



Membership Dues Increase

Communication Guide for District and Club Leaders

Before You Begin

A dues increase changes the cost of membership. It does not change what makes Toastmasters valuable.

Members stay because they belong to a club where they are welcomed, challenged, encouraged, and supported. Every meeting is an opportunity to demonstrate that value.

Many members will have questions or concerns about the dues increase. Some may disagree with the decision, and that is understandable. Our role as leaders is not to persuade members to agree with the decision. Our role is to listen, explain the reasons for the decision honestly and respectfully, answer questions using the information provided by Toastmasters International, and continue delivering an outstanding Toastmasters experience.

This guide is intended to help District and club leaders communicate consistently while speaking in their own authentic voice. It is not a script. Use the key messages and talking points to guide your conversations with members.

Quick Reference

If members remember only a few things from your conversation, these are the key messages they should hear:

1. **The Board did not make this decision lightly.** It carefully reviewed the organization's financial position and considered other options before increasing dues.
2. **Toastmasters has not returned to sustained organizational growth since the COVID-19 pandemic.** While clubs and Districts have worked incredibly hard to rebuild, overall membership has not yet returned to sustained growth, while costs have continued to increase.
3. **The organization reduced costs and prioritized spending before increasing dues.** Cost reductions, organizational efficiencies, District realignment, and project prioritization were all part of the Board's efforts to strengthen the organization's financial position.
4. **The dues increase strengthens Toastmasters at every level.** It helps ensure the long-term sustainability of Toastmasters International while also increasing funding available to Districts, enabling them to better support clubs and members.
5. **This decision is about the future.** The goal is to ensure Toastmasters remains financially sustainable so it can continue changing lives for today's members and for generations to come. This additional funding will help the organization strengthen and develop products and programs to support the future.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why are membership dues increasing?

None of us likes increasing costs for members. We understand that many members are facing financial pressures of their own. The Board approached this decision with great care because we know it affects every member.

At the same time, we have a responsibility to ensure that Toastmasters remains financially strong for future generations. After carefully reviewing our finances, reducing costs where possible, and considering different options, we concluded that a dues increase was necessary to protect the long-term health of the organization.

2. I love Toastmasters, but this increase is difficult for me. What would you say to members like me?

We understand. We know this decision affects real people, and we recognize that for many members this increase represents a meaningful financial commitment.

We also recognize that members around the world experience this increase differently because of exchange rates and local economic conditions. Those realities were part of our discussions. While we cannot control global economic conditions, we did not make this decision lightly, and we recognize the sacrifices many members make to continue their Toastmasters journey.

3. What am I getting for the extra money? How will this improve my experience as a member?

The primary purpose of the increase is to ensure Toastmasters remains financially healthy and able to continue delivering quality educational programs, member services, and support around the world.

The additional revenue also enables continued investment in our future while maintaining the systems, people, and infrastructure needed to serve a global membership.

4. Has Toastmasters done everything it can to reduce costs before increasing dues?

Yes. Reducing costs has been an important focus for several years. Cost reductions limit product and program support and development.

The Board and World Headquarters have worked together to identify efficiencies, prioritize projects, and carefully manage expenses. This has included initiatives such as our global District realignment project, which created larger, more sustainable Districts with stronger leadership pipelines while improving financial sustainability.

The Board also completed an extensive project prioritization exercise to determine which initiatives should move forward and which should not.

Cost reduction is an important part of the solution, but it is only part of the solution.

5. I live in a country where the exchange rate is weak. Was that taken into account?

Yes. The Board discussed the different economic realities experienced by members around the world and understands that exchange rates can significantly increase the actual cost for many members.

Toastmasters operates as a global organization with members in many different economies. While we recognize these challenges, it is not practical to establish different membership dues for every country's economic circumstances or currency fluctuations.

That understanding made this decision more difficult, not easier.

6. Won't this cause members to leave or make it harder to attract new members?

Any price increase carries some risk, and the Board discussed that carefully. At the same time, failing to maintain the organization's financial health would create even greater risks over the long term. Our goal is to ensure Toastmasters remains strong, relevant, and able to serve members for many years to come.

7. How can I explain this dues increase to members in my club?

We encourage club leaders to have open and honest conversations with their members. Acknowledge that this is a difficult decision, explain that the Board first focused on reducing costs and prioritizing spending, and emphasize that the purpose of the increase is to help ensure the long-term sustainability of Toastmasters.

8. Could Toastmasters have found other ways to raise money instead of increasing dues?

The Board continues to explore additional sources of revenue and believes they are important to the long-term future of the organization.

However, alternative revenue sources take time to develop and are not sufficient on their own to replace the stable funding that membership dues provide.

A financially healthy organization needs both diversified revenue and sustainable membership dues.

9. How do we know there won't be another dues increase in a year or two?

No Board can make commitments on behalf of future Boards. What we can say is that this decision was made after careful analysis of the organization's financial outlook and with the intention of supporting long-term stability rather than returning to this issue repeatedly.

10. Toastmasters has changed my life, but I need to justify this expense. Why is Toastmasters still worth it?

Every member ultimately decides what represents value to them.

Toastmasters continues to provide leadership and communication development at a cost that remains significantly lower than many comparable professional development opportunities.

Beyond education, members gain leadership experience, confidence, mentoring, friendships, and opportunities that often have a lasting impact on both their personal and professional lives.

11. Why didn't Toastmasters increase dues gradually instead of waiting this long?

That is a fair question. Previous Boards made decisions based on the information and circumstances at the time.

The current Board has also considered whether smaller, more regular dues increases could provide a more predictable approach in the future. However, our responsibility was to respond to the organization's current financial realities.

After reviewing Toastmasters' financial position and long-term outlook, we concluded that action was necessary now to ensure the organization's long-term sustainability. This decision was made based on the circumstances we face today and what we believe is in the best interests of Toastmasters and its members.

12. Was this a difficult decision? Did the Board have different opinions?

Yes. This was one of the most carefully considered decisions the Board made this year.

Board members brought different perspectives and experiences to the discussion, reflecting the diversity of our global membership. Those discussions helped ensure that the decision reflected careful consideration of both members' needs and the long-term health of the organization.

13. How will members know this additional money is being used responsibly?

The Board takes its responsibility to safeguard members' resources very seriously.

Financial decisions continue to be guided by strategic priorities, careful oversight, and responsible budgeting. We remain committed to ensuring that members' dues are used wisely to support the mission and long-term success of Toastmasters.

14. Wouldn't growing membership solve this problem instead of increasing dues?

Growing membership continues to be one of our highest priorities, and we are committed to supporting clubs and Districts in that effort.

However, membership growth alone cannot be relied upon to offset inflation and rising operating costs. Long-term financial sustainability requires both membership growth and an appropriate funding model.

15. What would have happened if the Board had decided not to increase dues?

Every significant decision involves choices.

Had the Board decided not to increase dues, the organization would have faced increasing pressure to reduce programs, services, or investments that support members and the future of Toastmasters.

The Board believed that taking action now was the more responsible course to help ensure Toastmasters remains financially strong and able to fulfill its mission for years to come.

16. Why should existing members bear the cost? Why not ask new members to pay more instead?

Toastmasters is a membership organization, and membership dues are the primary source of funding that supports the programs, services, and infrastructure all members rely on.

Both existing and new members benefit from those investments. At the same time, it is important that the cost of joining Toastmasters remains accessible so that we can continue attracting new members and growing the organization.

The Board believes that a balanced approach—supported by all members while continuing to pursue membership growth and additional revenue opportunities—is the most sustainable path for the future of Toastmasters.

17. Why is the new dues rate taking effect on August 3? That doesn't give clubs much time.

The Board recognized that there was no perfect implementation date and understood that some clubs and members would have preferred a longer transition period. Although the governing documents do not require a transition period, the Board deliberately created one to give members an opportunity to renew at the current dues rate before the increase took effect. At the same time, the Board needed to balance that opportunity with the organization's financial needs. The longer members were able to renew at the current rate, the longer it would take for the additional revenue to be realized and put to work supporting members and the organization. After considering the available options, the Board concluded that the August 3 implementation date provided the best balance between giving members an opportunity to renew at the current rate and beginning to strengthen the organization's long-term financial sustainability.