

Heart of Virginia Council, Scouting America

Season Pass/Annual Program Fee FAQ

Summary

The Heart of Virginia Council will be making some sweeping changes this year by allowing more Scouts the opportunity to participate in programs at no cost or at discounted costs. We will also make it easier for new families to join using a monthly payment plan option where the HOVC will advance the national \$85 registration fee and allow new families to pay over 12 monthly installments. The intent of these changes is to increase new membership by making it more affordable for new families to join Scouting and to retain our existing Scouts by getting more participation in programs through a “season pass” concept.

This plan will begin on June 1, 2025, with the following:

1. The 2026 “season pass” is for all youth Scouts in the HOVC. On January 1, 2026, all registered Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA youth will get a season pass allowing no cost or discounted programs within the HOVC.
2. Beginning June 1, 2025, each new family who joins will be given the option to pay the one-time National Scouting America registration/HOVC program fee or join by using a monthly payment plan option. National Scouting America does not have a payment plan so the HOVC will be fronting the national fee for those who decide on the payment plan option.
3. The annual program fee for each HOVC Scout youth will increase from \$30 to \$85 beginning June 1, 2025. The increase allows Scouts to receive an annual “season pass” with discounts and no cost activities to use through each calendar year.
 - a. The National Scouting American registration fee and the HOVC program fee adds up to \$170.
 - b. The individual unit fee as determined by each Scout Unit’s leadership is not part of the package.
 - c. The current adult registration and program fee of \$80 for adults is not changing.

Annual Program Fee FAQ

Q: What is the increase to the HOVC program fee?

A: The fee will increase for youth from the current \$30 to \$85. The adult fee will not increase and will remain at the current \$15 fee.

Q: When will this increase take place?

A: The fee increase will begin on June 1, 2025

Q: What does the Scout get for the \$55 increase?

A: Each Scout will receive an annual “season pass” starting in 2026 with discounts and activities at no cost that they can participate in throughout the year. See the details on the “season pass” sheets. This is designed to increase participation by the Scouts and families, improve the quality of our programs, provide financial value exceeding the \$85 program fee, and increase retention in our program.

Q: Why are you changing?

A: The decision to increase the HOVC Council program fee was deliberated extensively before taking this action. Outside events forced us to make this decision. First, we need to grow membership through new youth joining and by retaining our existing Scouts. A monthly new family payment plan and having free and discounted program will help with these goals. Second, the additional program fee will help with cost increases that have occurred over the past three years. The cost for maintaining our 600-acre Scout Reservation, which includes two fully operational camps, has increased dramatically. Insurance, utilities, and program costs have negatively impacted the council budget and our ability to cover these annual costs. These increases coupled with the major decline in units participating in the spring and fall product sales (37% of units in the council participate), and the low number of HOVC Scouts attending summer camp (a decrease in 2024 with only 25% of HOVC Troops spending a week at our own camp) have affected revenue negatively.

Note: HOVC has invested over \$1,100,000 in maintaining and updating camp facilities over the past 6 years. However, less Cub Scouts and Scouts BSA youth attend our camps and activities due to declining membership and units choosing not to attend our camps and programs. This has created a significant loss of revenue.

Q: What has the Council done to cut expenses?

A: With the unit and membership decline coming out of COVID, we consolidated 7 districts into 5 districts. We have eliminated staff positions to reflect this consolidation and loss of revenue. We have also worked to reduce expenses at our facilities by cutting costs through technology including LED lighting at camp, replacing old and outdated HVAC systems that were failing with new and more efficient models.

Q: Is there a household cap on the HOVC program fee?

A: No. There is no current family cap, but if a large family has financial challenges including parents who may be leaders, they need to reach out to Matthew Connors or their district executive to discuss the need. The Council does have specific assistance funds, so no family is turned away from participating in our program.

Q: How does this affect the popcorn and peanut sale?

A: It does not affect the products being sold. A Pack or Troop can determine the amount needed for each Scout to sell to pay for their annual expenses. This makes the product sale even more vital for your unit to help pay for Scouting. The council is currently working with the product sale companies to see if we can get a \$10 item back on the sales charts due to their costs going up.

Q: Can my unit have individual Scout accounts?

A: Yes. If the money goes towards Scouting functions and registration. An individual youth can utilize that money because it was raised for Scouting purposes.

Q: Am I required to pay the full amount, or can I just pay the National fees?

A: Yes. You are required to pay the full amount, which is the Scouting America registration fee of \$85 and the HOVC program fee of \$85.

Q: I am already registered as a Scout. When does the Council registration fee help me?

A: The Council "season pass" benefits go into effect January 1, 2026. The Scout will receive those benefits throughout the calendar year.

Q: I am a new Scout who just joined in the fall of 2025. When does the Council program fee help me?

A: The Council fee benefits go into effect January 1, 2026, when the "season pass" begins.

Q: Are we still doing the Family Friends of Scouting Campaign?

A: Yes. For those families that wish to participate. The program fee gets each Scout the "season pass" which has a value of more than the \$85. The more you use it the more value you get from the program.

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.

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/council fee and the unit fee which is determined by each Scout unit.