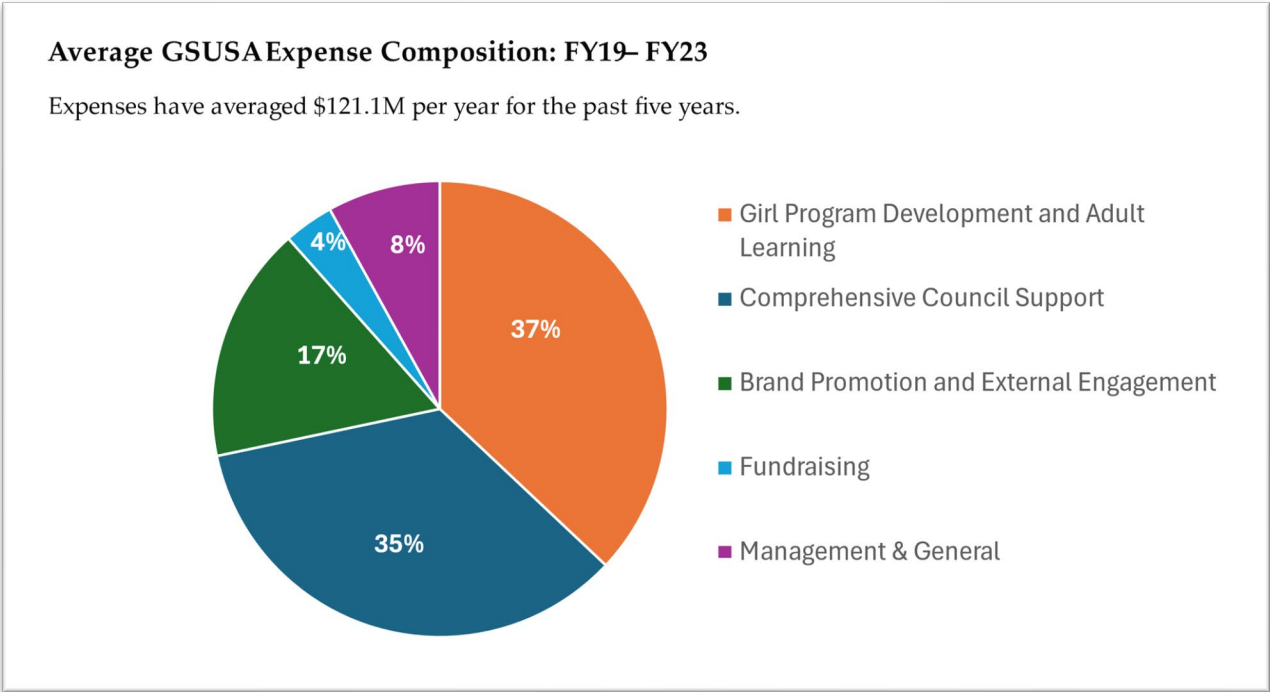
There are also very practical advantages to the way our Movement is structured. A national organization invests in initiatives that an individual council could not on their own, including global brand awareness; marketing campaigns; national programming; and economy of scale in areas like technology platforms, insurance, policies and procedures (such as Safety Activity Checkpoints), and much more. For example, if each council had to source, staff, and pay for its own set of technologies to support a high volume of registration and cookie program transactions, things would get very expensive very quickly. There are incredible economies of scale that benefit the Movement overall through this symbiotic relationship.

We also address what GSUSA does for the Girl Scout Movement in the [State of the Movement briefing video](#) (passcode RVaB%w^L) around the 16:22 mark. Here is a relevant slide from that presentation:

| | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|--|
|  Special 57th NCS | | | GSUSA & Councils Share Responsibilities | | |
| | | GSUSA | | COUNCILS | |
| Responsible for: | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Programming• Core Technologies• Marketing• Cookie Program & Tech• Brand Protection (IP)• Merchandise Operations and Supply Chain• Fundraising• Movement Alignment | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Program Delivery• Volunteer Recruitment and Training• Membership Recruitment• Fundraising• Managing Properties | |
| Primary revenue sources: | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Membership Dues• Fundraising• Girl Scout Merchandising• Licensing | | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cookie Program• Fundraising• Program Fees• Events and More | |

Slide excerpted from State of the Movement briefing video

In addition, please take a look at this graphic that was shared as part of the [July delegate webinar](#) (passcode e%H67C44). It illustrates how GSUSA supports the Girl Scout Movement.



Slide excerpted from July 2024 delegate webinar

Can GSUSA send out an explanation behind the dues increase to Girl Scouts and volunteers? This will allow families to understand the situation better and make them more likely to remain in Girl Scouts.

As with each National Council Session, we will communicate the results of our democracy in action through the appropriate channels, including a summary of actions for delegates to share with members in their councils.

In addition, in advance of the October 19 Special 57th NCS, we will share with council CEOs marketing assets and a communications plan that prepare for a variety of possible outcomes. We are working with councils to evaluate what assets will help communicate with members immediately post-NCS and beyond. All materials will reinforce the value and benefits of Girl Scouting.

How can non-delegates direct their questions?

Our governance structure outlines this best. National delegates are appointed or elected by members to represent their views. Our National Council delegates gather questions and feedback from members. Delegates have access to the [delegate website](#)—answers to most questions can be found there and will be updated regularly. National Council delegates provide feedback to their local council in whatever way the council has it structured. Most are doing so through their council liaisons.

Where can interested Girl Scouts find recordings of the State of the Movement webinar and other materials that are available to delegates?

Why can't we share some of the Delegate Workbook with members, so the information is consistently given to all? May we quickly have some written clarity on what information, documents, and recordings are allowed to be shared outside of the NCS. There are conflicting instructions currently, and much is appearing on public websites and social media.

We are so grateful for the role National Council delegates play as representatives of members in their jurisdiction. We rely on delegates to share the main considerations in the proposals with members in a way that enables members to share their views and to gain an informed perspective.

Regarding the Delegate Workbook specifically, it was developed in order to share detailed information about the special session with delegates who are elected or appointed to serve in a national governance role. Delegates have been part of our Movement strategy development process over the past weeks and months and have attended many webinars to learn about the considerations for a membership dues increase and GSUSA's financial position.

We have created a number of assets to support discussions with members, including the proposal video shortened into clips, slides, talking points, and a chart that illustrates what a membership dues increase can make possible. These are all on the [delegate website](#).

Can we get a delegate toolbox of approved resources (charts, diagrams, etc.) that we can share with our membership as we discuss the proposals?

We appreciate this suggestion! Ready-to-use assets are on the delegate website and, with feedback, we continue to add to these and make improvements to make them easier to use, including how they're organized on the site.

Could we have a pdf copy of the chart on page 12 as the delegates talk to council members?

Thanks for the suggestion. This has been [added to the delegate website](#).

How will GSUSA offer education about where the dues increase go or will that fall to councils and volunteers?

We have outlined how the revenues from a membership dues increase will be used in the [rationale for the proposals in the Delegate Workbook](#) and the [proposal video](#) (passcode @vHeA5x0), circulated with the workbook.

What is the communications plan around the outcome of the special session?

What is the communication plan for sharing the official decision from NCS (regardless of what the decision is)? How and when will GSUSA share the result with our membership?

As with each National Council Session, GSUSA will produce a summary of actions for delegates to share with members in their councils.

GSUSA's Communications team is finalizing communications plans for a variety of scenarios. The information will be shared with council CEOs in advance of October 19 to ensure councils have what they need to communicate post-NCS.

DEIRJ

***I know DEIRJ resources will be available with higher dues, but won't smaller increases also make it harder to be inclusive to those girls? Why are English and Spanish materials (media campaigns and website) further down on the list; shouldn't this be more of a priority?** (Compiled from similar questions.)

Initiatives to create relevant and targeted materials for all girls are part of our immediate plans; increased funding will allow us to create and deliver additional, more tailored resources sooner. This will help us make a bigger impact, strengthening our depth and reach. To grow our membership effectively, we must invest in materials that resonate.

By ensuring our programming content is deeply rooted in authentic cultural experiences, we create spaces where all girls feel valued, seen, and empowered. When communities feel genuinely valued and represented, they are more likely to engage deeply and sustainably.

As a possible savings at GSUSA, let's stop the expenses associated with DEIRJ as many public and private organizations have done. I believe from our inception that our organization already supports these areas.

Inclusivity is core to who we are as Girl Scouts. We're proud that the National Council reaffirmed our commitment to DEIRJ at the 2023 NCS last summer by codifying antiracism language into our constitution. The Movement's strategic plan and investments align with that commitment.

And DEIRJ is vital for the future of our organization. **Over 50% of America's youth are children of color.** Our communities and nation are increasingly diverse, and we must ensure that all girls and families know they are welcomed and belong in Girl Scouting. This means staying relevant and connecting with all our communities, ensuring they see themselves and their cultures represented in Girl Scouts.

Our members have consistently expressed a desire for more inclusive practices and opportunities. By neglecting their needs and the imperative to address this work as outlined in our *Blue Book*, we risk losing current and prospective members, thus limiting our impact. While it's important to seek ways to optimize expenses, we must consider the long-term implications of this recommendation.

Recent data also shows that **interest in DEI has increased**, not decreased, in recent years.

Investing in DEIRJ is not just a cost; it's an investment in our organization's future and our ability to positively impact the lives of countless young girls.

DETERMINING DUES INCREASE AMOUNT

I know that a lot of people suggested a family membership concept, but I am wondering if there has been consideration of a different membership fee for youth vs. adult?

Is there an option for offering reduced membership dues for volunteers to help ease the financial burden and encourage continued participation?

These were all important considerations. That is why the recommendation from the board is to create a differentiated price for adults, most of whom are our volunteers. Current board proposed adult dues are significantly lower than proposed youth dues but still increased to support the investments needed for our Movement—investments that will directly improve the volunteer experience.

We will continue to evaluate other membership options to support our Movement strategy. Establishing our new annual dues at this Special 57th National Council Session will provide the baseline to determine an appropriate family or bundled membership option or fees for different types of engagement in our programming.

How did the [National Board] determine the suggested amount of \$85 for girl members?

In recognition of the value girl members gain from the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, the Movement's current financial resources and of the need to increase resources to deliver our Movement strategy, the National Board recommends that \$85 fill the blank for annual girl membership dues, effective for Membership Year 2026.

Please refer to the [Delegate Workbook, starting on page 11](#), for more information about the board's rationale and page 12 for details about what increased dues would make possible.

The board has passed three resolutions of what they will do at \$85 level, but nothing has been addressed about the ability to increase dues by 25% without any delegate input each cycle. Has this been discussed?

The National Council discussed and confirmed the National Board's authority to approve dues increases of up to 25% each triennium at the 55th National Council Session in 2020. The *Blue Book* states that the National Board must seek input from local councils and delegates before making any changes to dues structure or amount.

Per the *Blue Book*, that National Board of Directors must obtain approval from the National Council whenever a planned dues increase will result in dues increasing more than a total of 25% in any one triennium. Will the National Board be able to raise membership dues below 25% if an increase in dues is approved during the Special Session? The *Blue Book* addresses more than a total of 25% in any one triennium, but not lower than 25%.

If the National Council does not decide to raise annual membership dues by 25% or more (\$31.25), the National Board would have authority to increase dues to \$31.25 in the 2023–2026 triennium.

What is the guarantee that if the delegates vote to increase membership dues this year, it won't increase every year? How are we planning to keep dues in line with expenses more regularly to prevent such large increases?

As all organizations do, we must regularly review our financial and membership models. To continue to maintain our core programming and make the necessary investments to provide an unparalleled experience for our current and future members and volunteers, we routinely need to reevaluate how we fund our mission. Looking back, we know that raising dues in the middle of a global pandemic or when our Movement strategy work was not complete would not have been the right choice. As effective stewards of Movement financials, the National Board and councils must use resources wisely, including a periodic assessment of how to best support our Movement including reviewing expense and revenue components. Our annual stewardship and delegate dialogues are opportunities to share this assessment.

That said, the National Board has the authority to increase dues up to 25% only once within a given triennium.

***Has there been an analysis of council fees required on top of GSUSA fee?**

For Membership Year 2025, 42 councils charge a council service fee that is, on average, \$15.

The *Blue Book* states: "A Girl Scout council shall not have the authority to establish any form of local council membership dues; however, Girl Scout councils may charge an annual council service fee for girl members, not to exceed the amount charged by GSUSA for annual membership dues." The annual council service fee was created by action of the National Council in 2011. Doesn't this also have to be addressed at the [Special] 57th NCS?

No *Blue Book* change is required to address the annual council service fee as this is not in scope at the Special Session. Councils can continue to assess their local needs and determine if a council service fee (less than or equal to the annual membership dues amount) is appropriate.

With GSUSA modeling for the projected membership impact (loss of members) with a dues increase, was the community based programming membership's dues amount discussed as retaining it at the \$25 per girl since the councils pay 100% of those dues? Also, if many councils eliminate this

community-based programming model because of the increased cost to councils, what is the expected percentage decrease in members from this group across the Movement?

Instead of creating a differentiated price for a community-based program at \$25, the National Board passed two resolutions to support councils' revenue and financial aid. They can be [viewed on the delegate website](#). These resolutions were an effort to avoid disruption in our ability to serve members as we do today.

EFFECT OF DUES INCREASE

Has GSUSA contemplated how many members will be lost if the membership dues are raised? And those members that are lost or cannot pay, will the amount cover those that are remaining and expenses be covered?

We have considered the impact of a potential membership decline as well as our ability to attract more girls and their families based on the investments we can make in the Movement. If membership dips initially, at the proposed dues price (\$85 and \$45) Girl Scouting will be stronger in the intermediate and long term, specifically because the increased revenue will fund initiatives that will improve the girl and volunteer experience.

We also considered how membership would trend if we did not increase membership dues. Given the many years of steady membership decline before the pandemic and weak gains in recent years, we cannot continue the status quo of operating with a deficit budget and an inability to invest in priorities to better serve girls, volunteers, and councils.

What is the expected cost to councils in the loss of revenues from cookie sales and fall products, due to the decline in membership from higher dues raised? (Compiled from similar questions.)

The goal of the strategic initiatives, including support from GSUSA to councils for members' financial aid, is to increase membership. If a council experiences a decline in membership, their calculated impact would be based on their specific data. As councils have experienced, a decline in membership does not universally correlate to a decline in cookie or fall product.

Does the increase in dues eliminate or at least decrease the annual fund donations that families make?

No. Families will still have the opportunity to donate and support their local Girl Scout council. GSUSA will work with councils to assess their fundraising efforts as well as launch a national fundraising strategy that supports, trains, and elevates the council fundraising efforts.

Can you please provide more details on how a projected 12% decline in membership will be overcome. Also, please provide details on how the board came to the projection of 12%. We currently have about 45 councils who are declining in membership. How will this help?

Are financial barriers the primary reason for our reduced membership over the past few years? If so, how will we address that as part of this dues increase?

It was mentioned that this increase will help remove financial barriers to membership? Is that the primary reason for decreased membership? If so, how will such a steep increase address this issue?

GSUSA modeled and discussed potential membership shifts when assessing potential dues actions. There was a range of potential membership decline (as well as membership increases) considered in this analysis. There is no assumption that membership will decline 12%.

There is no single reason why membership has declined over several decades, but given the lack of a dues change for eight years, we do not believe the cost of joining Girl Scouts has been a large contributing factor. We do know we experienced a sharp drop due to COVID-19, as girls and families refrained from social activities and access within schools was not allowed.

The research conducted this year helps us set the stage to better address the needs of today's girls and families.

In our July 2024 input sessions, delegates spoke with great compassion about not wanting the cost of Girl Scouts to leave anyone out. In response to this powerful advocacy, and recognizing this is a large increase, the National Board approved three resolutions to support girls and councils so that financial barriers do not prevent girls from joining and staying in Girl Scouts.

After listening and seeing that in the current year the membership growth is expected to end almost flat, what are the expectations for growth in the future year(s) with a dues increase? (Compiled from similar questions.)

This information was reviewed in our delegate webinars in July 2024. We considered the possibility that membership could decline from a change in membership dues in the near term as members adjust to this new price and investments from the additional membership dues revenue are being developed and scaled. In the long term, we expect the dues increase (as currently proposed) will lead to more members through investments that will improve the member experience and expand our reach.

Whose responsibility is it to provide financial assistance for dues if a girl cannot afford membership dues? The council or GSUSA? Will the membership dues [increase] affect girls and adults?

Councils manage membership dues financial assistance to members in their communities. GSUSA has a long-standing practice of providing funding to councils which offset some local program delivery costs. The National Board approved a resolution to support councils in executing the Movement strategy and assist in meeting the financial needs of members. With this potential dues increase, GSUSA will be able to provide financial support to councils based on a percentage of annual girl membership dues with:

- 32% of total annual girl membership dues when girl membership dues are \$85 or above,
- 30% of total annual girl membership dues when girl membership dues are between \$75 and \$84, or
- 25% of total annual girl membership dues when annual girl membership dues are between \$65 and \$74.

This support from GSUSA to councils will be for five years and may be used by councils to carry out our Movement strategy, support today's members, recruit new girls, and provide membership dues assistance to their members.

In addition, with the approval of annual girl membership dues of \$65 or more, the National Board will create a membership dues scholarship support fund of \$5M. Councils may apply for these funds if their incremental membership dues financial assistance need is more than the financial support provided by GSUSA.

These combined measures should meet the increased demand for membership dues financial assistance if the increases are approved as proposed.

Was the financial need amongst current membership calculated in the research modeling? Would the \$5M in scholarships be enough to cover our current membership estimated need? Especially interested in how this would impact our outreach/community-based troops.

How will this increase affect families? Going from say \$75 for a family of three that is with a leader involved. It would go to almost \$250 estimated and not counting local council fees. A family on the edge of being just out of the poverty level would see that as a huge increase. Families will have the biggest impact from these proposals.

The National Board has committed to providing financial assistance to councils to support membership dues financial assistance and resources to deliver our Movement strategy so that no family is unable to participate based on cost.

What were the GSUSA outcomes in the modeling for each of the price points? How hard is the membership going to be hit?

We did not assign specific membership assumption or correlation of trend at each price point. We modeled that if the membership dues had a moderate change, we would expect little to no impact to membership. For membership dues at or near the proposed dues, we assume a range of decline, from zero growth to a decline of up to as much as 12%.

With all the research that has been done, is there a projected membership change based on increased national dues? How do your projections take into account a potential decline in

membership? Could you provide what the drop in membership was after the past three increases in national dues? (Compiled from similar questions.)

We reviewed the historical correlation between membership dues change and membership counts; however, we did not rely heavily on this data point. Historically, there was not a correlation between prior membership dues changes and membership counts. However, given that the proposed dues change is anticipated to be larger than past increases and that we are in different economic times, we are not drawing the conclusion that the proposed dues increase would have zero effect on our membership.

To estimate the range of potential short-term membership decline, we considered girls and (non-lifetime member) adults differently, given that the proposed dues are different for each. We also differentiated between new and renewing members because a new member may have a different response to updated pricing compared to a renewing member who is familiar with the current state. We reviewed the national membership data both in total and by member segments. We reviewed trend data and other inputs to arrive at a range of potential year one membership impacts spanning from zero growth to a decline of up to as much as 12%.

Additionally, we reviewed the potential risk in membership for those who need financial aid. This included modeling the impacts to councils for existing member financial aid as well as aid at an elevated level.

Outside of membership and financial aid data, we also sought to understand how our current and future members might respond to the proposed membership dues change. Our modeling was influenced by delegate webinars, consultation with council CEOs and board chairs, market research, and competitor analysis to ensure that we considered a broad range of inputs and considerations.

We also considered how membership would trend without the proposed membership dues. Given the many years of steady membership decline before the pandemic and weak membership gains in the recent years, we expect that membership with the proposed dues will outpace membership without the proposed dues in the medium and long term as the initiatives funded by the increased dues take effect.

The National Board has committed to providing financial assistance to councils to support membership dues and resources to deliver our Movement strategy so that no family is unable to participate based on cost.

How will the increase impact extended year memberships?

The current extended year membership amount of \$35 is 1.4x times the \$25 current annual dues. To maintain the relative value of the extended year membership for a future dues amount, the *Blue Book* was adjusted to refer to the 1.4x factor vs. a specific dollar amount.

Therefore, beginning in April 2025, the extended year membership amount will be 1.4x times the cost of the annual dues at whatever level the National Council approves.

Would it be possible to only increase girl dues and not adult volunteer dues?

Yes. During the special session, delegates may vote to not increase adult annual membership dues and vote to increase girl annual membership dues.

However, as we shared on [page 19 of the Delegate Workbook](#), staying at our current \$25 membership dues will require dramatic cuts in services, including passing on technology costs to councils and delaying enhancements, including within systems used daily to serve girls and councils.

Explain how GSUSA came up with the extended year membership amount rate change in the September 2024 *Blue Book*. Is this within the administrative scope to change from a dollar amount to a percentage increase?

The current extended year membership amount of \$35 is 1.4x times the \$25 current annual dues. To maintain the relative value of the extended year membership for a future dues amount, the *Blue Book* was adjusted to refer to the 1.4x factor vs. a specific dollar amount. This change is administrative and was within the National Board's authority to administer.

Given that councils depend on cookie sales for a significant portion of their revenue, how does GSUSA plan to support councils if the fee increase leads to a reduction in membership and, consequently, cookie sales?

Has there been any analysis of the effect of the increase on the council level finances? EX. if we lose half the membership but dues triples, GSUSA will still have more money. BUT councils will be gutted, half as many girls selling cookies, attending events, attending camps, and triple the council scholarships needed to help the neediest girls in our area. (Compiled from similar questions.)

As a membership organization, the entire Movement is impacted when membership numbers change. GSUSA will be using the additional dues to invest in what councils need most to support girls and volunteers—importantly, providing equitable access to all. These investments are needed to attract and retain members.

Should there be a short-term decline in membership count—as members adjust to the new price and investments from the additional membership dues revenue are being developed and scaled—each council would be best positioned to determine how to apply the council revenue support that is being provided via the resolution ([view the full resolution text](#)) and make other adjustments to their operations.

When looking at the percentage of increase this proposal suggests, at \$85 it is a 240% increase. The subsidy to councils is 32%. Based on 2023 membership numbers, \$85 would bring \$102 million additional revenue for girl membership and \$15 million additional revenue from adult membership. At \$65, the increase is 160%, and 25% subsidy would go back to councils. The total increase to GSUSA would be a total of \$83 million. Although a huge number, it is certainly a more reasonable increase.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide a clarification. At \$85, incremental girl revenue would be \$28–32M for councils and \$32–38M for GSUSA. At \$45, incremental adult revenue would be \$7–10M for GSUSA.

How will councils benefit from increased membership fees? Will councils receive a higher percentage of the costs paid by youth members? Will adult member costs also increase?

Councils will benefit from increased membership fees in many ways, as everything we do will be in support of girls, volunteers, and our councils. Two specific ways are defined by the approved board resolutions: first, through council revenue support, and second, through having the opportunity to apply for additional aid through the membership scholarship support fund.

Increased membership dues for girl and adult members will support the current girls and volunteers we serve and provide us with the opportunity to reach the 24 million school-aged girls we do not yet serve—the girls in our communities who we know would benefit from being part of Girl Scouts. With increased funding through all revenue, including philanthropy and membership dues, we will have the opportunity to accelerate important initiatives that will improve the current Girl Scout experience, the Girl Scout brand, and our programming and engagement models. See the special session [Delegate Workbook](#) (pages 11–14) for more information on our strategic objectives.

Increased membership dues would support the initiatives that align with each of these strategic objectives.

To offer our girls an unparalleled experience and to grow our membership, we must invest in crucial initiatives now. As part of our strategy process, council leadership, national delegates, and GSUSA have been identifying what is needed from GSUSA in order to evolve. This includes simplified tools for volunteers, enhanced older girl programming, national marketing, new engagement models for girls and families, improved and better integrated technology, and so much more.

Can you please provide more details on how you will spend the additional funds? (Compiled from similar questions.)

Please refer to the [chart in the Delegate Workbook](#) to see examples of what a dues increase can make possible. These examples arose out of a Movement strategy process that relied on delegate and council input and feedback. As we have committed to our council leadership, we will determine together the priorities to invest in that will have the greatest impact on our current and future members.

The chart gives examples of what a dues increase can make possible, including expansion of the Girl Scout Experience Box, paid facilitator programs, improved technology user experience, alum engagement, older girl programming, cookie program innovation (including simplification), and increased national marketing, to name a few.

If we were to vote in favor of a [gradual] dues increase, how would GSUSA use this to increase the visibility of its phenomenal value in order to retain and hopefully boost membership, in particular in light of competing organizations, like Scouts BSA, which, at least at a local level, seem to be drawing girls away from the Girl Scouts?

At \$85 and above, Girl Scouting's future is incredibly bright. Together with councils, we will prioritize initiatives and execute them in ways that work for all, including national marketing campaigns, consolidated handbooks and badge books, increased GSUSA Gold Award Scholarship funds, improved volunteer tools, support, and more.

Regarding technology, we will be able to address the necessary enhancements, make our systems more user-friendly, and achieve connectivity to other systems. With these investments, we are confident our membership will grow as more girls and volunteers choose to join and fully engage with Girl Scouts.

Has GSUSA considered how a membership dues increase of over \$50 will impact volunteer retention and recruitment, given that volunteers are a critical part of troop leadership and program delivery?

A smaller increase to adult membership dues recognizes the value adult volunteers bring to the Movement while still providing an increase in dues to invest in the initiatives needed to execute our Movement strategy and better engage and retain members.

If the National Council votes to not increase membership fees, what service reductions are planned?
(Compiled from similar questions.)

Our Movement has reached the moment where we have choices and thoughtful business decisions to make. While a membership dues increase will allow for us to continue to serve our current community of families, it will also help us reach families who we know would benefit from all we offer but either don't know us, don't see how they fit in Girl Scouts, or don't yet feel welcome.

It will also allow us to ensure that our programming continues to be strong, relevant, and impactful for all our Girl Scouts. Without a dues increase, GSUSA would be forced to reduce the Girl Scout experience for many of our members and volunteers by either scaling back or eliminating services. Examples of services that have been reduced in the past include research, alum engagement, girl program development including an emphasis on camping and Highest Awards, national marketing efforts, technology enhancements, etc.

How will dues benefit councils? Will councils receive a similar percentage of dues from national?

What safeguards or financial strategies will GSUSA implement to ensure that councils do not suffer financially while GSUSA grows stronger from membership fee increases?

All members and Girl Scout councils benefit from our national membership organization. Our national membership dues pay for many initiatives, benefits, and services. These include the Girl Scout program and brand; national insurance for girls and volunteers; and administrative, technology, and program services all councils use rather than developing their own.

With this potential dues increase, GSUSA will be able to provide financial support to councils based on a percentage of annual girl membership dues with:

- 32% of total annual girl membership dues when girl membership dues are \$85 and above,
- 30% of total annual girl membership dues when girl membership dues are \$75 to \$84, or
- 25% of total annual girl membership dues when annual girl membership dues are \$65 to \$74.

This support from GSUSA to councils will be for five years and may be used by councils to carry out our Movement strategy, support today's members, recruit new girls, and provide membership dues assistance to their members.

In addition, with the approval of annual girl membership dues of \$65 or more, the National Board will create a membership dues scholarship support fund of \$5M.

Councils may apply for these funds if their incremental membership dues financial assistance need is more than the financial support provided by GSUSA.

Please provide detailed plans for the increased revenues that will be generated by a dues increase. Will these funds be used to increase GSUSA personnel headcount or for additional IT spending? Please provide specifics on how these funds will benefit local councils.

[This chart](#) illustrates investments that are possible based on the amount of annual membership dues.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

If the dues proposal passes at the level for a return of funds to the council, when will those funds be distributed back to the council? Will partial distributions be made, or will they be held until the exact amount is known by the end of fiscal year?

GSUSA will send the council revenue support funds to councils on a monthly basis, beginning with the extended year membership in April 2025, if the National Council votes to approve dues at \$65 or higher.

I want to confirm that the funds provided to councils (32% for \$85, for example) are to be used SOLELY for financial aid to girls and not to, say, invest in camps or programs.

Councils may use the financial assistance from GSUSA—as described in the National Board resolutions—as they see fit to carry out our Movement strategy, support today's members, recruit new girls, and provide membership dues assistance to their members.

Councils have indicated that it is sometimes easier to fundraise for member financial assistance than for other expense areas, so they can make decisions about how to best use these funds to serve their communities.

In addition, with the approval of annual girl membership dues of \$65 or more, the National Board will create a membership dues scholarship support fund of \$5M. Councils may apply for these funds if their incremental membership dues financial assistance need is more than the financial support provided by GSUSA.

If the NC fills the blank with \$85 for girls but then chooses a different phase-in, does that affect the Board resolutions/commitment as to the scholarship amount and the council revenue share support?

The board resolutions provide council support from dues revenue and a membership dues scholarship fund when girl dues are \$65 or more. If a change to the phase-in results in girl membership dues below \$65 in any year, membership dues would be invested in Movement strategy initiatives as prioritized with councils and there would be no financial support revenue share or scholarship fund from dues revenue in that year.

It is my understanding that the board resolutions that were passed to help with the cost absorption and guaranteeing a gradual increase only seem to be keyed to the \$85 dues level and up. Would the board consider a resolution supporting a gradual dues increase at a dues level of less than \$85 but above the current \$25 if that is the result of the NCS?

After consulting with delegates and councils, the board recommended implementing the phased-in approach at the \$85 level of annual dues for girls in order to give troops and families time to adjust to the higher price.

The board will continue to listen to the input of delegates ahead of and during debate at the special session.

One of the concerns that we've been hearing is the concern for families who are lower income, which I know varies by area, and then they have multiple girls that they're trying to register for. When you're looking at this amount that there's going to be this scholarship fund for, is there a family income that you're targeting? Will families below this amount or below that amount be the ones that are going to be eligible?

As the question notes, this varies by council. We have received requests from councils to explore establishing national criteria that could be integrated into the registration process for easier, consistent, and equitable approach, and we are exploring what may be possible.

A dues increase would result in the need for more financial aid. Is there a plan for councils to not have to pay 100%?

With this potential dues increase, GSUSA will be able to provide financial support to councils based on a percentage of annual girl membership dues with:

- 32% of total annual girl membership dues when girl membership dues are \$85 and above,
- 30% of total annual girl membership dues when girl membership dues are \$75 to \$84, or
- 25% of total annual girl membership dues when annual girl membership dues are \$65 to \$74.

There is great financial inequity amongst councils, and the recent donation from MacKenzie Scott, while generous, did not help fix this disparity. Has GSUSA considered providing more support to councils that have not been provided this type of donation?

To clarify, GSUSA was not involved in Ms. Scott's determination of which councils were included in the generous 2022 grant.

We are committed to supporting Girl Scout councils comprehensively. Through our council partnerships team, we continue to actively monitor the financial health of all councils and provide consultative advice in situations where improvement is necessary.

Furthermore, as we've stated before, we are committed to increasing all sources of revenue, including philanthropy. With strategic goals in place to raise more philanthropic revenue, GSUSA recently hired a new chief development officer (CDO) to lead Movement-wide fundraising initiatives. We will work with councils to assess their fundraising efforts as well as launch a national fundraising strategy that supports, trains, and elevates council fundraising efforts.

If I understand this correctly, councils that have girls with high financial needs will have to support the increased fees at any level under \$65? Won't that negatively impact council finances? Our council has 25% of girls receiving aid.

Though it may vary from year to year, nationally approximately 25–27% of girl members receive financial aid. Councils may use the financial assistance from GSUSA—as described in the National Board resolutions—as they see fit to carry out our Movement strategy, support today's members, recruit new girls, and provide membership dues assistance to their members.

Councils have indicated that it is sometimes easier to fundraise for member financial assistance than for other expense areas so they can make decisions about how to best use these funds to serve their communities.

In addition, with the approval of annual girl membership dues of \$65 or more, the National Board will create a membership dues scholarship support fund of \$5M. Councils may apply for these funds if their incremental membership dues financial assistance need is more than the financial support provided by GSUSA.

Can you clarify that the \$5M fund is a one-time fund, not per year. How long do you anticipate the fund to last?

Yes, the \$5M scholarship is a one-time fund and will be available until the funds have been exhausted. We are working through the mechanics on how the process will work and will provide additional specificity on the process and criteria shortly.

My council is in a large urban city. Girl Scouts here are unable to afford the \$25 membership, especially when there are multiple girls in the same household. What is our plan for inclusion and budgeting for scholarships?

What criteria are you considering granting council requests to the \$5M Membership Financial Aid fund? How is the process going to work? What assumptions or risk factors are you considering? How long will the funds be available?

Councils will be able to apply to the fund if their financial aid requests are greater than the council revenue support they've received from us. This fund is intended to bridge councils from their current financial aid to a future state where they can fundraise to cover the gap.

What is the source of the \$5 million scholarship?

If we have dues at \$65 or more, we can allocate funds from our fundraising efforts, our licensing program, and other sources of revenue to establish the \$5 million fund for scholarships.

***What happens after the five years of financial assistance? Will councils be responsible?**

Five years was selected by the board to represent the spirit of long-term commitment to enhancing council financial stability in connection with this change. At the five-year mark, we can assess the impact of this council support and consider what else may be necessary. The spirit behind these decisions will continue to be focused on Movement-level financial sustainability and member accessibility.

We've got these resolutions in place, [but] they're not in the *Blue Book*. What's their permanence? We have a new board coming in three years. Specifically [regarding] the scholarship fund, because that's the only one that's going to be extended beyond 2028.

The National Board is committed to carrying those resolutions through for the terms that were approved during the board meeting.

And, as parliamentarian Sarah Merkle described in the [Parliamentary Process 201 training](#) (passcode: ZBsMvEF3, beginning at 31:46), "Under Robert's Rules, which the board follows, in order to rescind a previous action or change it, it takes a two-thirds vote, and you have to give notice ahead of time, so that's a pretty high threshold—it's not often at NCS that we meet two thirds—or a majority of the entire membership of the board, not just the people who show up and vote. So there is a higher threshold there."

***Would GSUSA consider monthly payments for membership dues? This is similar to other items in today's age of managing personal finances.**

Will the system support someone who can pay a portion but not all of an increased membership dues? What if they want to split payment—half beginning of year and half later?

We are exploring these questions including the timeline these options would be available, if possible.

Can you clarify where exactly financial aid comes from to help girls with membership? What percent is from GSUSA, councils, grants, outside donors, etc.? Will a portion of the increased membership dues be given to councils since councils are also in deficits? With the increase in dues, this would affect the girls who are already on scholarship. Is there a plan for increasing/widening this scholarship?

Councils currently fundraise and utilize other revenues to meet the membership dues financial assistance needs of members in their communities. With this potential dues increase, GSUSA will be able to provide financial support to councils based on a percentage of annual girl membership dues with:

- 32% of total annual girl membership dues when girl membership dues are \$85 and above,
- 30% of total annual girl membership dues when girl membership dues are \$75 to \$84, or
- 25% of total annual girl membership dues when annual girl membership dues are \$65 to \$74.

This support from GSUSA to councils will be for five years and may be used by councils to carry out our Movement strategy, support today's members, recruit new girls, and provide membership dues assistance to their members.

In addition, with the approval of annual girl membership dues of \$65 or more, the National Board will create a membership dues scholarship support fund of \$5M.

Councils may apply for these funds if their incremental membership dues financial assistance need is more than the financial support provided by GSUSA.

I would like to have an explanation of why we need to have a money shell game of send money to GSUSA and then send a portion of the money back to councils. Just keep as it is today. Councils that choose to can add a fee and those who do not have the need don't.

GSUSA and councils work hard to ensure that members receive the value they deserve for their Girl Scout experience.

The National Board developed the proposal with an eye toward supporting the financial sustainability of our Movement—both GSUSA and councils. While we are proposing some of the funds go back to councils

to support financial aid for their members and strategy execution, a portion of the increase will remain at GSUSA to carry out current and future strategic priorities which benefit the Movement.

Also, it was important to offer consistent support to all councils and allow flexibility in how councils use the funds to best support their members.

I'm concerned with the lack of structure in guidance or limitations of how councils are to use the money they receive from the increased membership fees. Is there a plan to guide councils in most efficient use of these funds for their region? Is this amount going to be an ongoing kickback or a short term, i.e. 5 year program?

This support, from GSUSA to councils, will be for five years, and may be used by councils to carry out our Movement strategy, support today's members through any means they want to, recruit new girls, and provide membership dues assistance to their members.

It was important to offer consistent support to every single one of our councils and allow flexibility in how councils use the funds to best support their members. Five years was selected by board to represent the spirit of long-term commitment to enhancing the council financial stability.

So funds from the dues are being put in scholarship funds? I thought we set up a scholarship fund at the last NCS.

Yes, the National Council approved the creation of a Gold Award Scholarship at the 56th NCS in 2023. The \$5M scholarship fund is something different and new. Councils may apply for these funds if their incremental membership dues financial assistance need is more than the financial support provided by GSUSA.

The \$5M scholarship is a one-time fund and will available until the funds have been exhausted. We are working through the mechanics on how the process will work and will provide additional specificity on the process and criteria shortly.

GSUSA PERSONNEL, TECHNOLOGY, AND FINANCE & OPERATIONS

With a phased dues increase, does this continue to leave GSUSA in a budget deficit during and through the proposed council incentive phase?

No. At a girl member dues price point of \$85 or more, even with the phased implementation we do not expect to have to operate with deficit budgets to maintain our service offerings.

Which vendor is managing our code base?

We utilize software as a service (SaaS) in the cloud leveraging organizations such as SAP and Salesforce. We utilize nearshore and offshore contracted resources that support our GSUSA-specific configurations as well as nearshore and offshore contractors for our system testing and expanded system support during peak cookie and membership season. GSUSA directly owns our methodology and manages our codebase, leveraging GSUSA technical experts who oversee the prioritization, sprint planning, technical design, SaaS configuration, technical development, and quality assurance and system testing.

I have some follow-up questions on page 19. It notes that we are also delivering expanded cybersecurity technology to directly support our council facing technology. What is the cybersecurity technology that's being deployed?

We use a multilayered approach to ensure that we manage our cybersecurity risk in line with our strategic objectives and financial resources. Our cybersecurity strategy integrates various tools and services supporting our council-facing technology. These include Okta and Gigya for access control and management, Mandiant for endpoint detection, and Google Chronicle for managed detection and response. These tools are either currently in place or being deployed in a phase approach based on budget. In addition, we utilize contracted security experts for security services and, when required, third-party cybersecurity consultants to triage, investigate, and perform forensics.

Can I request for much more detail regarding the details on “technology stabilization?” Especially how the end user feedback will be solicited and incorporated. The Functionality and User Experience (UX) does not meet the needs of the volunteers I have spoken with. I have heard that at some membership rallies, the conversion rate of those who signed up to actually completing membership was only 16%, because the families could not complete the registration process online. That is a horrible abandonment rate.

We’re sorry to hear about the experience at those events. We have heard that the system does not support membership rallies, as it was built to support new members registering through the website, which includes gathering as much information as possible up front in the process. This information helps to support further follow-up and gives the user opportunities to explore participation options.

In FY25, we will be addressing a better way to process memberships and registrations at recruitment events. This will include new member workflow for improvements like reducing many of the initial required fields. Volunteer and council feedback will guide process changes.

What steps are GSUSA taking to ensuring the current technology platforms, the compatibility issues, the connectivity issues, lack of reliability and user un-friendliness are not repeated or continued?
(Compiled from similar questions.)

Over the last three years, we have invested in secure and stable core offerings that provide high volume transactional processing power and scalability for our councils, volunteers, and girls. Now that the

backend is stabilized, we can focus on the front-end features and functionalities. For example, we know that our troop volunteers utilize multiple applications to support managing their troops and they utilize multiple interfaces to do so. We are working to introduce a modular front end for the council-facing technology stack and to create a streamlined user interface.

We have been collecting feedback from our volunteers on the user experience challenges while working on the backend and have been making updates over the last three years. We will continue to utilize the voice of our volunteers to personalize their future tech experiences. We recently launched a Volunteer Advisory Committee at GSUSA which includes 18 volunteers. Their feedback will help guide the more substantive updates that a membership dues increase would allow.

The Volunteer Advisory Committee that you've assembled for technology—does that include girls? ... We have pretty savvy girls out there who are capable of doing very remarkable things, as we've learned, and incorporating their knowledge into this volunteer advisory committee may be a good idea.

The Volunteer Advisory Committee is comprised of 18 volunteers from across the Movement, and their scope includes all aspects of volunteering, including technology. We have a Girl Scout Advisory Board as well, which has been in place for four years. That board is made up of 20 girl members from across the Movement who guide and support many initiatives across GSUSA including marketing, technology, merchandise, program, convention, and the cookie program. We are grateful to all of these incredible individuals.

Can you provide a more detailed technology spend breakdown for those of us who do have the capability to digest that level of detail?

Here is a more detailed list on how the \$50M in technology spending is allocated:

- \$10M is allocated for depreciation.
- \$40M in technology spend is allocated to our core offerings that specifically support council activities, including VS2.0, Digital Cookie, Volunteer Toolkit, Looker, Snowflake cloud platform, and security for this core tech. More than \$35M of this spend is directly council-facing:
 - \$11M is budgeted to provide overall support and small enhancements for Digital Cookie and including hyper-care support throughout the months of peak cookie season, starting at the end of November. It also covers annual software licensing cost, software maintenance and/or subscriptions, hosting services, and costs for developers and technical expertise to deliver sprint planning, configurations, small enhancements, and software upgrades.
 - \$10M is budgeted to support our critical membership (girlscouts.org); registration (VS2); events (gsEvents) and volunteer systems (VTK), including regular enhancements and upgrades; and to support peak membership windows, including spring renewal and back-to-troop timeframes. It specifically covers annual software licensing cost, software maintenance and/or

subscriptions, hosting services, and costs for developers and technical expertise to deliver sprint planning, configurations, small enhancements, and software upgrades.

- \$6M is budgeted to support cybersecurity, networks, and storage, including our multilayered approach to secure our perimeter and ensure that we manage our GSUSA and council cybersecurity risks in line with our strategic objectives and resources.
- \$5.5M is budgeted for girlscoutshop.com, GSUSA offices, data rooms, and facilities and business technology and covers all software licensing cost, software maintenance and/or subscriptions, hosting services, and costs for developers and technical expertise to deliver sprint planning, configurations, small enhancements, and software upgrades.
- \$4.5M is budgeted for data, analytics, research, and data privacy. This includes software licensing costs, software maintenance and/or subscriptions, hosting services, costs for developers, training and technical expertise to support the data warehouse, Looker, the Truyo data privacy platform, and the Qualtrics research platform.
- \$3M is budgeted for our council-facing technology services and data layer (application programming interface) that will allow us to modernize and modularize our user experience over the next several years and includes the support of our “better together” framework APIs that we are building for our councils to facilitate secure integrations with key operational vendors.

The amount in the annual budget for professional services/consulting took a huge leap in 2018. We're talking 6 million in 2017 to 16 million in 2018—and it's stayed high since. Can you give us a breakdown of that line item? Is any of that money being spent on technology consulting?

- Technology-related expenditures are not reflected on this line.
- FY18 and FY19: Increased professional services expenditures for marketplace positioning work to defend and differentiate Girl Scouts from competitors in the market, particularly Boy Scouts of America (now Scouting America).
- FY20: Marketplace positioning spend declined. Investments addressed recruitment campaigns, the 2020 convention/55th NCS, and an Edith Macy Center support services staffing change.
- FY21: Spending reduced based on completing the marketplace positioning work and suspended Edith Macy Center operations during COVID-19.
- FY22: Spending Edith Macy Center expenses increased based on normal operations and external property strategy and GSUSA reorganization priorities.
- FY23: Spending increased 2023 convention/56th NCS and work with our marketing agency of record.

Did the council consider hiring experienced IT staff rather than using contractors? Or maybe you already have an IT staff?

We can't answer for councils but can answer for GSUSA. GSUSA has experienced IT staff and outsources technical capabilities where we don't or shouldn't.

Thank you for sharing information about the total payroll budget. Can you share a detailed org structure for GSUSA that outlines each department with head counts as they currently stand?

Our structure and roles reflect and are aligned with the staffing required to deliver on our Movement strategy so that we can offer the best experience for girls, volunteers, and families. As with most organizations, we do not share our organizational chart.

Looking at your headcount, how do you benchmark your headcount compared to other nonprofits that have similar operating models, say Red Cross? And as you look at the use of these funds going forward, is it mostly technology spend or personnel costs? How do you benchmark your headcount that have similar operating models?

Our structure and roles reflect and are aligned with the staffing required to deliver on our Movement strategy so that we can offer the best experience for girls, volunteers, and families.

What square footage does GSUSA need for headquarters personnel?

In 2016, GSUSA sold four of the nine floors we owned at 420 5th Avenue, significantly reducing our office footprint. We continue to evaluate our property strategy and total asset holdings to make sure that the space we use allows us to best deliver on our mission.

For more information about GSUSA’s headquarters, please refer to the [State of the Movement Q&A](#).

What has been done to cut costs? Have wages been frozen? If so, when? Have travel costs been reduced?

Please refer to page 20 of the [State of the Movement Q&A document](#) for details on cost reductions and personnel spending. Travel and related costs, as documented in our audited financial statements, are down considerably from five years ago.

| | | | | |
|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|
| FY2019 | FY2020 | FY2021 | FY2022 | FY2023 |
| \$3.7M | \$2.3M | \$0.3M | \$1.0M | \$1.7M |

FY2024 results are expected to be roughly at the same level as FY2023.

Has the option to move the national headquarters out of the most expensive city in the country ever been entertained as a method for reducing costs?

Yes, this has been looked at many times in the past. And we are reviewing again, as part of our strategy work.

GSUSA owns its office floors, so we don't pay any lease or rent. One consideration, if we were ever to move, would be the need to pay for rent or lease someplace else, in addition to significant one-time relocation costs.

Additional information about the New York headquarters (420 5th Avenue) can be found on page 8 of the [State of the Movement Q&A](#).

Have we considered eliminating staff positions, especially high-paying ones—110 CEOs—to eliminate excessive spending? Or eliminating/selling excess land like camps and other high-cost items, to look for efficiencies before we ask girls to fund these excesses?

We can speak to staffing decisions on behalf of GSUSA, though not on behalf of councils.

As we shared previously, at the end of fiscal year 2022, GSUSA underwent a reorganization, which followed a previous restructuring two years before. In both cases, GSUSA made hard decisions to let go of certain lines of work and say goodbye to valued colleagues.

Since those two staff reductions, we have held our personnel spending flat while facing capacity challenges and requests for new services. We can't cut much more without significantly compromising our ability to deliver for our councils and our members.

Decisions about camps and other property are made by each council.

I'm curious to have a better breakdown of the technology/software budget included in the proposal. If we are spending \$40M, but only 5% of that is for upgrades/enhancements, that indicates a significant amount of technical debt. what is GSUSA's plan to reduce that technical debt?

We have built a solid foundation over the last three years to reduce our technical debt, including technology that can scale effectively during our peak cookie and membership seasons. We have addressed our technical debt in this process and have upgraded our application software appropriately. The \$40M is spent specifically on keeping our council-supporting technology with the latest upgrades, supporting our capacity required during our peak seasons and delivering small enhancements during our off-peak season.

Just like any technology you may utilize, there needs to be continuous investment to make sure we do not fall behind the new technological advances offered by our software vendors as well as emerging security threats. Our ability to apply upgrades for enhanced functionality and new security protocols allows us to

avoid accumulating technical debt. We are also delivering expanded cyber security technology to directly support our council-facing technology. The \$40M covers all this support and prioritizes small enhancements and supports our continued focus on maintaining a healthy development process and codebase to manage our technical debt.

What does GSUSA believe is an adequate amount of operating reserves? By my calculations, you have close to 20 months of operating reserves.

- Broadly speaking, for councils, we would recommend 9–12 months of reserves as a general guideline, respecting that individual council’s operating conditions could drive variations on either end of that range. GSUSA looks at this question in a similar manner. Our operating conditions reflect a broader Movement-level responsibility that tends to tug us toward a higher level of risk reserves. As a result, we generally tend to operate at the top end of this range:
- Our calculation of liquidity excludes non-liquid assets (e.g., property, inventory) as well as the majority of our net assets with restrictions, primarily our donor-designated endowment. We include a footnote on liquidity in our financials.
- Using this calculation, we had approximately 14–15 months of reserves at the end of 2019 and approximately 13–14 months of reserves at the end of 2023.
- Part of our fiduciary responsibility is to help grow reserves to help us get through unexpected hardships like a global pandemic, and to rebuild them when we use them.
- A component of GSUSA’s specific fiduciary responsibilities is to manage our reserves in a manner that contemplates the risks of our federated Movement.
- GSUSA needs to have access to working capital, and in a similar way, we want to have adequate on-hand reserves to enable funding of future investments. But it’s also important to consider that from a ‘risk reserves’ perspective, GSUSA cannot look solely at our operating costs.
- For example, GSUSA can and does consider the scale of the cookie program (on behalf of the Movement) when considering its risk reserve policy. This example, and others, factor into the level of reserves we seek to maintain.

You include a 4% income from endowment. Why not 5%? Given that the 6040 portfolio for the past 15 years has returned 8%, and then secondly, when I look at your portfolio, I’m a little concerned that 44% of your assets are in what I would deem to be illiquid investments. Some clarity and transparency on the investment returns would be helpful.

Our spend rate is specifically designed to be at a level that is below our investment portfolio’s long-term rate of return to ensure that we enable reinvestment of a portion of our gains to grow the value of the portfolio. As noted in our financial statements, specifically under our notes on ‘investments,’ our holdings in hedge funds and real estate funds have less in the way of immediate liquidity; however, these represent small portions (<20% in aggregate) of our total portfolio.

Looking at the senior management team that's on the website, I noticed that most of the new hires are MBAs. Only one of the senior management teams for GSUSA has a master's in education. We have all these businesspeople but not as many people that are involved in education. How do each of the senior management teams fit together? Providing an organizational chart will be great to know how everything fits together.

We are confident in our [executive team](#)'s skills, experience, and ability to lead Girl Scouts of the USA and deliver on our mission. Their educational backgrounds include degrees in business as well as political science, computer science, history, and law, and their varied work experiences are in both for-profit and not-for-profit organizations.

What was the cost for rebranding in 2023? What was the cost of creation of the new girl uniforms also in 2023?

GSUSA spent \$150,000 on an optimization of brand guidelines in FY2023. We also regularly refresh our products to be relevant. In FY2023, we spent \$30,000 on development and marketing of new girl uniforms, including design, photography, and council and e-commerce marketing.

MEMBERSHIP CONCEPTS

Will be a way within the system to make a partial payment for membership dues and request financial aid for the remainder?

A parent asked about an installment payment option. I don't think it's feasible, but I promised to ask.

Will the system be set up to allow members to make payments on their dues?

We hear you; thank you for your feedback. Our management team is exploring the business and technological implications of these suggestions.

Could GSUSA create a more pricing options, such as lower dues for leaders or discounts or maximums for families? (Compiled from similar questions.)

Delegate input on this question led to the National Board recommending a lower price for adult members, indicated in Proposal 2. Delegates asked us to consider a lower price that recognizes the value adult volunteers bring to our Movement and the cost to families of multiple memberships.

We will continue to explore other membership dues options such as family plans, differentiated pricing for volunteers/adults, differentiated pricing by Girl Scout age, and multi-year memberships as part of our three-year strategy. Establishing our new annual dues at this special NCS will provide the baseline to determine an appropriate family or bundled membership option.

Could GSUSA explore offering tiered membership options that allow for varying levels of participation at different price points, making it more affordable for volunteers and members with financial limitations?

Councils initiate their local membership financial aid scholarship programs that best address their members' needs.

MEMBERSHIP DUES PROPOSAL—GENERAL

What things will USAGSO be a part of, with this increase? What benefit are our girls going to get?

We are committed to making sure that the things we can do can be available to all, and that includes USAGSO.

With the phase-in process, is the 32% based on the \$68 and so on, or [is] the 32% based on the \$85?

The council revenue support percentage would apply to the actual revenue collected. So, if \$85 were approved as the girl member dues amount, in FY2026, that rate would be discounted by 20% to \$68.

Therefore, for each girl member, councils would receive:

- In FY 2026: 25% of \$68 or \$17 (with \$68 reflecting a 20% discount)
- In FY 2027: 30% of \$77 or \$23 (with \$77 reflecting a 10% discount)
- In FY 2028: 32% of \$85 or \$27 (with no discount)

Does the proposed bundle of what could be possible at each increase amount include consideration of the reduction of money that could go to the proposed council incentive?

The proposed use of any membership dues increase is laid out in the Delegate Workbook. The infographic shows the investments that could be possible at each level of increase. Final decisions on the initiatives and investments will be made in partnership with local councils.

This takes into account the funds remaining after deducting the council financial assistance.

We've been given some ideas of what the different levels, such as \$45, \$65, \$85, and \$100 could provide. I'm wondering if these are just ideas, or guaranteed outcomes, or if they're mix and match?

The initiatives illustrated in [this chart](#) reflect examples of what could be possible with a dues increase. These initiatives arose from our Movement strategy process that incorporated delegate and council input

and feedback. As we have committed to our council leadership, we will determine together the priorities to invest in which will support the most impactful outcomes for current and future members.

The members I've spoken to would like to know what form of governance will be provided for the additional funds. Will the National Council delegates be given the opportunity to approve the usage of funds (generally), or will it be at the discretion of the National Board?

No. Our council and national governance holds the respective board of directors accountable for approving budgets and measuring outcomes. Throughout spring and summer 2024, delegate feedback played a critical role shaping our Movement strategy priorities. As we have committed, we will determine in partnership with councils the priorities to invest in that will have the greatest impact on our current and future members. This includes which initiatives are prioritized/funded as well as the level of investment, timing, etc.

I think it's going to be really important that we have at least some more some detail to provide to parents when we're trying to tell them about the dues increase, whatever it is, because the confidence level in our technology, unfortunately, is pretty low, and so just saying that we're going to be investing more in technology without being able to give some details is going to make it really hard for people to want to agree to spend the money.

An increase in dues will provide the funding needed to support our volunteers, girls and their families – examples of which are provided in [this chart](#).

The foundation for nearly all that we do is technology. We must provide technology that makes the Girl Scout experience easier for families, volunteers, and our councils. We acknowledge that we have not always met the mark, and there is so much more to do.

Currently, the cost to run systems, maintain them, and keep them updated has increased. Additional funding will make drastic improvements possible including:

- Improving our digital volunteer support systems, including Volunteer Toolkit and gsLearn
- Enhancing Digital Cookie technology, including single log-on and money and rewards management
- Offering enhanced sign-up, training, and curriculum experience flexible for each delivery model, while improving the troop volunteer experience
- Implementing Movement-wide philanthropy platform that allows for visibility in council and GSUSA fundraising and shared donors

With 25% of our membership on assistance, how do we continue to support them beyond the two years of GSUSA help? Continued cookie increases cannot save us as a business.

To clarify, in its resolution to support councils by sharing a portion of dues back to them, the National Board committed to five years of support, not two.

Five years was selected by the board to represent the spirit of long-term commitment to enhancing council financial stability in connection with this change.

Why are we spending on social media influencers when in our experience, in our council, that doesn't work?

Thank you for sharing your experience. In many markets with older girls, volunteers, and parents, social media is an effective tool. As we have committed to our council leadership, we will determine together the priorities to invest in that will have the greatest impact on our current and future members.

What is the amount being presented for the dues increase?

At the special session, the National Board will recommend that \$85 fill the blank for annual girl membership dues and that \$45 fill the blank for annual adult membership dues, effective for Membership Year 2026.

How do our membership dues compare with other youth-serving organizations, such as Scouting USA?

A comparison with other similar organizations showed that most peer organizations raised their national dues since 2019, and some considerably: Scouting America (formerly BSA) to \$85, American Heritage Girls to \$60, and Frontier Girls to \$35.

Our current dues do not reflect the value that Girl Scouting offers. A membership dues increase would bring the cost of Girl Scout membership more in line with similar organizations, reflect our value, support our Movement's transformational initiatives, and enable future growth.

With the ability to raise membership dues added to the *Blue Book* at the past NCS, I am curious why the board waited so long to raise dues. Increases every 3 years would have put us in a better financial position—where we could have avoided this huge increase ask. Is there a reason why the board hadn't taken action earlier?

Girl Scouts last raised membership dues in 2017. A few years later, we found ourselves in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we knew that was not the right time for a further increase. Together, we have developed a Movement strategy, and we are working with councils to prioritize those initiatives that will have the greatest impact for the girls, families and volunteers today and in the future. It was important for us to develop our strategy so that we could determine the level of resources we would need AND get your feedback on how we would use those resources.

The National Board had the opportunity to increase dues (25%) last triennium, in addition they could have put forth this proposal last summer in Orlando. What changed, causing a special session? This

seems to be a topic that could have been better addressed, debated, and negotiated last summer at the in-person NCS.

We have undertaken significant research and prioritization to develop our Movement strategy since we last came together in 2023 at the 56th National Council Session in Florida.

As our strategy work progressed and matured, what came squarely into focus was the breadth and depth of investment required to transform the Movement, across so many dimensions and in so many ways. This level of understanding puts a fresh urgency on the question of funding, and puts context around the inadequacy of small, incremental changes. We need to be bold—now—to improve our experience for existing members and to attract new members to join our Movement and benefit from our program.

Why is this proposal being addressed now, instead of during NCS 2026? (Compiled from similar questions.)

We have engaged with delegates on exciting opportunities to better serve our current members and future Girl Scouts through the development of our Movement strategy. We cannot deliver these benefits with the resources that are currently available. A Girl Scout is only five years old—or 15 years old—once. For every year we delay in meeting the needs of girls and their families, a new group of girls misses the life-changing Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Our members, councils, and volunteers need notice to prepare for a membership dues change, and an increase does not become effective immediately. Members begin joining in April for the coming membership year. If we were to wait to act until the National Council Session in July 2026, the new rate of membership dues would not be effective until April 2027. This delay would mean we would limit our ability to serve current and future members for an additional two years.

We must act now to plan for 2026 renewals, beginning in April 2025.

What is the projected membership at the end of 2024? Include girls and adult lifetime members.

We are projecting to finish the membership year 2024, which finishes on September 30, 2024, at 1.8M members, which includes 135,000 lifetime members.

What is the range of dollar amounts in scope for the proposals? Does the range begin below the current \$25? Is there an upper limit?

With the “fill in the blank” process, there is no upper limit to the scope of suggestions. A suggestion to lower the dues to below the current level of \$25 would be out of scope.

Suppose delegates want a phased-in approach different from the resolution?

Delegates would need to approve an amendment to the proposal to add a proviso setting out the phasing in of an increase. We recommend that delegates **share specific ideas with the parliamentary during their office hours or submit an amendment in advance by October 3 via the delegate website** for feedback on whether the suggestion would be likely to be deemed in scope. (Updated on October 9 to reflect passed deadlines.)

If any of the proposals do not pass, will GSUSA implement the minimum allowed without a national council vote? \$31.25? If we approve an increase of any amount, does the board intend to raise the dues by the allowed 25% in the following triennium?

The National Board has not discussed future actions, because they would necessarily be informed by the debate by the National Council.

***Is a change in lifetime membership dues part of this proposal?**

No. The proposal does not include a change to lifetime membership pricing.

***Will GSUSA offer an incentive to become a lifetime member as we renew from MY2025 to MY2026? Perhaps reducing the required volunteer years from 10 to 5? (Compiled from similar questions.)**

We will be considering changes or incentives to lifetime membership holistically after the annual dues amount for adults has been determined through this process.

When you say "Membership Year," is that the year that it begins or ends? So is Membership Year 2026, 2025–2026 or 2026–2027?

Membership Year 2026 runs from October 1, 2025, to September 30, 2026.

Membership Year 2026 renewal begins on April 1, 2025, which is when any new member dues go into effect.

If the National Board can increase the dues by 25%, what are their time restrictions? If we vote to only increase by a smaller amount, what would stop them from increasing the next year to achieve their proposed amount.

National Council approval is needed whenever a planned dues increase will result in dues increasing more than a total of 25% in any one triennium. The National Board could not increase dues to a level of more than \$31.25 until the 2026–29 triennium. This is why the National Board called a special session so that delegates could debate and reach a decision on the increase needed to deliver our Movement strategy.

Will GSUSA provide the actual approved board resolutions in their entirety to the delegation? This would provide added transparency.

Yes, we are happy to share them. [They are posted here.](#)

If the \$85 membership fee is passed, would new members be expected to pay that and renewing members would phase in, or would everyone phase in?

If approved, the phased-in price would apply to new and renewing members equally.

I would like to know if an increase in dues will impact the cost of badges, insignia, badge requirements, etc. Would it also increase, decrease, or stay the same?

The cost of badges, uniforms, and other merchandise are routinely reviewed and adjusted to keep up with rising costs to produce these products. We endeavor to provide high-quality products at a good value.

PROGRAM

How will you ensure that the curriculum, technology, and program boxes are what the membership and volunteers want and are not considered a failure and waste of resources like other curriculum and technology GSUSA has invested in and disseminated over the last decade?

The Movement strategy was developed by our Membership Strategy Committee (which includes volunteers) in close consultation with delegates and council leaders over many months in 2023 and 2024. As we have committed to our council leadership, together we will determine investment priorities that will have the greatest impact on our current and future members.

In addition, GSUSA recently launched a Volunteer Advisory Committee at GSUSA which includes 18 volunteers. Their feedback will help guide the more substantive updates that a membership dues increase would allow.

GSUSA is also applying a variety of mechanisms to rigorously guide and evaluate business decisions. Bonnie cited the Girl Scout Experience Box as one example of this, in the [State of the Movement briefing video](#) (passcode RVaB%w^L), around 7:04. For that initiative, we are measuring both membership growth and volunteer satisfaction to ensure we are getting the return on the resources needed to deliver the programs, and early results are very strong.

If the \$85 is voted on, will we be given a timeline for the promises given? For example, older girl programming. We've been told in the past that this programming would be available, yet we are losing older girls due to the lack of interest at their age. When would we see these programming options? 2026 membership year? More into the future?

Council CEOs will have a seat at the table as we discuss how and when we prioritize the different strategic initiatives that you heard about in the state of the Movement.

Strategic initiatives require innovation, and they must each be chosen because of the potential impact on the Movement. So, everything we do in these efforts and all our work together is intended to improve the Girl Scout experience for members across the country.

How do professional partnerships, such as one with the MLB, benefit councils with no major league baseball team?

Partnerships with well-known brands/organizations like Major League Baseball elevate the awareness of Girl Scouts to broad new audiences. And, while in-person PLAY BALL events hosted by both major and minor league teams were an added benefit of the partnership, the activity and supplies that were provided by MLB were available to any eligible troop and not dependent on proximity to or affiliation with a local team.

We have several areas in my service unit that do not have access to Wi Fi or internet. So how, with all of the technology that's being given, is that going to help those leaders and adults and girls?

What are we doing about those that are not able to access internet?

In addition to the technology improvements, a membership dues increase would also allow for the development of much-requested print materials for troops, including updated handbooks and badge books to ensure an equitable experience for all Girl Scouts and volunteers. Resources like Volunteer Toolkit, gsLearn, and other digital platforms are intended to enhance the Girl Scout experience, but internet access is not required to enjoy a fulfilling Girl Scout experience.

The volunteers I have spoken with have expressed concerns with how much they have to pay for things like access to badge requirements, on top of paying for membership. While they appreciate the focus on first year volunteers, they have expressed concern that the Daisy boxes are not available for established troops—not even for purchase. Is it possible to even having access to the meeting plans and supplies list that new troops? This would be incredibly helpful. Especially if the Daisy kits (and Brownie kits if they come to fruition) are refillable/reusable.

Badge and Journey requirements, meeting plans, and supply lists are free to all volunteers within the Volunteer Toolkit. (Note: complete Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador content was added to the VTK in July 2024). While materials in VTK have improved, the overall user experience could be more user-friendly. A dues increase would allow these improvements to be made.

For 2025 MY, 110 councils choose to use the Girl Scout Experience Box for first-year Daisy troops. A dues increase would fund expanding to include first year Brownie boxes. All volunteers can access the content in the Daisy Girl Scout Experience Box in the Volunteer Toolkit. Volunteers of other program levels (including multi-level) can also use the new troop year plans as ready-to-use collection of badges and experiences curated for each year of Girl Scouting. Those plans are available for free in the Volunteer Toolkit, as well as on [website's troop year planner](#).

Will GSUSA be offering more activities/events for free/reduced cost?

Events and programs are typically created and led by individual councils in order to best meet the needs of their members. However, as part of our Movement strategy, GSUSA is working with councils to prioritize initiatives that would be made possible by a dues increase. These initiatives are outlined in the Delegate Workbook and include improvements to both print and digital materials such as Volunteer Toolkit, handbooks, and badge materials, as well as a focus on modern and relevant programs for middle and high school girls.

If membership dues are increased, will all events put on by [councils] be free to members?

Councils will continue to determine fees for their own events.

Experience Boxes are a wonderful resource for new younger girl leaders. How does this help make Girl Scouts girl-led? How will this benefit Older Girl Troops?

A girl-led experience comes to life differently for Girl Scouts at each program level. The Girl Scout Experience Box for Daisies includes scripts and instructions designed to help Girl Scouts lead throughout each Daisy meeting. There are many activities that allow Daisies to take the lead in age-appropriate ways like sharing their opinions and values during conversations with their leaders and peers.

Plus, activities like setting up snacks and supplies, making a list of friendship values, and paying each other kind compliments help Daisies develop their own unique voice and early leadership skills. Girl Scouts also make group decisions on what they want to do as a team beyond their troop meetings including field trips, community service projects, and how they will run their Girl Scout Cookie business and use the funds. Any additional Experience Boxes for other ages will be designed to support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, including the three processes of girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning, appropriately for the intended program level.

It was also mentioned that a dues increase would address programming shortfalls. There is a consistent lack in relevant older girl programming. How will this be addressed?

An important body of work will be to reimagine, innovate, and expand the experience we offer to our middle- and high-school-aged Girl Scouts. This new approach will be informed by member and non-member research and collaboration, addressing retention of current members, as well as providing a

robust on-ramp for new older girls. Our goal will be to create an exciting, meaningful, and relevant experience for middle- and high-school Girl Scouts.

Parents are asking where does the cookie money go? Will there be a comprehensive plan explaining what goes to GSUSA vs. council?

All sales proceeds from the Girl Scout Cookie Program go directly to the councils, service units, and troops associated with the girls making the sales. Money from individual troop sales does not go to GSUSA.

SPECIAL 57TH NCS LOGISTICS AND PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

We know that the board cannot raise dues more than 25% per triennium. And then we've learned through the parliamentary webinars that we can put provisos in there for phase in periods. So let's say the fill in the blank was for \$100, and our phase in plan was for six years. With the limit of 25%, does that mean that the dues can't be raised until year six, or can dues get re-raised in the middle of that phase in period?

The *Blue Book* provides that the Board can raise dues up to 25% in a triennium and a proviso can't affect that. However, if there is a proviso for a phase-in period, the Board will be limited such that no increase can be greater than 25% of wherever dues start in a new triennium.

What is GSUSA's contingency plan if councils are affected/still affected by Helene and other hurricanes/bad weather in the coming weeks? They should not have to worry about logging in or finding electricity to make sure that their voices are heard.

Our thoughts are with everyone affected by Hurricanes Helene and Milton. We continue to speak with our councils in affected areas to understand the impact on their members and delegates.

Will there be girl presiding officers at the Special 57th NCS?

There is significant preparation required for presiding officers—both girls and adults. Given this, for our special session, we have chosen presiding officers from those who have previously chaired sessions of the National Council. Many of our girl member presiding officers have graduated high school and are now adult members. The preparation time also overlaps with the start of the school year and for these reasons girls will not preside at the special session. We are very grateful for the active participation of girl members on both the Movement Governance Advisory Team (MGAT) and NCS Advisory Team (NCSAT). These girl voices and influence have been very impactful in planning for the special session and will continue to shape the 58th NCS in 2026.

What is the predicted cost of producing the Special 57th National Council Session? Will this cost be covered by GSUSA or shared by councils? Funded by GSUSA vs. funded by councils? (In other words, membership dues go directly to GSUSA, so could the extra virtual meeting impact council finances?)

GSUSA is absorbing the costs of hosting the special session, and no charges will be passed on to councils or delegates. We are using our resources wisely to keep the cost of hosting this meeting as low as possible, for example, by temporarily converting meeting space at our headquarters to be used as a make-shift studio for the session and reassigning staff to work on putting the meeting together.

Keeping costs low is a priority for GSUSA, so you can expect that the special session won't have some of the features that you may remember from the virtual 55th National Council Session held in 2020.

We are still finalizing some of the details for delivery of the meeting, so final costs may vary, but we anticipate that the special session will cost GSUSA around \$150,000, in addition to staff time to prepare for and deliver the session.

This 'Fill in the Blank' process sounds very confusing—could it cause the special session to last even longer? (Compiled from similar questions.)

The 'fill in the blank' parliamentary procedure is recognized as being both more efficient and more conducive to discussion of this type of motion than the traditional amendment approach. The process is described in more detail in the Delegate Workbook and on the delegate website.

Suppose the delegates at the special session want to create a phased-in approach to the increase (that differs from the discount for years 1 and 2 supported by a board resolution). For instance, suppose that year 1 would be set at \$45, year 2 at \$65 and year 3 at \$85. The fill-in-the-blank strategy for the proposal does not obviously lend itself to this option. Can you recommend how this might be accomplished? If the National Council decided on less than \$85, would we still have phased in?

The National Board's resolution on a phased increase applies only if girl annual membership dues are approved at \$85 or above. A delegate seeking a different phased increase at \$85 or above would need to move to amend the proposal by adding a proviso proposing an alternate phased increase. If the National Council fills the blank with a number less than \$85, a delegate seeking a phased increase would similarly need to move to amend the proposal by adding a proviso to that effect.

We recommend that you share your specific ideas with the parliamentarian ~~during her office hours or submit an amendment in advance~~ via the delegate website for feedback on how the parliamentarian intends to advise the presiding officer as to whether the amendment is within the scope of notice given for the Special 57th NCS. (Updated on October 9 to reflect passed deadlines.)

Can the percentage to councils change with amendments on October 19th or would that be out of scope?

Amendments related to the percentage of dues given to councils are outside the scope of notice given for this Special 57th NCS.

What number of delegates is required to meet quorum? (Compiled from similar questions.)

Quorum for a virtual special session is the same as for a regular or in-person session—two hundred members of the National Council from one or more local councils in a majority of the geographical areas of the country as defined in the [Bylaws](#).

Will an agenda go out? More info coming out re: the logistics and program the week prior to the session.

Yes, the program and joining information for the special session will be emailed to delegates and alternates the week of October 14.

What is the expected time duration for the October 19 event?

The event will begin at 12:00 p.m. ET, and we can count on it lasting several hours. It's the National Council that will ultimately determine the duration by deciding how much time to devote to discussion, which motions to make, and when to conclude the proceedings.

Can those who are not delegates be able to listen in? For the in-person sessions, anyone registered is allowed to sign up to attend in person to view/listen. Is this going to be an option for those who are not delegates?

Yes, non-delegates will have an opportunity to view a livestream link of the proceedings.

A link for the livestream will be distributed to alternates, board chairs, CEOs, and delegate liaisons. [Visit the NCS page on girlscouts.org](#) for more information about registration.

How are we ensuring in such a small amount of time that staff/volunteer voter ratio to show up and vote will be in attendance?

National Council delegates were informed about the date of the special session on August 1, 2024. Although that is much less time than is normally provided for a National Council Session, the very strong attendance at recent delegate webinars indicates that delegates are prioritizing their governance role among their many other commitments. We are grateful for delegates and alternates' active participation.

Delegate liaisons who need to elevate alternates to delegate status can do so using the delegate change request form. Council bylaws should set out the process for identifying replacements if needed. To work through any specific situation, they can contact the [Office of the National Board](#).

OTHER

When should we expect proposal submission information to come out for the 58th NCS in 2026?

The Movement Governance Advisory Team is reviewing the proposal submission process and information based on feedback shared through the Democratic Process and Delegate Voice discussion topic at the 56th National Council Session. We anticipate the revised process will be shared with delegates in early 2025.

Per page #11 of the State of the Movement Q&A, the \$15M donation that GSUSA received from MacKenzie Scott "allowed us to continue to carry out the essential needs of our Movement." What specifically was it spent on? The answer in the Q&A was extremely broad.

The unrestricted \$15M donation allowed us to continue funding support services and programming for councils and girls during the challenging pandemic time when all of our revenues decreased due to COVID-19 restrictions.

What are the planned increases for the other revenue streams? Do they increase if dues are not raised?

We must increase revenue from all sources—robust fundraising, comprehensive partnerships, and membership dues.

We have both conservative and stretch multi-year growth targets for all revenue streams that we agree to with the board. These will vary based on business model, operating environment, and other dimensions.

At \$85, there would be increased Gold Award Scholarships—when created it was intentional not to use membership dues. What has changed?

Fundraising from Girl Scout supporters plays a significant role in supporting Gold Award Scholarships. The goal is for our current 112 Gold Award Scholarships be funded through continued growth in philanthropy and that as this fund grows, we will consider increasing the number of scholarships and/or the number of girls who receive scholarships.

Increasing all forms of revenue will enable Girl Scouts to expand older girl programming and scholarships, including those available to our Gold Award Girl Scouts—for example, scholarships for travel, programs, global opportunities, etc.

The National Board is committed to ensuring that there are funds available so that Girl Scouts beginning their Gold Award can be confident that scholarships will continue to be available when they have completed the award. This may necessitate the use of other funding sources other than philanthropy. The

recommendation of the Gold Award Scholarship Task Force, the 2023 NCS proposal, and the National Board resolution establishing the fund did not preclude the use of GSUSA's resources to support the fund.

For implementation, does the board have authority to create new membership levels or does that require a vote by the National Council?

Yes, the National Board has the authority to establish new—or amend existing—membership levels and categories. For example, National Board action in the 1980s led to the creation of the Daisy level for Kindergarteners and 1st graders. The National Board also acted in 2017 and 2018 to create the new extended year membership category for girls and adults.