



Heart of Virginia Council
Scouting America

Membership Registration Fees

Monthly Payment Plan FAQ

Summary:

New families who wish to join pay a monthly registration fee like Netflix or Apple Music to be registered members of Scouting America instead of paying for all the registration up front. The payment plan would be recurring each month on a credit card or debit card.

A monthly payment plan option will help us to get more youth in Scouting and keep them in Scouting. Benefits include affordable fee structure, elevated program opportunities for families, and financial stability for the family.

Families could make joining decisions based on monthly budgets, which is how most of our families operate.

Monthly payment plans have proven to be beneficial for other organizations to help customers maintain membership status. It could be a great way for our units to focus on Scouting while building our membership which would strengthen our overall program and is what we all want.

A new Scout would pay \$16 a month, and a new adult would pay \$8 a month. This recurring fee would charge their credit card so there is nothing to follow up on for the family. The idea is that this gives new families the opportunity to earn money for their child's scout account so that after their first year their registration fees are covered through unit fundraising.

Q: Will there be a monthly payment plan option for new families who join ?

A: Yes. We are looking into this for new youth and adults joining beginning on June 1, 2025. The HOVC will have to cover the upfront \$85 national registration fee which we expect to recoup in the payment plan. This upfront cost for National Scouting America registration fees by the HOVC will be between \$85,000 and \$100,000 based on the number of families who use this option. As in the past, returning Scouts have their chance to earn their funds through the unit fundraising Scout Accounts. If there are issues related to registration costs for a family, the unit leader needs to contact HOVC for assistance.

Q. Is the payment plan using credit cards or debit cards safe?

A. Yes, the HOVC is doing this through a local bank and through Swipe Simple. These are secure and that is why there are additional processing fees and credit card fees using the payment plan. Other councils use this method as well.

Q: What does the Payment Plan look like for new Scouts?

A: The payment plan gives new families the opportunity to spread their first-year registration cost over a 12-month plan because they have not had time to build their Scout Account. This family would have the option to pay the youth \$170 national (\$85.00) and council (\$85.00) fees all at one time, or they can pay \$16/month over the next 12 months. The additional cost for the

monthly payment plan includes the third-party credit cost and monthly processing fee. HOVC will be outsourcing this through a local bank and Swipe Simple, which are secure sites.

Q: Is the registration and program fee of \$80 for new adults included in the payment plan?

A: Yes, the leader fee for new registering adults (\$65 National Scouting America and \$15 HOVC program fee) can be paid through the payment plan. It will be \$8 a month for 12 months. The additional cost for the monthly payment plan includes the third-party credit card or debit card monthly processing fee.

Q: Does this payment plan go on annually for a family?

A: Yes. The payment plan is designed to help new families get into the program and not let the cost become a barrier to joining. The hope is that the Scouts earn money through their unit fundraising in their first year, which allows them to cover the cost of registration going into year two. In year two if a family still needs to use the payment plan, then they will have that option. However, they will need to fill out another form stating that they agree to allow us to pull the monthly payments from their credit card for 1 more year.

Q: Can financial assistance be associated with a monthly payment plan?

A: No. We do not have the bandwidth to alter monthly payment amounts. Financial assistance will only be applied to one-time payments.

Q: How much does it cost for a new youth to join the HOVC Scouting program during the Fall recruiting season?

A: The cost for a new youth to join Scouting will be \$170. This includes the \$85 Membership Fee for National Scouting America and HOVC \$85 program fee. Any fees that the unit charges will be in addition to the \$170 will be collected separately by the unit.

Q: Can the unit fees be prorated with the registration fee?

A: No. Unit fees are determined by the individual unit and payment options can be worked out with them. There are two fees: the \$170 national (\$85.00) fee and the council (\$85.00) fee. The unit fee which is determined by each Scout unit and collected separately.

Q: Will there be a pay up front option for families that don't use credit cards?

A: Yes. Families can pay the full amount up front to avoid a recurring monthly charge.

Q: How do you explain the registration fee increase for families that compare costs to 2024?

A: The new Season Pass provides pre-paid activities and events for the Scouts and is different from the pay-as-you-go program of the past. See the Season Pass FAQ for further details. A monthly payment plan for new families will be a way to shield families from future large fee increases. We would also stabilize our fundraising efforts. Other costs include Insurance, Scout Life magazine, Camp Utilities and Maintenance, Registration Fee Assistance and Administrative Services.

Q: What will units do about collecting dues?

A: Units will be able to adjust unit dues accordingly and still collect them in the manner they are accustomed to. Units should check the pre-funded Season Pass activities to determine if any of these events/activities were previously included in their Unit fee.

Q: Does this plan have an easy start/stop?

A: Yes. Registering for the payment plan option is simple for a family to get started. A Scouting family would enter their information into a registration portal once and the membership subscription will be automatically charged to their credit card each month. A family will have to contact the Scout office to stop payments. If a family stops payment, they will be dropped off the roster at renewal.

Q: What happens when a Scout quits and who do they contact?

A: When a Scout becomes inactive and wants to stop Scouting, they should contact the local Scout office to stop their monthly payment.

Q: How can units charge dues after the increase in council fees?

A: The membership monthly payment plan would provide families with an affordable method to register for Scouting, thus helping them get started in the program cost effectively. Units that wanted to include additional dues for activities and other items should be able to continue doing so but not through the council payment plan option.

Q: What is the reason for increasing fees and how will this be communicated?

A: The Season Pass program is intended to increase participation through pre-paid events and activities that Units can use as part of their annual planning process. This will also increase the quality of our program, reinforcing overall quality and retention. We would communicate this process through our normal means, email, newsletters, social media, the Courier, and our network of volunteers including our commissioner corps.

Q: Does this take away from Scouts paying their own way?

A: No. Scouts will still have opportunities to earn their way by selling popcorn/peanuts in the fall and camp cards in the spring. Most units have scout accounts where the Scouts can earn money to pay for their future registration fees and program costs.

Q: How do units collect dues for unit expenses?

A: Units can collect dues in the same way they are currently. Units should not include registration fees with dues for those on the monthly payment plan.

Q: Wouldn't this make it harder for units to collect dues for activities and advancements? What will be done to assist with this?

A: No. Through proper communication, units should be able to collect dues like they have in the past. New families will not see a difference in the process as they are used to paying for registration up front outside of unit funding. Families currently involved in Scouting will understand that the two expenditures are different and paid to two separate entities.

Q: Will this plan elevate program delivery with any new offerings?

A: Yes. This plan will provide will come with a "Season Pass" program that is laid out in another FAQ.

Q: Will the plan be flexible enough to allow units to collect dues?

A: Yes. The plan should not hinder the unit's ability to raise funds or collect dues for activities and advancement.

Q: Will there be a lag in registration to cushion faulty payments?

A: No. The Heart of Virginia Council will continue to pay for all registration up front. This takes the burden off families to pay for the entire year at once. Families will be able to enjoy the program at a more affordable pace.

Q: How will the Membership payment plan benefit my Unit?

A: Membership monthly payments will benefit units in several ways. It is designed to help our units grow membership by making it more affordable for first time families to join.

Q: How will this plan benefit my family?

A: Several ways, this plan makes Scouting more affordable for families up front. They will feel better about trying something new for only \$16 a month. This will increase our membership base creating more adult leadership, better program and more fun for Scouts. Families are used to payment plan models through companies such as Apple and Netflix. It makes sense to them to pay monthly. Also, this plan is just easy. Recurring monthly payments means nothing to do on their part.

Q: What payment methods are accepted for membership subscriptions?

A: The Heart of Virginia Council will accept credit card and debit card payments.