



Northern Star Scout Chat

June 11, 2020



Annual Program Registration/Renewal



Reasons Why

- Families prefer to pay upfront, one-time fees for their child's activities/programs.
- Activity/program registrations are now available online, accessible 24/7.
- Online registrations for youth and adults, new and returning.



Reasons Why

- Family FOS is declining 12% per year, for the past five years.
- Less than 30% of families participate in FFOS, down from 55% five years ago.
- Average gift for FFOS is roughly \$137.
- Cost of supporting one Scout is \$252 per youth, does not include National BSA membership fee.
- National BSA continues to raise their membership fee, not update their business model to meet the needs of today's families and councils.
- Cost of doing business continues to increase (supplies, training, facilities, recruitment, insurance, etc.)



Activity Registration Costs

- **Activity Registration Costs**

- ***Baseball- \$500-\$1,300 per season (pay up front, three months)***
- ***Piano- \$400 per quarter (12 sessions, 30 minutes per session, pay up front, ~\$33 per session or \$1,600 per year)***
- ***Swimming- \$350 per quarter (12 sessions, 1 hour per week, pay up front, ~\$29 per session or \$1,400)***



Activity Registration Costs

- Summer Community Ed Classes-\$39-\$139 per class (pay up front)*
 - »*STEM, 12 hours, \$139*
 - »*Archery, 8 hours, \$105*
 - »*Minecraft App, 6 hours, \$65*
 - »*Soccer, 8 hours, \$49*
 - »*Geocaching and Survival Skills, 6 hours, \$39*

- Scouting- \$180 per year*
(52 weeks, \$15 per month)



Northern Star Business Model

- 2020-2021 Scouting year matches the school year, simplification of recharter/renewal
- Entire registration/renewal system online, 24/7 access,
- Simplification for unit leaders, more time to spend on unit program
- Reduction/elimination of paper applications and collecting fee's
- New youth and new adults can register online
- \$180 per youth
- \$42 per adult
- Families pay closer to the true cost of Scouting
- Financial assistance for anyone who requests it, confidential
- \$20 into unit accounts(August-October payments)
- No family group solicitations for financial support
- August 1st implementation



Fears vs. Findings

- *Membership will decline* - Membership in the pilot district exceeded Council trends from 2016-2019, membership growth in 2018, increase recruitment of new youth. The increased fee was not a limiting factor
- *New families won't join or pay* - Over 95% of new families paid the full registration fee.
- *Families will leave* - Retention exceeded or was on par with other districts from 2016-2019.
- *Families cannot afford it* - 100% of families requesting financial assistance received it. Unit leaders do not need to decide if families can afford the program, individual families can request assistance if they need it.



Fears vs. Findings

- *We won't be able to support our unit program* - Popcorn participation and sales increased from 2016-2019, \$30,000 increase in a single year. Scouts are encouraged to pay their own way
- *It won't work in my community* – The pilot district included inner city and suburban areas, low/middle/high income levels, good school access, poor school access, tenured units, new units, Red/Yellow/Green functioning units.
- *We are going to have to change how our unit functions* - Yes, unit leaders will need to separate registration from unit program, thus allowing more time to be spent on programming, the fun part.
 - Individual Family = Registration
 - Unit Program = Camp, events, activities, etc.
- *This isn't the best time to implement* – No time is a great time to increase registration, we acknowledge and recognize that, however, we must keep Scouting strong locally, this implementation plan has been in place for over a year.



How can Northern Star charge a program fee that is more than \$66, which is the National BSA limit?

- It is our responsibility to keep local Scouting strong in our units, for our families, and across our Northern Star communities. We have been testing a new business model to accomplish that for the past four years, as announced in our letter to all families last October.
- The National Council is doing more and more direct communication with individual Scouters and Families in recent years, including announcing directly to all what the new national registration fees will be. They have stated that local councils are authorized to charge a council program fee in addition to national fees, but the approximately 250 local councils will be implementing widely varying program fees based on local conditions – so there is a great deal of confusion that results from the national announcement.



How can Northern Star charge a program fee that is more than \$66, which is the National BSA limit?

- Northern Star Council is a separately incorporated, locally governed entity that manages our membership registration and charter renewals through our own online and paper systems. Our Board of Directors has determined, based on our successful testing of this new business model for the past four years, that we should set our fee at a level that
 - Protects our families from the national fee increases coming in 2021 and 2022,
 - Aims to hold our registration fee stable for three years,
 - That does not pose a “barrier to entry” for new members by charging them an extra \$25 joining fee,
 - That supports our ability to not turn any family away based on their ability to pay, versus capping our council program fee at \$66 and then having to turn families away when they cannot afford to pay.



Scouting Value

Scouts don't leave because of the cost, they leave because they don't witness the true value of what Scouting has to offer. It is up to us, those that truly live Scouting values to coach and mentor those values. \$180 is a lot of money. It is a lot of money even in the best of times. Scouting is an investment for our youth who WILL change the world into a more peaceful, inclusive place.

- 94% of families who left Scouting in 2019 was due to lack of communication, poor unit leadership, issues with other families, issues with meetings, and poor program content.
- 6% of families who left Scouting in 2019 was due to the cost.



Questions