

Why a Membership Fee Increase Is Necessary

Our annual membership fee has remained at \$15 since 2017, despite rising operating costs. The Board is proposing an increase of \$10, bringing the annual fee to \$25 effective September 1, 2027. This increase will help strengthen our financial position and support the long-term sustainability of our organization.

The key consideration is how we fund our activities and operating expenses, particularly the need to make our casino proceeds last between casino events.

Casino Funds Must Last Between Casino Events

As a non-profit organization, we are eligible to receive casino proceeds to pay for expenses permitted under Alberta Gaming, Liquor and Cannabis (AGLC) guidelines. Allowable expenses include rent, transportation, and the development of computer applications.

Casino proceeds are an important source of funding, but we cannot control when we are scheduled to hold a casino or how much revenue it will generate.

We typically have a casino approximately every 18 months. If a casino generates \$84,000, that money needs to last until the next event. To make those funds last for the full 18-month period, our average annual spending from casino proceeds would need to be approximately \$56,000.

However, we expect to spend approximately \$89,000 from casino funds this year. At this rate, we are using these funds faster than we can reasonably expect to replace them. We also cannot assume that our next casino will take place on schedule or generate the same amount of revenue.

This does not necessarily mean that any particular expense or activity is inappropriate. Rather, it highlights the importance of ensuring that our overall spending from casino proceeds is sustainable between casino events.

Where Will Additional Funding Come From?

Our annual membership revenue is approximately \$50,000. It helps cover expenses such as credit card processing fees (Stripe), office supplies, volunteer recognition, and social events. With this revenue already supporting these costs, there is limited flexibility to absorb further increases in expenses.

If we continue to spend casino funds at the current rate, we will need to find additional sources of revenue or reduce spending. One option would be to reduce the subsidies available to our various activities, potentially affecting the programs and benefits our members enjoy.

Increasing the membership fee offers another way to address this challenge. Strengthening our regular annual revenue would allow membership fees to cover a greater share of our costs and reduce the pressure on casino proceeds. This would help us preserve support for our activities while managing our finances more sustainably.

We Also Face Increasing Costs

Our facility costs continue to rise. Under our four year agreement with Trico, rent increases by 3% annually. As a result, rent in 2030 will be approximately 12.5% higher than in 2026. Other facilities we use may also become more expensive.

The Board has approved updates to our Online Registration System and member database to incorporate newer vendor software. These costs have been accommodated in our current budget.

The Board has also approved a project to update or potentially rewrite our website using newer software. The preliminary estimate is approximately \$40,000 over two years, although the final cost will depend on the scope of the project. This expenditure is not currently included in our 2027 budget.

These anticipated costs reinforce the importance of planning ahead rather than waiting until rising expenses put further pressure on our finances.

Why Increase the Fee to \$25?

The proposed increase from \$15 to \$25 represents an additional \$10 per year, or less than \$1 per month. It would be our first membership fee increase in ten years.

The purpose is not simply to collect more revenue. It is to strengthen our reliable annual membership income, bring our spending more closely in line with the casino funding we can reasonably expect, and help us manage rising costs without unnecessarily reducing support for our activities.

For existing members, the increase would take effect September 1, 2027. For new members who sign up in July and August of 2027, the fee increase will apply to them.

The choice is not simply between increasing membership fees and continuing as we are. We need to ensure that our spending is sustainable. Increasing membership revenue now is one practical way to address that need while helping preserve the programs, activities, and benefits that make our organization valuable to its members.