



Financial Assistance Changes All Member Email Communication July 12, 2019

EMAIL SUBJECT:

Our New Financial Assistance Program

Dear Members,

Girl Scouts of Western Washington is committed to supporting diversity, equity and inclusion. Our goal for the last few years has been to help girls, families and volunteers to participate in Girl Scouts regardless of the financial barriers they may face. True to this goal, in the last four years we have grown the amount we give through our Financial Assistance program by 92%, an increase of more than \$300,000. Our commitment to this goal has allowed us to partner with previously underrepresented communities and give girls who wouldn't otherwise have that opportunity the benefits of the amazing Girl Scout leadership development program.

As we enter into our new Girl Scout year this fall, we must now combine two goals: staying true to our commitment while recognizing that limitless growth in Financial Assistance isn't sustainable. With that goal in mind, we must take an initial step toward establishing a workable Financial Assistance amount within our budget. This requires changing how we allocate awards to members.

What is changing?

Grant Type	FY19 Grant Awards	FY20 Award Changes
Membership	\$25	No change
Troop Dues	\$40	No change
Girl Supply Voucher	\$77	Reduced to \$40
Troop Supply Voucher	\$70	Reduced to \$40
Event	Varies	No Change
Camp	Up to \$600	Reduced to \$250
Travel	Varies	REMOVED

These changes will not affect the amount we award for Girl Scout membership, Troop Dues or Events. There will be a reduction in the maximum amount awarded for vouchers and camp. Additionally, after reviewing our Financial Assistance grant participation numbers, we have made the difficult decision to eliminate the travel grant. Eligible travel grant applications that are in process or submitted by August 30th will be honored through this transition time.

These changes are not a long-term or permanent solution, however. In the future we would like to move away from a multi-grant award structure and find a way to issue a one payment lump sum that can be used as a girl chooses her Girl Scout program path. For the next few years we will closely monitor financial assistance trends and discuss funding and program concepts so that we can provide our families equal access to all programs.

Here are a few important transition dates:

- All grants, *with the exception of membership*, will be closed on August 30, 2019
- **NEW** Financial assistance grant awards will go into effect on October 1, 2019
- The travel grant award program will end on August 30, 2019

Please know that a lot of people with great minds and big hearts put deep analysis and thought into this, knowing its impact on girls, families and volunteers. Please also know that while my heart fervently wants to keep things as they've been, my head knows that's not fiscally responsible.

I'll close with these last facts: 70% of Girl Scout councils don't offer any financial assistance. Of those that do, the amount is generally less than \$100 per award. I am so glad our council has come together and made a commitment to offer substantial financial assistance to our fellow Girl Scouts. I look forward to continuing that commitment in a sustainable way for years to come.

If you have any questions regarding this change, please contact us via FAQuestions@girlscoutsww.org

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Megan Ferland

CEO

Girl Scouts of Western Washington