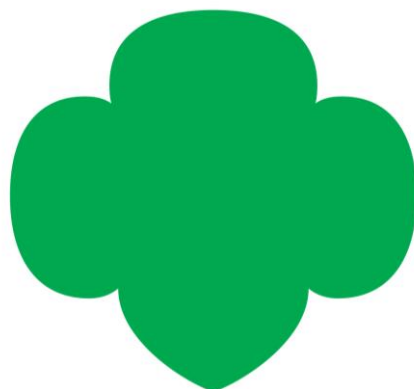


Volunteer Essentials 2017/2018



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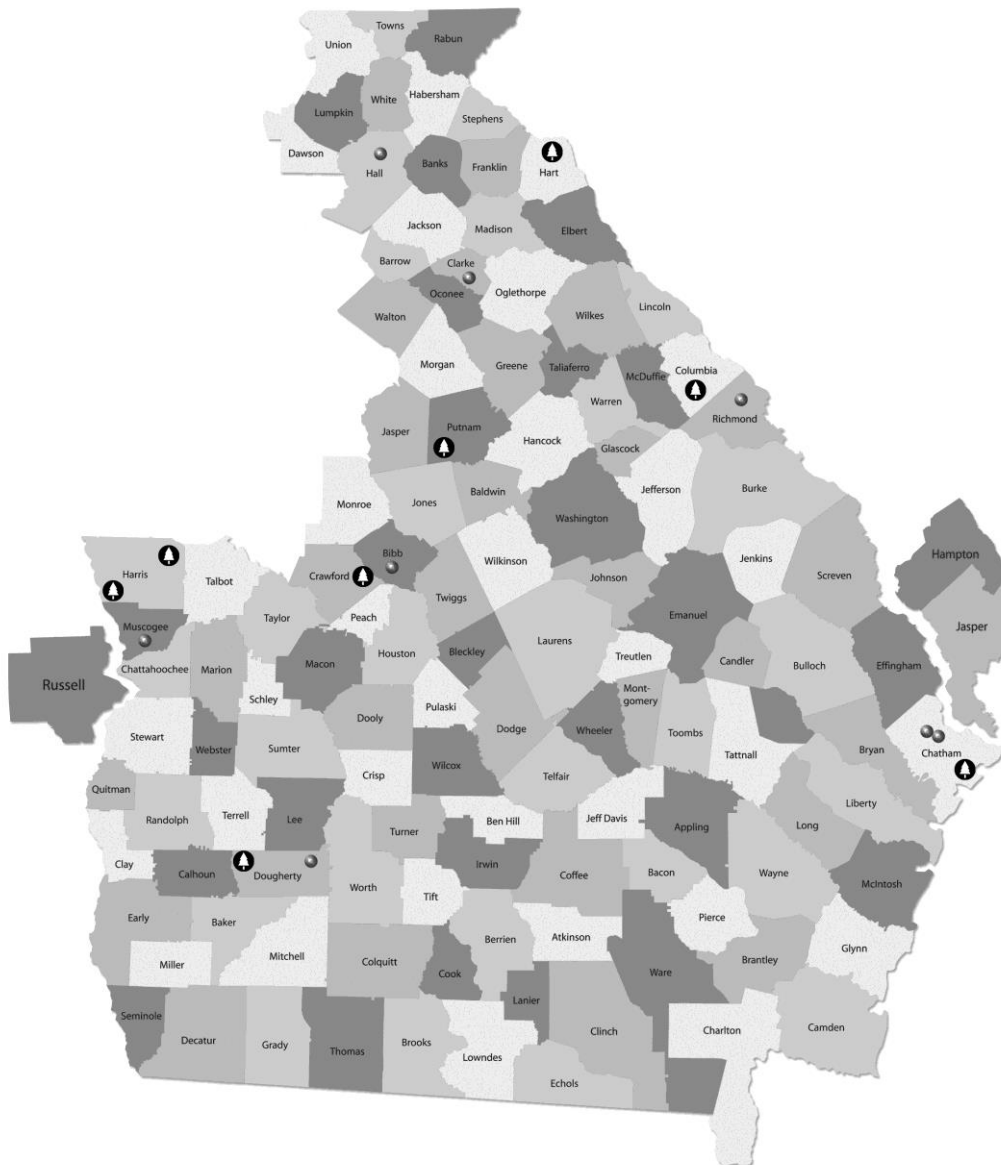
Quick-Start Guide

Welcome to the great adventure of Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world.

We know you're busy and need to be efficient with your time. For that reason, this Quick-Start Guide to *Volunteer Essentials* gives you the nitty-gritty—what you need to know now, as you plan for your first meeting with girls. We encourage you to read through these tips as soon as you can, and then feel free to put down this handbook for now.

The rest of *Volunteer Essentials* is a reference for you to use only as needed. When you have a question, simply look up the topic in the Table of Contents, and you'll find your answer. Think of *Volunteer Essentials* as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering: it's here when you need it, but there's no need to read it all today.

Ready to get started? Then read the following handy tips, and you'll be on your way!



We Are Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts was founded in 1912 by trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low. We are the largest girl-serving organization in the United States and a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a sisterhood of close to 10 million girls and adults in 145 countries.

Our Mission and Vision

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We strive to be the premier leadership organization for girls, and experts on their growth and development.

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God* and my country,

To help people at all times,

And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word "God" in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word "God." **Note:** This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls' books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it's your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your group and to make sure that everyone in the group feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls' families.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,

friendly and helpful,

considerate and caring,

courageous and strong,

and responsible for what I say and do,

and to

respect myself and others,

respect authority,

use resources wisely,

make the world a better place,

and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

More than 3 Million Strong

We are urban, rural, and suburban. We are in schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes, and detention centers. We are in virtually every zip code and in 90 countries around the world.

- **2.3 million** girls 5 to 18 years of age
- **16,800** Girl Scouts overseas
- **888,000** adult volunteers
- **59** million alumnae
- **112 councils** throughout the United States

At any given time, approximately 10 percent of girls are Girl Scouts, and it's interesting to know that:

- 80 percent of women business owners were Girl Scouts.
- 69 percent of female U.S. Senators were Girl Scouts.
- 67 percent of female members of the House of Representatives were Girl Scouts.
- Virtually every female astronaut who has flown in space was a Girl Scout.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

We have identified Three Keys to Leadership: girls Discover themselves and their values; Connect with others; and Take Action to make the world a better place. At Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl: activities are girl-led, which gives girls the opportunity to learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment.

Connect Online

Connect with Girl Scouts of the USA at www.girlscouts.org, www.facebook.com/GirlScoutsUSA, www.twitter.com/girlscouts, and www.pinterest.com/GSUSA.

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia also shares event information, learning opportunities, tips, and advice at www.gshg.org, www.facebook.com/girlscoutshistoricgeorgia, and www.twitter.com/GAgirlscouts; www.instagram.com/girlscoutshistoricga; and www.youtube.com/GAgirlscouts. Have a general question? Drop us an email at gshg@gshg.org.

ToGetHerThere

At Girl Scouts, we know that when girls are given the opportunity, they change their world. Every girl has an important role to play, and every girl deserves the confidence to achieve anything she sets her sight on. But we need help to ensure that girls in every U.S. zip code develop the confidence that Girl Scouts nurtures. That's why we've launched ToGetHerThere, the largest fundraising campaign for girls in history.

ToGetHerThere is a Movement wide fundraising campaign with the goal of raising \$1 Billion for girls by 2020. Every gift to every Girl Scout Council counts toward the goal. Together, we will get her there - to help lead her troop, her family, her community, her company, her country, and her world. To learn more about joining the largest campaign for girls visit girlscouts.org/invest.



Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and power of girls and women together. Any girl—from kindergarten through 12th grade—can join Girl Scouts. Girl Scout volunteers are also a diverse group—you may be a college volunteer working on a community-action project, a parent volunteer ready for an outdoor adventure with your daughter's group, or any responsible adult (female or male, who have passed the necessary screening process) looking to help prime girls for the day when they'll lead—however and wherever they choose.

What all members share, both girls and adults, are the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues of \$25. (Adults have the option to purchase a lifetime membership for \$375).

Girls at Every Grade Level

After girls join, they team up in the following grade levels:

- Girl Scout Daisy (grades K–1)
- Girl Scout Brownie (grades 2–3)
- Girl Scout Junior (grades 4–5)
- Girl Scout Cadette (grades 6–8)
- Girl Scout Senior (grades 9–10)
- Girl Scout Ambassador (grades 11–12)



GRADES												
K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
TROOP												
			CAMP									
						SERIES						
										EVENTS		
						TRAVEL						
			VIRTUAL									

Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure

Girl Scouts is the world's largest organization of and for girls, currently encompassing 2.3 million girl members and nearly one million volunteers! Three core structures support all these members: the national headquarters, your council, and your support team.

National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), located in New York City, employs roughly 300 employees. GSUSA is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). (Visit [GSUSA online](#), where you'll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers.)

Global Girl Scouting ensures that girls have increased awareness about the world, cross-cultural learning opportunities, and education on relevant global issues that may inspire them to take action to make the world a better place. Visit [Global Girl Scouting online](#) for additional information.

Since 1925, USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO), a division of Global Girl Scouting, has helped ease the transition for American families relocating overseas by offering the familiar traditions and exciting opportunities of Girl Scouting to girls abroad. USAGSO now serves thousands of American girls living overseas, as well as girls attending American or international schools. Through Global Girl Scouting, members participate in World Thinking Day on February 22, visit the four WAGGGS world centers (see the "For Travel Volunteers" appendix), participate in international travel, promote global friendship and understanding by supporting the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, and take action on global issues.

Your Council

Girl Scout councils are chartered by the national office to attract and retain members in a geographic area, provide ways for girls to participate in Girl Scouting, create an environment that reflects Girl Scout values and ideals, manage volunteers' experience with Girl Scouting, and keep girls and volunteers as safe as possible. The national office provides support materials to all councils to ensure that the Girl Scout experience is nationally consistent.

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Inc.

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia is rich in heritage and purpose. Our council extends from the North Georgia Mountains to the Okefenokee and from the Atlantic coast to the Chattahoochee Valley. GSHG is home to more than 12,000 Girl Scouts, and is the historic home of our founder, Juliette Gordon Low. "Daisy" founded Girl Scouts on March 12, 1912 in Savannah, Georgia, where her birthplace and the historic First Headquarters still welcome thousands of Girl Scouts every year.

Our council serves girls in 122 counties in Georgia, two in South Carolina and one in Alabama. Service centers are located in Albany, Athens, Augusta, Columbus, Gainesville, Lizella (Macon) and Pooler (Savannah), where you can talk with local council staff members and pick up necessary forms. You may shop for Girl Scout merchandise in the Athens, Lizella

or Pooler service centers, at Girl Scout First Headquarters, or online. The official council headquarters is in Savannah, Georgia.

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia has four beautiful camp properties, all open to you and your girls. Whether at the beach, in the mountains, or in a pine forest, you will feel right at home as you enjoy the out of doors and teach your girls a love for the environment. Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia is brimming with wonderful resources and places to explore with your Girl Scouts: fine colleges and universities, including the University of Georgia; resorts like Callaway Gardens; events like The Masters golf tournament; theme parks like Wild Adventures; and geographic venues like the Okefenokee Swamp and the beautiful Atlantic coast. Traveling throughout your council will provide many fun and educational opportunities for your girls, while allowing them to make friends they might never have known otherwise. Whether you are new to Girl Scouting, or continuing your journey, Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia beckons you to a fabulous and fulfilling adventure.

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia Service Centers

Offices are open Monday through Thursday 8:30-5:30 and Friday 9:00-12:30. Council shops in Athens, Lizella and Pooler are open Monday through Thursday, 9:00 – 5:00, Friday from 9:00 – 12:00, and the first Saturday of the month from 10:00-1:00. The shop at Girl Scout First Headquarters is open from Monday, Tuesday and Thursday through Saturday from 10:00 – 4:00. The online shop is open 24/7!

515 Pine Avenue
Albany, GA 31701
229.432.9188

185 Newton Bridge Road
Athens, GA 30607
706.548.7297

508 Shartom Drive
Augusta, GA 30907
706.774.0505

1344 13th Avenue
Columbus, G A 31901
706.327.2646

535 Spring Street SE
Gainesville, GA 30501
770.536.8656

6869 Columbus Road
Lizella, GA 31052
478.935.2221

110 Pipemakers Circle Suite 116
Pooler, GA 31322
912.236.1571

Girl Scout First Headquarters
330 Drayton Street
Savannah, GA 31401
912-232-8200

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia Properties

Girl Scout First Headquarters

The Girl Scout First Headquarters building, formerly the carriage house for Juliette Low's adult home, was willed to Girl Scouts of Savannah, Georgia, upon Juliette's death in 1927. The building was in continuous use for Girl Scout troop activities, adult training, and administrative offices from 1912 until 1985, when the staff moved the Council office to 428 Bull Street. On January 15, 1996 the First Headquarters building reopened to the public as a Girl Scout museum, program center and Council shop. In December 2002, First Headquarters closed for remodeling and reopened the following March as the First Headquarters Program Activity Center. It offers exciting interactive educational experiences for Girl Scouts and the community. First Headquarters houses fascinating Girl Scout archives. Older Girl Scouts are encouraged to provide service as Program Aides for the facility. A Council's Own badge program, Daisy's Neighborhood, is available for Girl Scout Brownies to Ambassadors to help them learn about the history of Girl Scouting. Troops may make an appointment to conduct a special ceremony in the reception area or the courtyard. Volunteer opportunities for adults include shop support, historical display interpretation, program delivery, and historical research.

Camp Low

Located on Savannah's south side on 300 acre Rose Dhu Island, Camp Low includes 4 hammocks (pieces of forested land that rise above an adjacent marsh). It is home to magnolia trees more than 200 years old, cedar trees more than 500 years old and palmetto trees over 40 feet tall. An earthen battery was built by Confederate troops on the south and west sides of the island during the Civil War, and some of the trenches and mounds are still visible today.

Camp Martha Johnston

This scenic 165 acre camp in Crawford County has been owned and operated by Girl Scouts since 1922. It has units with rustic cabins and Sweetwater Retreat, a climate controlled facility that opened in 2000 with meeting rooms, a dining hall, and sleeping quarters.

Camp Robert Lewis

The roar of camp's magnificent Mulberry Falls in Harris County provides a stunning backdrop for Girl Scout events. Known as one of the most scenic properties along the Chattahoochee Riverway, it encompasses 40 acres of pristine, unspoiled riverfront. This site is used to teach environmental education and the Leave No Trace camping philosophy.

Camp Tanglewood

Located in Columbia County on 184 acres of hilly woodland, Camp Tanglewood is a retreat into the wilderness in the heart of a city. From the low ropes course to the pool, lakes, and wheelchair accessible cabin built by ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, Camp Tanglewood has something for everyone!

For further information about our properties or to make reservations contact us at reservations@gshg.org. Volunteers may check out property amenities, procedures, and make reservations at <https://gshg.doubleknot.com/facilitysearch/3289> ; more detailed information may be found under camps at www.gshg.org .

GSHG Operational Volunteer Policies

Effective May 20, 2014

I. Operational Policies VOLUNTEER PHILOSOPHY

We maintain that the strength of the Girl Scout Movement rests in the volunteer leadership of its adult members. It is through this volunteer leadership that the Movement serves girls. To ensure the job satisfaction of volunteers and to employ the talents of volunteers effectively, it is essential that the following policies be established and maintained.

These policies do not create a contract with any volunteer, express or implied, and may be changed at any time at the discretion of the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Inc. (GSHG, Inc.). Policies apply to all persons accompanying or participating with individual members, troops/groups (i.e. siblings, spouses, relatives, friends, consultants, etc.)

A **POLICY** is an established course of action that must be followed.

Policies provide consistency of action, give direction, and minimize the need for risk management. Difficulty or inconvenience in carrying out the requirements of a policy shall not be used as an excuse for not adhering to the policy.

A **PROCEDURE** describes the course of action to carry out a policy. (Please refer to Volunteer Procedures)

1.1 POLICY: EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

GSHG, Inc., in recognition of its responsibility to its volunteers and in keeping with GSUSA's equal opportunity policies as written in the "Blue Book of Basic Documents," reaffirms its policy to ensure fair and equal treatment in all its practices to all persons regardless of race, color, creed, sex, marital status, national origin, citizenship, age, socioeconomic status, or sexual orientation. There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified individual by reason of disability or medical condition. Furthermore, to assure that the membership of GSHG, Inc. reflects the diversity of population groups within its jurisdiction, GSHG, Inc. is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and outreach in the recruitment, selection, placement, development, and recognition of volunteers and in the extension of Girl Scouting to adults in all communities within its jurisdiction. GSHG, Inc. shall place emphasis upon securing representation of persons from under-represented populations.

1.2 POLICY: RECRUITMENT

Each volunteer position will have a written description that defines specific responsibilities and schedules, clarifies expectations, and, in conjunction with performance goals, forms the basis for assessment of volunteer performance, reappointment, rotation to another position and termination.

1.3 POLICY: MEMBERSHIP

All volunteers participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall meet GSUSA membership standards as defined in the "Blue Book of Basic Documents," be registered through GSUSA, Inc. as members of the Girl Scout Movement and shall agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and GSHG, Inc.

1.4 POLICY: REGISTRATION

All adult volunteers participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall be registered as members with GSUSA and individually pay the applicable membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime members or who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity.

1.5 POLICY: SELECTION

Every adult volunteer is selected on the basis of qualifications for membership, ability to perform the volunteer position, and the willingness and availability to participate in training for the position, if such training exists. Each operational volunteer will also be required to complete an application, provide references, sign agreements, and undergo a background and other screening prior to selection.

Procedure: Each Girl Scout troop will have a leader and a co-leader who are unrelated, non-cohabitating adults. Roommates, housemates, or married spouses – no matter the sex of the individuals involved – may not be co-leaders of a troop nor be co-signers on the troop account. At all times, girls must remain under the supervision of at least two approved, unrelated, non-cohabitating, registered adult volunteers.

All adults accompanying troop or group overnights must be both registered adult members of the Girl Scout Movement and approved volunteers.

The approved, supervisory volunteers and council staff have the right to limit participation of non-approved adults for the best outcome and environment for the girls.

1.6 POLICY: PLACEMENT

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of GSHG, Inc. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the council will take precedence over the needs of the individual. Individuals not placed in a position for which they applied may be recommended for other positions and they may request reassignment.

1.7 POLICY: APPOINTMENT

Volunteers, minimum age of 18 years, unless otherwise specified shall be appointed for a term indicated in the written position description.

1.8 POLICY: REAPPOINTMENT

Prior to completion of her/his term, each operational volunteer shall receive confirmation of reappointment to her/his position or notice that she/he will not be reappointed.

Reappointment takes place only after completion of a satisfactory performance review and mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations and a time commitment.

1.9 POLICY: TRAINING

All volunteers will receive initial training for their position and will also be required to complete additional training that is designated as mandatory for the position. Training must be completed within a specified timeframe. Training will ensure that each volunteer has the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in her or his work. *Operational Volunteer Policies & Procedures Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia 3/28/12*

1.10 POLICY: BENEFITS

Benefits to volunteers include training and other learning opportunities, support in the position, council publications, tools for recording volunteer experience, references upon request, liability insurance, and supplementary accident insurance, as part of national and/or council membership.

1.11 POLICY: PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL

Each volunteer shall be provided with the opportunity for regular review and evaluation.

1.12 POLICY: RECOGNITION

The formal adult recognition system of GSHG, Inc. will be consistent with the most current GSUSA publication.

1.13 POLICY: UNIFORMS

Purchase of a uniform is at the volunteer's expense and is encouraged. Volunteers are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout pin when they are not in uniform. A uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scouting.

1.14 POLICY: HARASSMENT AND HOSTILITY

The council is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy and equitable treatment. It is the policy of the organization to provide all with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcomed harassment and hostility.

The council expressly prohibits any form of harassment or hostility on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, disability, marital status, citizenship, ancestry, military status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state, or local law. This policy is considered to include physical violence as well as intimidation, stalking, coercion, display of weapons, threats, and talking or joking about harassment or hostility whether in person or through some other means of communications such as writing, telephone, voice mail or electronic mail.

1.15 POLICY: SEXUAL HARASSMENT

It is against the council's policies for any individual, male or female, to sexually harass another person of the same or opposite sex. The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with the council any volunteer who sexually harasses another volunteer, employee, or any child of the same or opposite sex.

1.16 POLICY: CHILD ABUSE

The council supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts and it is against the council's policy for any volunteer, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any child.

The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the council, any volunteer who in the judgment of the council poses a risk of injury to a minor or is believed to have abused or neglected any

child or who has been convicted of any crime against a child.

If any member of a volunteer applicant's household is a registered sex offender, the volunteer is disqualified from volunteering for GSHG in any capacity. This applies regardless of the nature of the crime.

If any volunteer suspects or believes a child is being abused they must immediately contact the Chief Executive Officer or his/her designee. *Operational Volunteer Policies & Procedures Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia 3/28/12.*

It is strongly recommended that the volunteer also contact child protective services in the county where the child lives, to report this information. A person who in good faith makes this report is immune from civil or criminal liability per state statute. Contact information is at the end of this document.

Procedure:

Children in Georgia will be better protected from child abuse as a new expanded mandated reporter law specifies a wider range of people being required to report suspected child abuse. Effective July 1, 2012, under Code Section 19-7-5 of the Official Code of Georgia Annotated, the mandated reporter law for Georgia has expanded to include more individuals that are law-bound to report suspected abuse. The new amendment designates several categories of individuals as mandated reporters, who "having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been abused shall report or cause reports of that abuse to be made." All child service organization personnel (both employees and volunteers) are now mandated reporters.

This now means that volunteers, as well as staff, are mandated by law (not just council policy) to report suspected child abuse and neglect. ALL volunteers of organizations that serve children are now mandated reporters regardless of their position or type of service. If child abuse or neglect is suspected, a report must be filed within 24 hours to the Department of Children Family Services (DFCS) or the GSHG CEO or his/her designee. Failure to report child abuse or neglect may result in being charged with a misdemeanor.

As this law expands, the need for employees and volunteers to be able to recognize and report any type of child abuse grows. The Governor's Office for Children and Families (GOFC) sponsors a free, online training course, provided through ProSolutions Training, <https://www.prosolutionstraining.com/> that details the law and its recent changes, discusses warning signs that can indicate if a child is being abused or neglected, and explains your role in reporting suspected child abuse. The hour long course can be accessed through this link: <https://www.prosolutionstraining.com> and then go to "Mandated Reporter." You will need to create an account but the training is FREE.

For more detailed information about the law, please visit the Office of the Child Advocate website www.oca.georgia.gov.

Reporting – Child in Immediate Danger:

First Step: To report child abuse: Please call the DFCS Child Protective Center at: 1-855-GACHILD / 1-855-422-4453. Reports are taken 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Second Step: If a volunteer witnesses a situation in which a child is in immediate danger, they should call 911 immediately, then report the situation to the council by calling the GSHG emergency hotline, 1-866-236-7944.

Reporting – Child not in Immediate Danger:

Volunteers who witness or suspect child abuse or neglect must report it within 24 hours by calling the GSHG emergency hotline, 1-866-236-7944. The Council emergency contact provider will take the information from the caller and notify the Leadership Team member on call to follow up and ensure the proper agency is notified.

1.17 POLICY: TOBACCO, DRUGS, ALCOHOL

Smoking is always prohibited whenever girl members are present. Smoking/tobacco products are prohibited in the GSHG, Inc. offices. On other GSHG, Inc. properties smoking/tobacco products are permitted only in designated areas. Tobacco products of any kind may not be used in the presence of girls.

No person shall possess or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs/substances, prescription/over the counter medications (which may impair judgment) on GSHG, Inc. property, during any GSHG, Inc. sanctioned activity or while conducting council business.

Alcohol or any substance, which may impair one's judgment, must never be used by adults immediately prior to or during a girl member activity.

Alcoholic beverages when previously approved by the council Board of Directors or Chief Executive Officer may be served at some council events where girls are not present.

1.18 POLICY: FIREARMS/WEAPONS

Firearms and/or weapons may not be present at any Girl Scout activity nor on council owned or leased property except when in the possession of a sworn officer of the law, a certified instructor, licensed wildlife control personnel and/or trained adult in conduct of Girl Scout program activity. Outdoor skills' training is required before using pocket knives during Girl Scout programs.

Procedure:

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia would like to remind volunteers that it is not recommended that meetings take place in a facility that has firearms present. If there are firearms present, please ensure that all state and local laws and recommendations are followed for their handling and storage. As the Georgia Department of Human Services reminds us; the best way to prevent unintentional firearm injuries to a child is to not have a gun in a home where a child lives or plays. If this is not possible, the following precautions should be followed:

- Make sure guns are locked away from children
- Ammunition should be removed from guns and stored separately
- Hide the keys
- Teach children that guns are "hands off"

For more information, go to the DHS website at <http://dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov/press-releases/2012-10-10/gun-safety-keeping-georgia%E2%80%99s-children-safe>

1.19 POLICY: TERMINATION

Any volunteer may terminate her or his services upon written notification to the supervisor. The council may terminate the services of a volunteer because of, among other things, restructuring of volunteer positions, the elimination of the volunteer position in which a person serves, the inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, the refusal to comply with council or Girl Scouts of the U.S.A policies, the refusal to support the mission and values of the organization and the council goals, or membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with those of GSUSA. An adult volunteer who is terminated from her or his Girl Scout position may continue her or his adult membership with GSUSA unless it is determined that she or he is not able to meet the membership requirement related to accepting the principles and beliefs of the Movement or by supporting the mission and values of the organization. If the individual cannot meet the membership requirements related to accepting the principles and beliefs of the Movement or supporting the mission and values of the organization, her or his Girl Scout membership will not be renewed by GSHG, Inc. Absolute confidentiality must be observed at all times to protect the rights of the volunteer.

1.20 POLICY: GRIEVANCE/CONFLICT RESOLUTION

GSHG, Inc. has established a system for resolving conflicts which arise when an operational volunteer believes that policies and/or procedures related to her/his position are not being administered properly as applies to her/him.

1.21 POLICY: PROGRAM LIABILITY INSURANCE

Any person participating in any Girl Scout program/activity must be registered or be covered by appropriate Girl Scout insurance.

1.22 POLICY: CONTRACTS

All contracts must be authorized and signed by the Chief Executive Officer, or the Chair of the Board of Directors, or their designee.

1.23 POLICY: PROPERTY

No person/troop/group/organization shall use or alter GSHG, Inc., property or equipment without permission from GSHG, Inc.

1.24 POLICY: ANIMALS

No person shall bring any animal onto any GSHG, Inc. property or into any activity without the written permission of the Chief Executive Officer or her/his designee. Exceptions will be made for animals needed to assist persons with disabilities and for fulfilling program activities.

1.25 POLICY: PUBLIC RELATIONS

Girl Scout publicity shall be focused on interpretation of the objectives and accomplishments of the Girl Scout movement. A photo release, which reads, "The council may reproduce and use any slides/photographs, videos, or moving pictures taken of girls for publicity purposes," will be included on each parent permission form for Girl Scout activities.

In any situation involving public information on behalf of GSHG, Inc. or GSUSA, statements shall be made by the Chief Executive Officer, the Chair of the Board of Directors, or his/her designee.

1.26 POLICY: CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Volunteers and members of their families (a family member may include but is not limited to father, mother, child, brother, sister, wife, husband, grandparent, grandchild, in-law, or any individual who makes her/his home with a volunteer), whether acting individually or in representative capacities, are prohibited from using the volunteer's Girl Scouting position, knowledge or information to obtain personal, professional, political, or financial gain or advantage for the volunteer or others. Volunteers or their family member(s) may discuss their situation with a council staff representative if there is a question of conflict of interest.

A Board member shall not, while serving as a member of the Council Board of Directors, serve in a council position which requires formal GSUSA or council-developed or sanctioned training or which is council or Service Area/District planned.

1.27 POLICY: WHISTLE BLOWER

Retaliation against anyone who has reported an allegation of harassment, sexual harassment, or any violation of any council policy is expressly prohibited and, if it occurs, will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

1.28 POLICY: BEHAVIOR

Any adult volunteer whose behavior is not in keeping with the standards outlined within the Volunteer Essentials, Safety Activity Checkpoints as well as those set forth by this council may be asked to relinquish her or his position. Volunteers should not at any time use profanity when working with girls or when involved in any Girl Scout activity.

1.29. POLICY: CO-ED

Within a camp or overnight setting, males and non-related females must have separate sleeping, dressing and restroom facilities.

1.30 POLICY: TRAVEL/TROOP TRIP POLICY

All troops/groups must acquire proper council approval before engaging in any activity beyond regular troop/group meetings at their designated site and time.

See supporting document(s)

- Troop/group travel and trip procedures

II. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT POLICIES

"All money and other assets, including property, that are raised, earned, or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be held and authorized by a Girl Scout council or Girl Scouts of the USA. Such money and other assets must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. They are the property of and are administered by the Girl Scout council or Girl Scouts of the USA and shall not be sold, given, transferred, or conveyed to a third party for less than fair market value. Such assets are not the property of individuals, troops, geographic units, subordinate units, or communities within a Girl Scout council". (GSUSA Blue Book of Basic Documents - 2017)

It is the responsibility of the Board of Directors of the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Inc. to ensure that the above national policy is followed within our jurisdiction. It is also the responsibility of the Board to ensure that we uphold our responsibility to our donors and to the community as a tax exempt 501(c)(3) organization. The following policies and procedures

provide the structure with which to do this.

2.1 POLICY: FUND OWNERSHIP

By law, Troop/Group and Service Area/District funds are the property of the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Inc. (The Corporation)

2.2 POLICY: FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Those assuming stewardship of any Girl Scout monies within the jurisdiction of the Council are accountable to the Council. The Council authorizes the troop/group and Service Areas/Districts to open accounts and hold monies in a designated institution in accordance with Council policy. The Council may have reason to require access to troop/group or Service Area/District accounts in order to fulfill its fiduciary responsibility or to administer council policies (see corporate resolution regarding financial arrangements of troop/group).

PROCEDURE:

Duly appointed Troop Leaders and Service Area Managers/Service Area Leadership Team/District Chairs authorized by the council to establish a troop or Service Area/District bank account are ultimately responsible for proper recordkeeping and management of all funds in the accounts. Failure to follow all procedures or properly manage funds will result in the Troop Leader's or Service Area Manager's /Service Area Leadership Team's/District Chair's release from all volunteer positions and other legal actions up to and including criminal prosecution may be undertaken.

2.3 POLICY: BANK ACCOUNTS

TROOP/GROUP POLICY:

Each Troop/Group must have a checking account into and out of which all funds flow. This account must be used in support of Girl Scout program.

Each Troop/Group account must be in the name of "Troop/Group number, Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Inc." with the address of the primary Troop Leader or her/his designee. Additionally, the Corporation non-profit identification number must be used on each account.

Duly appointed volunteers must follow council policies when opening the account.

See supporting documents

- Council Procedures – Bank Accounts
- Corporate Resolution regarding financial arrangement of bank accounts.

PROCEDURES:

1. Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia or its authorized representative will issue a Bank Account Authorization form to a duly appointed Troop Leader to be used to establish a troop bank account.

2. Troop bank accounts will be opened at banks designated by the Membership Representative, and in the manner detailed on the authorization form. A maximum of 4 signatories are permitted on a troop account. There must be at least two, including the Troop Leader, and one other nonrelated individual from the troop. All signatories MUST be registered Girl Scout adults and approved volunteers. The person who holds the debit card and/or checkbook is not the same person who receives the monthly bank statements.

3. One copy of the completed Bank Account Authorization Form showing the bank account number must be on file with the appropriate Membership Representative within one week of opening the account.
4. Any change(s) in the account information i.e., signatories, addresses, etc. must be authorized by the Membership Representative who will issue a new Bank Account Authorization Form.
5. Troop bank accounts and the funds therein, are the property of Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia. Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia reserves the right to randomly audit troop accounts and will do so via online access.
6. Money earned during a troop year should be spent during that year. It is appropriate to have a \$100-\$150 account balance remaining to begin the next troop year. Special circumstances requiring larger carry over balances must be discussed and approved by the Membership Representative.
7. Any funds donated to the troop must be handled according to Policy and Procedures at 2.8, Service Area/District/Troop/Group Gift Acceptance, in this document.
8. Service Area/District event expenses, beyond the troop's registration fees for the Service Area/District event, must never be processed through a troop account. Troops hosting a Service Area event should process all event related monies through the Service Area account.
9. Checks are never to be signed without a payee written on the face of the check.
10. The troop may obtain one debit card to be used for deposits and payments; the card is for official Girl Scout business only. The debit card is not to be used for personal purchases. The cardholder is responsible for obtaining purchase receipts, securing the card, and is legally responsible for the transactions posted to the card. Debit card expenditures should be reconciled monthly to ensure accurate and timely bi-annual reporting, and that there are no unauthorized expenditures applied to the account. Inappropriate debit card usage will result in forfeiture of the debit card privilege.
11. Online banking is authorized on troop bank accounts to view account balances, download transaction history, and print copies of checks and statements. Online balance transfers are not authorized. Because all signers are responsible for maintaining the troop account, the user ID and password for access to the account should be shared with all account signers. This will facilitate monitoring the account activity and balance and help prevent cardholder/signers from inadvertently overdrawing the account. Passwords should be changed whenever there is a change in signers on the account.

SERVICE AREA POLICY:

Each Service Area must have a checking account into and out of which all funds flow. This account must be used in support of Girl Scout program.

Each Service Area account must be in the name of "Service Area Name, Girl Scouts of

Historic Georgia, Inc.” with the address of the Service Area Leadership Team or Service Area Treasurer. Additionally, the Corporation non-profit identification number must be used on each account.

Duly appointed volunteers must follow council policies when opening the account.

See supporting documents

Council Procedures – Bank Accounts

Corporate Resolution regarding financial arrangement of bank accounts.

PROCEDURES:

1. Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia or its authorized representative will issue a Bank Account Authorization form to a duly appointed Service Area Manager/Service Area Leadership Team to be used to establish a Service Area bank account.
2. Service Area bank accounts will be opened at banks designated by the Membership Representative and in the manner detailed on the authorization form. A maximum of 4 signatories are permitted on a Service Area account. There must be at least three, including the Service Area Manager/ Service Area Leadership Team, a Membership Representative, and one other nonrelated individual from the Service Area team. All signatories **MUST** be registered Girl Scout adults and approved volunteers or staff. The person who holds the debit card and/or checkbook is not the same person who receives the monthly bank statements.
3. One copy of the completed Bank Account Authorization Form showing the bank account number must be on file with the appropriate Membership Representative within one week of opening the account.
4. Any change(s) in the account information i.e., signatories, addresses, etc. must be authorized by the Membership Representative who will issue a new Bank Account Authorization Form.
5. Service Area bank accounts and the funds therein, are the property of Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia. Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia reserves the right to randomly audit Service Area accounts and will do so via online access.
6. Fundraising for the sole purpose of acquiring Service Area money is prohibited.
7. Any funds donated to the Service Area must be handled according to Policy and Procedures at 2.8, District/Service Area/Troop/Group Gift Acceptance, in this document.
8. All Service Area event monies will be processed through the Service Area account with the exception of Service Area day camp. Troops hosting a Service Area event should process all event related monies through the Service Area account. Service Area event expenses, beyond the troop’s registration fees for the Service Area event, must never be processed through a troop account.
9. Checks are never to be signed without a payee written on the face of the check.
10. Copies of the monthly bank statements must be provided to the Membership Representative.

11. The Service Area may obtain one debit card to be used for deposits and payments; the card is for official Girl Scout business only. The debit card is not to be used for personal purchases. The cardholder is responsible for obtaining purchase receipts, securing the card, and is legally responsible for the transactions posted to the card. Debit card expenditures should be reconciled monthly to ensure accurate and timely bi-annual reporting, and that there are no unauthorized expenditures applied to the account. Inappropriate debit card usage will result in forfeiture of the debit card privilege.

12. Online Banking is authorized on Service Area bank accounts to view account balances, download transaction history, and print copies of checks and statements. Online balance transfers are not authorized. Because all signers are responsible for maintaining the Service Area account, the user ID and password for access to the account should be shared with all account signers. This will facilitate monitoring the account activity and balance and help prevent cardholder/signers from inadvertently overdrawing the account. Passwords should be changed whenever there is a change in signers on the account.

DISTRICT POLICY:

Each District must have a checking account into and out of which all funds flow. This account must be used in support of Girl Scout program.

Each District account must be in the name of “District Name”, Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Inc.” with the address of the District Chair or District Treasurer. Additionally, the Corporation non-profit identification number must be used on each account.

Duly appointed volunteers must follow council policies when opening the account.

See supporting documents

- Council Procedures – Bank Accounts
- Corporate Resolution regarding financial arrangement of bank accounts.

PROCEDURES:

1. Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia or its authorized representative will issue a Bank Account Authorization form to a duly appointed District Chair to be used to establish a District bank account.

2. District bank accounts will be opened at banks designated by the Membership Representative and in the manner detailed on the authorization form. A maximum of 4 signatories are permitted on a District account. There must be at least three, including the District Chair, a Membership Representative, and one other nonrelated individual from the District team. All signatories **MUST** be registered Girl Scout adults and approved volunteers or staff. The person who holds the debit card and/or checkbook is not the same person who receives the monthly bank statements.

3. One copy of the completed Bank Account Authorization Form showing the bank account number must be on file with the appropriate Membership Representative within one week of opening the account.

4. Any change(s) in the account information; i.e., signatures, addresses, etc. must be authorized by the Membership Representative who will issue a new Bank Account Authorization Form.

5. District bank accounts and the funds therein are the property of Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia. Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia reserves the right to randomly audit District accounts and will do so via online access.
6. Fundraising for the sole purpose of acquiring District money is prohibited.
7. Any funds donated to the District must be handled according to Policy and Procedures at 2.8, District/Service Area/Troop/Group Gift Acceptance, in this document.
8. All District event monies will be processed through the District account. Service Areas hosting a District event should process all event related monies through the District account. District event expenses, beyond the Service Area's registration fees for the District event, must never be processed through a Service Area account.
9. Checks are never to be signed without a payee written on the face of the check.
10. Copies of the monthly bank statements must be provided to the Membership Representative.
11. The District may obtain one debit card to be used for deposits and payments; the card is for official Girl Scout business only. The debit card is not to be used for personal purchases. The cardholder is responsible for obtaining purchase receipts, securing the card, and is legally responsible for the transactions posted to the card. Debit card expenditures should be reconciled monthly to ensure accurate and timely bi-annual reporting, and that there are no unauthorized expenditures applied to the account. Inappropriate debit card usage will result in forfeiture of the debit card privilege.
12. Online Banking is authorized on District bank accounts to view account balances, download transaction history, and print copies of checks and statements. Online balance transfers are not authorized. Because all signers are responsible for maintaining the District account, the user ID and password for access to the account should be shared with all account signers. This will facilitate monitoring the account activity and balance and help prevent cardholder/signers from inadvertently overdrawing the account. Passwords should be changed whenever there is a change in signers on the account.

2.4 POLICY: STEWARDSHIP OF FUNDS

TROOP/GROUP:

All funds related to the Troop/Group must be deposited into the Troop/Group checking account as received (i.e. there should be no cash on hand).

Each Troop/Group must prepare a financial report at least twice per year accounting for **all** checking accounts maintained by the Troop/Group and submit required documentation.

Funds from disbanded and/or dormant Troop/Groups will revert to the council and will be disbursed according to council procedures.

PROCEDURES:

1. All funds must be deposited into the troop bank account.
2. Receipts for all cash expenditures must be saved and kept with the original Detailed Cash Record form.

3. Income and expenses must be documented **as these occur** on the Detailed Cash Record form and submitted to the Membership Representative twice annually (April 1 and October 1). The Detailed Cash Record showing the income and expenses, along with the March (for the April report) and September (for the October report) bank statements must be submitted to the Membership Representative.

4. The council reserves the right to audit, close or place a hold on any troop bank account if established procedures are not followed.

5. Troop financial records should be open for inspection by parents and Service Area or council staff at all times.

6. When a troop disbands, remaining troop monies, the troop's checkbook and all other materials belonging to the troop must be returned to the Membership Representative.

7. When a troop disbands, splits, or reorganizes, and a girl or girls transfer to another troop, a prorated share of remaining troop funds will be forwarded to the troop to which they transfer.

8. The Council encourages disbanding troops to expend all remaining troop funds in a manner determined by the girls, i.e. final troop trip, contribution to Service Area for girl program, charitable donation to another organization, etc. Troop funds do not become the property of any individual, girl or adult, per direction in Volunteer Essentials/Safety Activity Checkpoints.

9. When a troop disbands without girl-directed fund distribution, either the outgoing Troop Leader or the assigned staff member will be authorized to close the troop bank account and write a final check from the account or request that the financial institution issue a check for the balance in the account made payable to Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia. The check will be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer along with a completed Disbanded/Dormant Troop Bank Account Closure Information form.

Disbanded troop monies will be held in a restricted account for one (1) year from the time of disbandment. Monies not claimed by regrouping of the troop will be transferred to the council operating budget.

If one or more members of a disbanded troop re-register with another troop within one (1) year of their troop disbanding, a prorated share of monies will be disbursed to their new troop.

10. If a troop bank account has been dormant for one (1) year or more, council staff will be authorized to close the account and request that the financial institution issue a check for the balance in the account made payable to Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia. The check will be forwarded to the Chief Financial Officer along with a completed Disbanded/Dormant Troop Bank Account Closure Information form. The check will be deposited into the council operating budget.

SERVICE AREA:

Each Service Area must prepare a financial report at least twice per year accounting for **all** checking accounts maintained by the Service Area and submit a copy to the Director of Membership. A copy of the financial report must be maintained for Service Area records and cancelled checks, bank statements, and financial reports must be retained for seven years.

Service Area Leadership Team or their designee **must** present the Service Area financial reports to their members at least quarterly.

PROCEDURES:

1. All funds must be deposited into the Service Area bank account.
2. Receipts for all cash expenditures must be saved and kept with the original Detailed Cash Record form.
3. Income and expenses must be documented **as these occur** on the Service Area Detailed Cash Record form and submitted to the Membership Representative twice annually (April 1 and October 1). The Detailed Cash Record showing the income and expenses, along with the March (for the April report) and September (for the October report) bank statements must be submitted to the Membership Representative.
4. The council reserves the right to audit, close, or place a hold on any Service Area bank account if established procedures are not followed.
5. Service Area financial records should be open for inspection by Service Area team members or council staff at all times.
6. A Service Area Proposed Budget is due to the Membership Representative no later than September 1st of each year. This budget will reflect anticipated income and expenses for the upcoming Girl Scout year. Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia reserves the right to disapprove anticipated expenses.

DISTRICT:

Each District must prepare a financial report at least twice per year accounting for **all** checking accounts maintained by the District and submit a copy to the Director of Membership. A copy of the financial report must be maintained for District records and cancelled checks, bank statements, and financial reports must be retained for seven years.

District Chair or their designee **must** present the District financial reports to their members at least quarterly.

PROCEDURES:

1. All funds must be deposited into the District bank account.
2. Receipts for all cash expenditures must be saved and kept with the original Detailed Cash Record Form.
3. Income and expenses must be documented **as these occur** on the Detailed Cash Record form and submitted to the Membership Representative twice annually (April 1 and October 1).

The Detailed Cash Record showing the income and expenses, along with the March (for the April report) and September (for the October report) bank statements must be submitted to the Membership Representative.

4. The council reserves the right to audit, close, or place a hold on any District bank account if established procedures are not followed.

5. District financial records should be open for inspection by district team members or council staff at all times.

6. A District Proposed Budget is due to the Membership Representative no later than September 1st of each year. This budget will reflect anticipated income and expenses for the upcoming Girl Scout year. Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia reserves the right to disapprove anticipated expenses.

2.5. POLICY: DELINQUENT FUNDS Any Girl Scout adult delinquent in financial accounts to the Council beyond 60 days will not be allowed to serve in any position that requires training such as troop leader, or in any policy position such as delegate or board member, nor will they be allowed to handle money, product or merchandise for the Council until the amount owed is paid in full. Reappointment to a volunteer position is at the discretion of the Council. The Council reserves the right to take appropriate measures including legal action if the funds owed are not remitted to the council office. Legal action includes but is not limited to taking out a warrant to appear in small claims court.

2.6. POLICY: FUNDING *(updated March 2017)* Troops/Groups may be financed in any of the following ways: dues, council sponsored, product sales, additional troop sponsored money earning projects (which must be preapproved by the Council), and if necessary, through council financial aid available to individual members. Funding for Troop/Group activities is primarily the responsibility of the Troop/Group, the girls and their families. Service Areas and Districts can raise funds to support girl program. Fundraising by Service Areas/Districts will have an annual (per membership year) limit per the following criteria and requires preapproval by the Council *:

- \$1000 Level – Service Areas/Districts with 100 or fewer girls (15 SAs)
- \$2000 level – Service Areas/Districts with 101-300 girls (15 SAs)
- \$3000 level – Service Areas/Districts with 301 and higher girls (11 SAs)

2.7. POLICY: COUNCIL GIFT ACCEPTANCE The Council has detailed Stewardship Guidelines for acceptance of gifts. Questions should be directed to the CEO. Designated “gift solicitors” may accept unrestricted cash gifts only on behalf of the Council. All other gifts must be referred to the Chief Executive Officer or Chair of the Board of Directors or his/her designee for approval before acceptance.

2.8. POLICY: DISTRICT/SERVICE AREA/TROOP/GROUP GIFT ACCEPTANCE *(updated March 2017)* A monetary gift of \$250 or above specifically earmarked for a Troop/Group or Service Area/District must be sent to and processed through the Council. The funds must benefit the entire Troop/Group or Service Area/District, not a specific individual. Funds will be disbursed to the Troop/Group or Service Area/District only after the Troop Leader(s) or Service Area Manager/Service Area Leadership Team/District Chair signs off on a Troop/Group Gift Acceptance Form, which confirms that the funds will be for the benefit of the

entire Troop/Group or Service Area/District and not for a specific individual. **A monetary gift of less than \$250** specifically earmarked for a Troop/Group or Service Area/District may be sent directly to that Troop/Group or Service Area/District. The funds must benefit the entire Troop/Group or Service Area/District, not a specific individual. No notification of the Council is required. The troop is responsible for thanking the donor. Documentation of tax deductibility of the donation **cannot** be provided by the troop/Service Area.

- Documentation can only be provided if the gift is processed through the council

Monetary gifts donated directly to Troops/Group or Service Areas/Districts or given through the council and restricted for Troops/Groups or Service Areas/Districts are limited to a combined total of **\$300 per year per Troop/Group** and **\$500 per year per Service Area/District**.

For In-kind gifts which are solicited and received by a Troop/Group or Service Area/District **in support of fund raising events which benefit the Council** (e.g. Family Partnership events), the Council must be notified that these gifts were received so that the council can properly acknowledge, thank and provide the appropriate tax documentation to the donor.

For **In-kind gifts**, which are solicited and received by a Troop/Group or Service Area/District **in support of Troop/Group or Service Area/District activities** (e.g. food for a camp out, Gold/Silver/Bronze projects, etc.) no notification of the Council is required.

- The troop is responsible for thanking the donor.
- Documentation of tax deductibility of the donation **cannot** be provided.

2.9. POLICY: FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

The Council shall designate funds for financial assistance for girls or adults based on need and without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, or ability. Financial assistance either for girls or for adults is the responsibility of the Council, not the Service Area/District. If funds are distributed by the Service Area/District, full documentation must be provided and must follow procedure established by the council.



Child Abuse Reporting Agencies

Volunteers are mandated reporters.

ALABAMA – Russell County

Department of Human Resources
1003 25th Avenue
Phoenix City, AL 36869
(334) 214-5780 Day
(334) 298-6535 After hours
<http://www.dhr.alabama.gov>

SOUTH CAROLINA

Department of Social Services
State Child Protective and Preventive Services 1535 Confederate Avenue
Columbia, SC 29202
Jasper County – (843)726-7519
Hampton County- (803)943-9261
(803)943-9271
<http://dss.sc.gov>

GEORGIA

Department of Human Services
Division of Family and Children Services
Georgia Protective Office
#2 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 2
Atlanta, GA 30303
(404) 651-6318
1-855-GACHILD/ 1-855-422-4453 Child Abuse Hotline - 24 hour
<http://dfcs.dhs.georgia.gov/child-abuse-neglect>

The policies contained herein were adopted by the Board of Directors of Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Inc. on May 20, 2014 and supersede previous policies.

Your Support Team

A team of volunteers and staff provides you with local support, learning opportunities, and advice. As a volunteer, you will have the most contact with your Girl Scout support team, which may be called a service area. Never hesitate to contact them, because your support team will guide and assist you in all things Girl Scouting. If you have questions about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, resources in the National Program Portfolio (National Leadership Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*), or selling Girl Scout cookies and other products, go to your team for answers and ongoing support.

Getting Started with the National Leadership Program through Journeys

The Girl Scout program is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), in which girls Discover themselves, Connect with others, and Take Action to make the world a better place—all within the safety of an all-girl environment where girls take the lead, learn by doing, and learn cooperatively.

At the core of the GSLE are National Leadership Journeys, fun and challenging experiences grouped around a theme and spread over a series of sessions. Each Journey has all the important components of the GSLE sewn right in. So, to guide girls on a great Journey, all you need is enthusiasm and a sense of adventure. Before you dive in, try these six simple tips:



1. **Choose a Journey.** Because Girl Scouting is girl-led, it's important to give girls the chance to pick the Journey they want to do. Talk to them about what each Journey for their grade level is about and let them choose one.
2. **Get to know the Journey.** Pick up a girls' book and an adult guide. Read the girls' book for the pleasure of it, just to get an overview of the Journey's theme and content.
3. **Invite girls (and their parents/guardians) to use their imaginations** to make the Journey come to life in ways that excite them. Remember that you and the girls don't have to do everything exactly as laid out in the sessions.
4. **Step back and watch** how the girls, with your knowledge, support, and guidance, have enormous fun and a rewarding experience. Celebrate with them as they earn their National Leadership Journey awards—and perhaps some Girl Scout badges, too!

Planning in a Girl-Led Environment

It's important to start planning your time with girls. You should consider the following questions and begin to map out your Girl Scout year:

- How many times each month will you meet? When do you plan to break for holidays?
- How many weeks do you need to allocate for the Girl Scout Cookie Program?
- Will you have time in your schedule for guest speakers and other visitors?
- If you've worked with this group before, what are their preferences: badge work? field trips? other activities? Inform yourself and your girls about the many Girl Scout program options available to them. Learn more choices here: [Our Program](#)

If your group will be meeting for less than a year (such as at a resident camp or during a series), you'll be able to adjust the calendar to suit your needs. In the same way, if you're planning a multi-year event (such as a travel excursion), add one or two more years to the framework.

After you've drafted a loose framework, ask the girls what they think. Or, create the online calendar together! Remember that you want girls to lead, but younger girls will need more guidance, while older girls will require much less. Seniors and Ambassadors may not even want you to draft a calendar in advance, so if they balk at what you've done, let them take the reins. (Journeys for older girls include planning pages specifically designed to help them customize their Journey.) Daisies and Brownies, on the other hand, may enjoy your calendar and just fill in a few ideas here and there, which will clue you in to their interests.

As your group starts its Journey, get a discussion (or debate!) going on the Journey's theme and what it means to the girls. Probe to find out what they're most interested in accomplishing during their time together, and then help them connect those interests to their Journey.

Volunteer Toolkit

Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), which launches August 14, 2017 for K-5, is about to make your Girl Scout year a lot easier.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you already know that your girls love Girl Scouts for the friends, the fun, and all the new things they get to try.

What if there was a way to run your troop or group that saves you time and helps you plan so that you can spend more time with the girls? Meet the Volunteer Toolkit, the new online tool that makes it easy for you to get the most out of every troop or group meeting.

And here's the best part—with the Volunteer Toolkit, you can say goodbye to digging through big stacks of books and piles of resources. It is accessible from your computer, tablet, or mobile device—placing everything you need in one easy-to-access place that's accessible on the go.

With the Volunteer Toolkit, Troop Leaders can...

1. Access a whole year of Girl Scout fun by grade-level. Year plans come with pre-populated sets of meetings that give you plenty of ideas for activities and all the resources you need at your fingertips.
2. Don't see an activity your troop loves in one of the pre-filled meetings? Well go ahead and add that camping trip or visit to the science museum. Your year plan is fully customizable. You can even change the order of meetings by just dragging and dropping.
3. Track your troop's earned badge and journey awards throughout the year so it is easier to acknowledge each girls' unique achievements and attendance at troop meetings.
4. Access the girl and family rosters to make communication easier. One click email allows you to correspond directly with your troop's parents.
5. Manage troop finances all in one place.

Note: Beginning in August 2017, there will be a series of VTK Tutorial Videos on the GSHG website under Volunteer Resources.



Meeting with Girls for the First Time

When you first get together with girls (and this meeting may also include parents/guardians, or you may decide to hold a separate meeting for the adults), you'll want to get to know the girls, and give them a chance to get to know one another.

Icebreaker games that let girls share simple details about themselves are a great way to start off your first gathering. Journeys often start with such an icebreaker, so if you're digging into a Journey right away, you'll be all set. You can also check your council's resources or search the Internet for "icebreakers for kids" to find more ideas.

If you already know which Journey the girls want to do, you'll find it useful to accomplish some of the following during this meeting. (Note that all these points are detailed in the adult guide for each Journey, too). If your girls haven't chosen a Journey yet, you can spend time during the first meeting talking about the themes of the three Journeys that are available for their grade level and find out which one the group would like to do. You can then discuss these points in the next meeting, if you run out of time.

1. **Introduce the Journey, its theme, and its ties to leadership.** Each Journey's adult guide gives you ideas for talking with girls and their parents/guardians about the Journey's theme and the Three Keys to Leadership.
2. **Find out what interests the group (and be sure to include the other adult volunteers), so that you and the girls can begin to customize the Journey.** Do the girls want to dig deeper into a particular aspect of the Journey? Without promising anything (yet!), ask the girls to talk about what they're passionate about, what they've always wanted to do, and how they would spend their time if money and other barriers were no object. Remind the girls they can do activities inside or outside. Build off the ideas shared, but be sure to include opinions from **all** the girls. Ask direct questions of those who seem to be holding back or are unsure about answering, so everyone is included.
3. **Get the girls talking about how they want to schedule their time together.** Use the planning pages from their Journey (referring to your draft calendar only as needed, so that the girls lead). Consider questions like these:
 - Can girls organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular Journey topic or theme?
 - Is there an event that meshes with this topic or area of interest?
 - Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via email or social media?
 - Can they invite a guest speaker to answer questions or demonstrate particular skills?
 - Which badges can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?
 - If they are Juniors or older, are they interested in pursuing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards?
 - Do they have ideas for activities that will involve younger or older girls?

Using Safety Activity Checkpoints



When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. You can find these on your council's website and on the Volunteer Toolkit {insert council VTK link}; your council may also provide them in some additional electronic or printed form.

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint offers you information on where to do this activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity, how to prepare yourselves for the activity, what specific steps to follow on the day of the activity, and so on.

In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can email or print them for co-volunteers, parents/guardians, and the girls themselves. The checkpoints are formatted as checklists, so that you, your co-volunteers, and the girls can check off each step that has been accomplished.

In keeping with the three processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, be sure that:

- **All activities are girl-led.** Take into account the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities, while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.
- **Girls have the chance to learn cooperatively.** Have girls teach each other new skills they may need for the activities, rather than hearing all that from you.
- **Girls learn by doing.** If research or special equipment is needed, they'll learn better by doing that research themselves than by having you do the legwork and report back to them. Even Daisies can do basic research and give reports or do show-and-tell for each other. Ambassadors may need you only for moral support as they research, teach each other, and plan every detail of their excursions.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with your council **before** making any definite plans with the girls. A few activities are allowed only with written council pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely:

- **Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from your council for girls ages 12 and older who will operate motorized vehicles, such as go-carts and personal watercraft; take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable; or fly in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot air balloons, and blimps.
- **Warning:** The following activities are never allowed for any girl: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing, go-karting, and outdoor trampolining); creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skis, and wakeboards); hunting; shooting a projectile at another person; riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes; and taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher.

An additional note: Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that

could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from your council. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring volunteer who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position. You are required to obtain permission slips signed by the girls’ parents/guardians; see the [“Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels”](#) chapter of this handbook for more information.



Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

**Girl Scout troops are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow development of individual girls. The following troop sizes are recommended:

- Girl Scout Daisies: 8–12 girls
- Girl Scout Brownies: 12–20 girls
- Girl Scout Juniors: 12–25 girls
- Girl Scout Cadettes: 6–25 girls
- Girl Scout Seniors: 6–30 girls
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: 6–30 girls
- Girl Scout Multi- Grade Level: 12-30 girls,** Note: See page 69 for program rationale.

Girl Scouts' volunteer-to-girl ratios show the **minimum** number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls. (Councils may also establish **maximums** due to size or cost restrictions.) These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one volunteer has to respond to an emergency, a second volunteer is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you'll find the chart extremely helpful.

	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for every:	One additional volunteer to each additional:	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	One additional volunteer to each additional:
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K–1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

Here are some examples: If you're meeting with 17 Daisies, you'll need three volunteers, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), and at least one of whom is female. If this isn't making sense to you, follow the chart: you need two volunteers for 12 Daisies and one more volunteer for up to six more girls. You have 17, so you need three volunteers. If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated volunteers, at least one of which is female (because, on the chart, two volunteers can manage up to 25 Cadettes).

In addition to the volunteer-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old or at the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18.

Adult supervision for all girls also extends to any online activity. For additional information on online safety, please consult:

- The "Computer/Online Use" Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge
- Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Girls, Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Parents/Guardians and Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Volunteers



Following the Girl Scouts Safety Guidelines

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from your council. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18) and must be screened by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, or a topic is discussed that could be considered sensitive, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.
4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow your council's guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.
5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other volunteers to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/volunteers, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls' families.
6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer, over the age of 21 and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.
9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults and volunteers are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers. Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult. On group websites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.
12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout-approved product sales and efforts.



girl scouts

Outdoor Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent in the outdoors, including how to plan and organize outdoor activities. Acknowledge a girl's mastery of an outdoor skill and invite her to challenge herself further by taking that next step up and out. Outdoor fun can be endless when girls lead.

Look Out
Share past experiences in the outdoors.
Talk about favorite outdoor places and why they're special.
Wonder what else can be seen in the outdoors.

Meet Out
Stop outside to look, listen, feel, and smell.
Share what was observed.
Learn more about what was discovered.

Move Out
Plan and take a short walk outside.
Discuss being prepared for the weather.
Do activities to explore nature.
Plan and carry out an indoor sleepover.

Explore Out
Plan and take a short and easy hike.
Discuss what to take in a day pack.
Dress for the weather.
Plan a healthy snack or lunch.
Learn how to stay safe in the outdoors.

Cook Out
Plan and cook a simple meal outdoors.
Make a list of gear and food supplies needed.
Learn and practice skills needed to cook a meal.
Review outdoor cooking safety.
Practice hand and dish sanitation.
Create a Kaper Chart for the cookout.

Sleep Out
Plan and carry out an overnight in a cabin/backyard.
Discuss what to pack for the sleep out.
Learn to use and care for camping gear.
Learn and practice new outdoor skills.
Plan a menu with a new cooking skill.
Discuss campsite organization.
Plan time for fun activities.

Camp Out
Plan and take a 1- to 2-night camping trip.
Take more responsibility for planning.
Learn and practice a new outdoor skill.
Learn a new outdoor cooking skill.
Plan a food budget, then buy and pack food.
Practice campsite set up.
Plan an agenda that includes fun activities.
Explore/protect the surrounding environment.

Adventure Out
Plan and take an outdoor trip for several days.
Learn and practice a new outdoor skill.
Learn a new outdoor cooking skill.
Develop first-aid skills and use safety check points.
Budget, schedule, and make arrangements.
Participate in an environmental service project.
Teach and inspire others about the outdoors.
Imagine new experiences to be had outdoors.
Practice all Leave No Trace principles.

LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES:

Plan Ahead & Prepare

Leave What You Find

Respect Wildlife

Minimize Campfire Impacts

Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

Dispose of Waste Properly

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts

No matter how you volunteer with Girl Scouts, your investment of time and energy will pay back tenfold. With your help, girls will be able to identify issues they care about and work with one another to resolve them. Your interests and life experiences make you the perfect person to be a new kind of partner for girls, someone who creates a safe environment where they can work together and each girl feels free to work toward her highest aspirations. Have no doubt: You, and nearly one million other volunteers like you, are helping girls make a lasting impact on the world.

Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

Your most important role as a Girl Scout volunteer is to be excited about everything this opportunity affords you: a chance to help girls succeed, play a critical role in their lives, and watch them blossom! You also want to be someone who enjoys the activities you'll be embarking on with the girls—whether you're volunteering at a camp, working with girls who are traveling, or partnering with girls on a short-term series on a topic that interests you.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll serve as a partner and role model to girls. You'll also work closely with a co-volunteer, because two volunteers must be present at all times when working with girls, and at least one of those volunteers must be female and *not* related to the other adult. This is an important distinction that bears repeating: Men can serve as troop volunteers, but an adult female who is not related to the other volunteer must be present at all times, and only in cases of emergency is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer.

Remember to also check the volunteer-to-girl ratios in the [Quick-Start Guide](#) and the [“Safety-Wise”](#) chapter of this handbook.

In *More than ‘Smores: Success and Surprises in Girl Scouts Outdoor Experiences*, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) has described the role of Adult Volunteers:

“Because everything girls do outdoors in Girl Scouts must be supported by an adult, these results speak indirectly to adult volunteers and their preparation. To get girls outdoors more regularly, Girl Scouts need adult volunteers who encourage and promote outdoor experiences. Communicating to volunteers and parents that casual outdoor experiences are effective ways of giving girls opportunities to build competencies and try new things may be the key to opening the gateway for all Girl Scouts to participate in the outdoors on a more regular basis.” (2014, p.27)

Your Responsibilities

Your other responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Understanding the Three Keys to Leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Discover, Connect, and Take Action
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach
- Working in a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you'll also partner with other volunteers and council staff for support and guidance
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls' interests and needs
- Providing guidance and information regarding Girl Scout group meetings with girls' parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media, and any other method you choose
- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork, such as permission slips
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team as well as your council
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God* and my country,

To help people at all times,

And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word "God" in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word "God." **Note:** This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls' books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it's your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your group and to make sure that everyone in the group feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls' families.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong,
and responsible for what I say and do,

and to

respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Your Volunteer Support Team

In your role as a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll team up with co-volunteers, parents/guardians, members of the community, council staff, and others who have expressed interest in working alongside you. The adult guide of each Journey gives you tips and guidance for creating a friends-and-family network to support you all along the way.

The other volunteers on your support team may help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Being responsible for communicating with girls and parents/guardians
- Locating volunteers with special skills to facilitate a specialized meeting
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Building girls outdoor skills and experiences
- Managing group records

If you have a large support team, the first thing you'll want to do is meet with this group and discuss what brought each of you to Girl Scouts, review your strengths and skills, and talk about how you would like to work together as a team. You might also discuss:

- When important milestones will happen (Girl Scout cookie activities, field trips, travel plans, events, dates for other opportunities) and how long the planning process will take
- When and where to meet as a group of volunteers, if necessary
- Whether, when, where, and how often to hold parent/guardian meetings
- Whether an advance trip to a destination, event site, or camp needs to happen

Remember to call on your volunteer support team. This team can help you observe a meeting, assign you a buddy, help with registration forms, assist you with opening a bank account, plan your first meeting, and so on. Also plan to attend support meetings—usually held several times throughout the year—that provide excellent opportunities to learn from other volunteers.

Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts strives to provide you with the necessary information to successfully manage your group of girls and to let you know how and where you can get additional information on certain topics when you want to learn more. Volunteer learning is offered in a variety of ways to best meet your unique learning styles: written resources, face-to-face learning, interactive online learning—and additional methods are being developed and tested all the time.

Learn about Girl Scouts Online

There's a good chance you've already logged on to [GS University](#) to watch Girl Scouting 101 or Volunteering for Girl Scout Series and Events, our self-paced, online orientations to Girl Scouting. If you haven't, please contact your local council for your passwords. Those online sessions and *Volunteer Essentials* are designed to give you all of the information you need to start working with girls. They're always available; think of them as references you can use whenever you need them.



Online through our council website, you'll currently find learning modules that you can complete on your own schedule and at your own pace, as well as face-to-face training opportunities that allow for immediate feedback on the skills learned and knowledge gained. You also have resources—like this publication, a New Volunteer Guide, and the Journey adult guides, for example—to use as a reference during the next year. Read what you need now, and come back to it when you're ready for more. If you have already completed Girl Scouting 101 online and are part of the troop leadership team, you will also need to complete the council's orientation session, New Leader Orientation.

The following charts show the training provided to support the various Girl Scout volunteer roles and activities in which you may participate:

<p>If you want to volunteer for this position ↓</p> <p>Then you need to complete these →</p>	Volunteer Application and Background Check	Membership Registration	Volunteer Position and Agreement	Volunteering for Girl Scouts Service Events Outline Training	Girl Scouting 101 Online Training	New Leader Orientation (Face-to-face)	Review Volunteer Essentials	Grade Level Training	Other Required Training and Notes
Adult Learning Facilitator/ Trainer/Training Coordinator	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	*	Yes	*	*Training dependent on area of focus
Booth Sale Adult Attendee (under supervision of leaders/chaperones. <i>For parents who wish to observe their daughter's activities without taking an active role</i>)	NO*	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	*May not supervise any girls but his/her own. May not be alone with girls. May not handle Girl Scout money.
Booth Sale Chaperone	Yes	Yes	Yes*	No	No	No	No	No	*Product sales parent permission

									forms
Parent Attendee (under supervision of leaders. <i>For parents who wish to observe their daughter's activities without taking an active role.</i>)	No*	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	*May not supervise any girls but his/her own. May not be alone with girls. May not handle Girl Scout money.
Parent Volunteer/Helper - Approved	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Training dependent on activity. See next page.
Parent Helper – Infrequent (1-2 timers/year; under supervision of leadership)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Parent Helper – Regular/ongoing	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	Training dependent on activity. See next page.
Series Advisor	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Position Training
Service Unit/Service Area/ District Event Director	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Position Training
Service Unit/Service Area/District Event Pathway Coordinator	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Position Training
Service Unit/Service Area Manager/Co-Manager	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Position Training
Service Unit/Service Area Product Sale Manager	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Position Training
Service Area/District Team – Other	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Position Training if offered
Special Skills/Activity Facilitator – one time/occasional (under supervision of leadership)	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	i.e.: archery instructor for event, day camp, or troop activity. Dependent on activity. See next page.
Special Skills/Activity Facilitator – Regular	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Dependent on activity. See next page.
Troop/Group Activity Planner	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	
Troop/Group Product Sale Manager	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Position Training
Troop/Group Support (committee member, parent helper, Treasurer)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	

This guide is intended to be an at-a-glance resource of some of the standards found in Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints. It is NOT be a replacement for knowing the full standards found in these resources. Please be sure to review the additional requirements noted in the Safety Activity Checkpoints.

<p>If you want to volunteer for this position,</p>  <p>Then you need to complete these</p> 	CPR/ First Aid Adult and Child	Beyond the Meeting Place Home Study	Ceremonies/Campfires/S'mores/S ongs	Outdoor Skills 101	Outdoor Skills 102	Life Guard	Basic Water Rescue/ Small Craft Safety BWR/SCS	Basic Archery	Grade Level Training	Notes
Leaving the Meeting Place (any activity away from the normal meeting place including simple field trips to a local museum, fire station or attraction or day time activities at a camp or state park)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Canoeing/ Sit-on Kayaking (regardless of meeting site)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	*or equivalent training or documented experience
Indoor Cooking (residential kitchen, NOT at regular meeting site)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Outdoor Cooking (i.e., campfire or propane stove)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	
Indoor Overnight (an enclosed facility with a bathroom; i.e., gym, church hall, lodge)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	No	No	
Campfire with S'mores	Yes	Yes	Yes or	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	
Outdoor Overnight (camping – bathroom facilities in separate structure; i.e., platform tents, cabins, pitched tents)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No	
Primitive Camping (no facilities)	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	
Swimming – private pool only (if at <u>regular</u> meeting site)	Yes	No*	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	*if at regular meeting site
Swimming – including hotel and	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes*	No	No	No	*waterfront component

private pools										may also be required depending on location
Wading (regardless of meeting site)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes or	Yes	No	No	
Fishing (regardless of meeting site)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	
Canoeing (regardless of meeting site)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	
Tubing (regardless of meeting site)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	*must also have Moving Water certification. Lifeguard with Waterfront may also be used
Special Skills/Activity Facilitator – Regular	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Dependent on activity. See next page.	
Troop/Group Activity Planner	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No		
Troop/Group Product Sale Manager	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No	Position Training	
Troop/Group Support (committee member, parent helper, Treasurer)	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	Yes	No		
Other – see Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints										

Volunteers may need additional training according to their troop or group's activities. Please see the Safety Activity Checkpoints. For safety questions, contact your council staff support person or email safety@gshq.org.

- **Beyond the Meeting Place** Home Study- a registered adult from your troop/pathway group must complete this course prior to leaving the meeting place with girls (i.e., field trips, etc.).
- First Aid/Adult and Child CPR- a registered adult from your troop/pathway group must complete this course to serve as the "First Aider" for all events/trips away from the normal meeting site and for certain other specific activities indicated in the Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Outdoor Skills 101 - a registered adult from your troop/pathway group must complete this overnight course prior to going on overnight camping trips.

Any registered Girl Scout adult may participate in the following additional learning opportunities:

Archery Level 1 Instructor

Length of course: 8 hours Min/ Max: 6/10

The purpose of this course is to teach participants how to set up and operate a safe, short-term archery program, guide new archers, maintain the equipment, and create fun games for new archers. This course certifies participants to provide basic archery programs. This class is required for Girl Scouts to participate in archery activities.

Basic Water Rescue/Small Craft Safety – Canoe (BWR/SCS)

Prerequisite: Skills requirements Length of course: 8 hours, (course time may be shortened by blended learning on line component) Min/ Max: 6/20

Provides the information and skills to prevent, recognize, and respond to small craft and aquatic emergencies using non-swimming rescues. This class is required to take Girl Scouts canoeing on lakes. **Note: Moving Water component may be added to take applicable Girl Scout age levels canoeing on rivers.**

Beyond the Meeting Place Home-Study and On Line – required course if going away from your meeting place, (example – trips, outings)

This home-study includes progression (age-appropriate and experience-appropriate activities), girl led process, minimal impact principals, poisonous / venomous plants and animals, dressing for the outdoors, required GSHG travel/trip procedures, food nutrition and safety considerations for traveling, and safety considerations when traveling. A registered adult from any troop or pathway group must complete this course prior to conducting any kind of travel or trip, including local day-time field trips. This training allows troops/groups to take simple field trips (to local attractions such as museums fire stations); take day trips to explore the outdoor environment (a hike at a state park); or enjoy an overnight stay in an indoor setting (hotel, school, church, or lodge/cabin) with indoor residential cooking and bathroom facilities for which you don't have to leave the building. This BMP Home-Study is also the pre-requisite required before completing Outdoor Skills 101.

Ceremonial Campfire & S'Mores

Prerequisite: Beyond the Meeting Place Length of course: 2 hours

This optional enrichment course covers basic fire safety and fire building. This training will allow troops/groups to build ceremonial campfires, roast hot dogs and marshmallows (for s'mores) and do simple outdoor grilling with girls. (Training is not needed if adults are grilling without girl participation and away from girls.)

First Aid/ Adult & Child CPR

Length of course: 8 hours Min/ Max: 6/10 – **Required when leaving your meeting place**

The purpose of this course is to recognize and respond to emergencies including shock, cardiac and breathing emergencies for adults, children and infants, heat and cold emergencies, sudden illnesses and poisonings. Additionally, participants will learn first aid for issues from cuts and scrapes to muscle, bone and joint injuries. This class is required before Girl Scouts leave their meeting place and for participation in various other activities (see safety guidelines in Volunteer Essentials and specific Safety Activity Checkpoints).

NOTE: You may be eligible for a First Aid/CPR Challenge session if your certification has not expired past 3 months. In this session no instruction is provided but the participant has a designated timeframe to review materials and practice skill portions and then can request to test out for certifications. Contact the Director of Volunteer Development for more information.

Girl Scouting 101 – required course

Length of course: 45 minutes

Girl Scouting 101 introduces volunteers to the overall Girl Scout Leadership Experience, including Journey resources and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, the Girl Scout Cookie Program, safety guidelines, and much more. Includes: Girl Scout overview; Ways to Participate (pathways); What Girl Scouts Do (GSLE, journeys, Girl's Guides, Bronze/ Silver / Gold Awards); Mission, Promise, and Law; Girl Scout Cookies; Staying Safe (Girl Scouts Safety Standards); Ages and Stages: What Girl Scouts Are Like (girl development for each grade level); and What's Next (how to move forward with your local region or area, how you are supported). Spend about 45–50 minutes—whenever you can fit it into your day. Available online (<http://training.girlscouts.org> , password “aboutGS101”), CD or e-facilitation session (blended learning option with online training and a face-to- face Q&A session).

Grade Level Training - Min- 5

These sessions will help volunteers learn how to use the Journeys. Participants will use hands-on activities to discover how to engage girls at each grade level, learn how to customize a Journey for their group, delve into the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) and the 15 outcomes, review *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, find out how to tie Bronze, Silver and Gold awards into Journey work, and look at the difference between “community service” and “TAKE ACTION” projects. Offered as a face-to-face session. Recommended that volunteers in a leadership role attend within the first three months (or upon changing grade-levels).

LeaderFest and LEAP

This adult event includes a variety of training classes - from core training like New Leader Orientation, Grade Level, and Outdoor Skills 101 to fun, enrichment workshops all in one convenient training event. Participants have the opportunity to take several workshop sessions of their choosing over the course of this event and meet leaders and volunteers from across their region and the council. Check the council website, www.gshg.org , for fees, schedules, and details.

Moving Water Safety – Canoeing

Prerequisite: Basic Water Rescue/Small Craft Safety Length of Course: 1 hour class time or by blended learning on line & river trip Min/Max 6/10

The purpose of this course is to provide individuals with information and skills to prevent, recognize, and respond to moving water emergencies. This class is required before taking Girl Scouts canoeing on rivers or other moving water.

New Leader Orientation (NLO) & New Volunteer Orientation (NVO) – required course

NLO provides the nuts and bolts for getting started as a leader and a basic overview of this volunteer role, as well as other volunteer roles (those not as a troop Leader). Includes: understanding your role as a leader or other volunteer, pathway/troop basics, planning and executing a parent meeting, planning and executing a pathway (troop) meeting using GSLE, setting up the troop checking account and other basics of running a troop/pathway, council policies and basic safety guidelines, travel and ratios, how a SU/SA operates and the importance of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). This training is offered as a face-to-face session and webinar – called Leadership Academy or on line NLO.

Outdoor Skills 101 (OS 101) – required to take girls overnight camping

Prerequisite: Beyond the Meeting Place Home-study (Must be completed at least one week prior to OS101.) Length of course: 18 hours Min/ Max: 6/20

The purpose of this course is to teach additional outdoor skills needed for an outdoor overnight experience. Covers: the eight basic outdoor skills; using campfires to do basic outdoor cooking; how to cook foil meals, one pot meals, and use of a propane stove; using knives safely; knot tying; how to implement girl/adult planning and progression in outdoor activities; and health, safety, and security controls to ensure the wellbeing of girls and adults and to experience living in the out-of-doors. This class is available as a facilitator-led course. This class is required before taking Girl Scouts on experiences where there will be outdoor cooking, campfires or sleeping in an outdoor setting (platform tents, cabins, or pitched tents where bathroom facilities are in a separate structure).

Outdoor Skills 102 (OS 102) – Prerequisite: Outdoor Skills 101 Min/Max: 6/20 These are a series of workshops/courses offered segmented or on a weekend that include advanced outdoor cooking segments, (box oven, dutch oven, vagabond stove & buddy burner, stick cookery, pie irons, fire ring grate cooking, and novelty cooking) back country camping, compass & orienteering, hiking, and backpacking. ** It is highly recommended that volunteers take their troop or group basic overnight camping 2-3 times before enrolling in OS 102.

Volunteer Essentials

Volunteer Essentials is a resource written for volunteers working in all positions. It offers information about Girl Scouts as a movement and a tradition, asks volunteers to assess their own skills and competencies, discusses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and Journey books, highlights other program offerings, shares information about healthy development in girls, instructs volunteers in how to keep girls safe, gives information on taking trips and hosting events, and tells volunteers how to help girls manage group finances, including details on the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Volunteer Essentials is available as a resource guide through our website at www.gshg.org.

Volunteering for Girl Scout Series and Events

Length of course: 25 minutes

Volunteering for Girl Scout Series and Events online orientation introduces volunteers to: What Girl Scouts Do (GSLE, Journeys, Girl's Guides, Bronze/ Silver / Gold Awards), Mission, Promise, and Law, Girl Scout Cookies, Staying Safe (the Girl Scouts Safety Standards), Ages and Stages: What Girl Scouts Are Like (girl development for each grade level), Ready to Work with Girls? (how to move forward with your local council; how you are supported). Available online (<http://training.girlscouts.org> , password "volunteer").

And More!

Additional enrichment and skills classes are offered occasionally and on request with completing a training request form and sending to the Director of Volunteer Development, (i.e., Firebuilding, Lifeguard, Challenge/Ropes Courses, Orienteering, Geocaching, Outdoor Skills 102 segments, Team Building, Intermediate Archery Instructor, etc.) We also offer Training Blitzes and Super Saturdays with a full battery of offerings. Check the online training schedule under the events tab on the GSHG web site, Samoa News (the volunteer e-newsletter) and Face Book for details on additional classes of interest in your area. Learning opportunities ensure that you have the support and safety you need in Girl Scouting. The Volunteer Development department at your council will provide you with the instruction and guidance necessary to fulfill your role successfully as a Girl Scout volunteer—learning that will not only help you. work more effectively with Girl Scouts but also may introduce new skills and behaviors into your work life,

relationships, and personal development. In the end, your service will be recognized and evident to all the girls you help become confident, courageous, and character-driven young women. And that's the greatest reward of all!

Adult Course Equivalency- You may qualify for an equivalency to a GSHG course if you have documented proof of completion with another child/youth serving organization, Girl Scout Council, or Boy Scout Council. These requests are handled on a case-by-case basis by the Director of Volunteer Development. Once documentation is received by way of a signed letter, training card, e-mail or other acceptable correspondence then you will also be required to successfully complete an equivalency questionnaire in order for a full determination to be made.

Knowing How Much You're Appreciated

Whatever your volunteer position, your hard work means the world to girls, to your council staff, and to Girl Scouts of the USA. We're calling on all members of society to help girls reach their full potential, and you've answered that call. So thank you, from the bottom of our hearts.

Just as you'll receive support throughout your volunteering experience, when you reach the end of the

Volunteer Appreciation Month

Volunteer Appreciation Week—a special week in April—is set aside especially for you. Girl Scouts pay tribute to the volunteers who help girls make the world a better place. The week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders' Day (April 22).

In addition, Girl Scouts also celebrates Volunteers Make a Difference Week, in conjunction with Make a Difference Day, which takes place during the weekend in autumn that we set our clocks back.

term
you
signed
up for,
you'll
talk with
your
support
team
about
the

positive parts of your experience, as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return to this position or try something new. The end of your troop year, camp season, overseas trip, or series/event session is just the beginning of your next adventure with Girl Scouting!

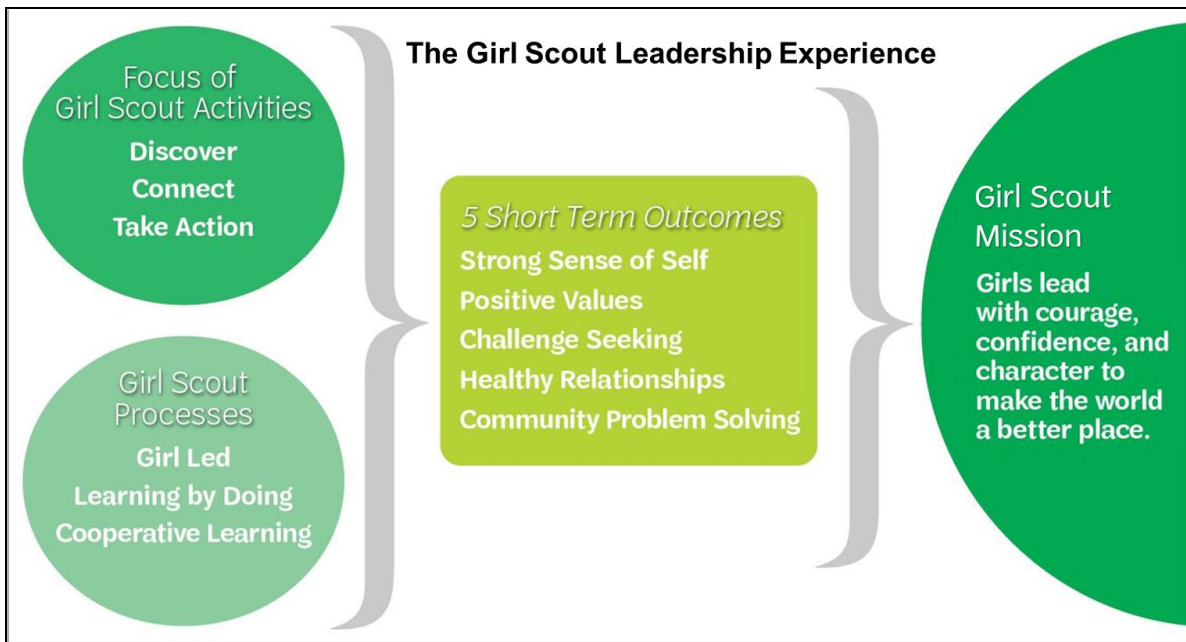
If you're ready for more opportunities to work with girls, be sure to let your council support team know how you'd like to be a part of girls' lives in the future—whether in the same position or in other, flexible ways. Are you ready to organize a series or event? take a trip? work with girls at camp? work with a troop of girls as a year-long volunteer? share your skills at a council office, working behind the scenes? The possibilities are endless, and can be tailored to fit your skills and interests.

Adults in Girl Scouting give generously of their time, talent, resources and skills. Their dedication inspires all of us. Parents, volunteers and other adult members can publicly say "thank you" to their peers by nominating these committed individuals who have exceeded expectation and have made outstanding contributions through the formal adult awards system. Visit the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia website at www.gshg.org for a complete list of formal awards, their criteria and the nomination deadline.



Chapter 2: Girl Scouting as a National Experience

Now that you're a Girl Scout volunteer, you belong to a network of more than 1 million adults who share an important commitment: to help Girl Scouts deliver its mission: building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. During your time as a volunteer, you will play an important role in building girl leaders by guiding girls through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). The GSLE is the foundation of all Girl Scout program activities, describing *what* girls do in Girl Scouts, *how* they do it, and how they will *benefit* from their participation.



Through our national curriculum, girls learn about themselves and their values, and stretch to seek and meet challenges beyond what they might in other settings. They also learn to connect with friends, family, and community to create positive relationships and band together on issues of importance to them. Girls are challenged to look and think critically at the world around them and consider how they can best address significant problems they are passionate about solving. When girls participate in the GSLE, they experience 5 measurable leadership benefits or “outcomes” – ultimately resulting in Girl Scouting achieving its mission. No matter where girls live or what their age or background, as Girl Scouts they are part of a powerful, national experience.

What Girl Scouting Does for Girls

Girl Scouting guides girls to become leaders in their daily lives, their communities, and the world—helping them become the kind of person exemplified by the Girl Scout Law. When girls—as the Girl Scout Law states—are “honest and fair,” when they “use resources wisely,” and know how to be “courageous and strong,” they can be more successful in everything they do. It may start in school and on sports teams, but [research](#) shows that the courage, confidence, and character they develop as Girl Scouts follows them throughout their lives.

Girl Scouting has a practical approach to helping girls become leaders:

- When girls lead in their own lives, they **Discover** their values, skills, and the world around them. This helps them grow more confident and use their abilities to help themselves and others.
- When girls lead in their communities, they **Connect** with other people in a multicultural world. This helps them care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.
- When girls lead in the world, they **Take Action** to make the world a better place. They learn how to identify problems in their community and create solutions to fix them.

Girl Scouts Take Action to Change the World

Girls of all ages can make the world a better place. Watch the videos below to see Girl Scouts in action!

[Troop Inspires a School to Save Water](#)

[Where the Sidewalk Ends](#)

[Juniors Help Historic Building Save Energy](#)

In other words: **Discover + Connect + Take Action = Leadership**. And everything you do with girls in Girl Scouting is aimed at giving them the benefits of these three “keys” to Leadership.

Fun with Purpose

Girl Scouting isn’t just about what we do; it’s also about how we do it. Girls will give almost any activity a try, as long as the volunteers guiding them take the right approach. Girl Scout activities ask adult volunteers to engage girls in three ways that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities:

- **Girl led:** Girls of every grade level shape their experience by asking questions, sharing ideas, and using their imaginations. As a leader, allow girls to take an active role in making decisions and choosing activities. Of course, you’ll provide guidance appropriate to the age of the girls. But when girls play a critical role as decision makers in the planning and implementation of their activities, they are more engaged and active learners. Engagement is one of the most powerful determinants of success and well-being for people of any age.
- **Learning by doing:** This means hands-on learning that engages girls in an ongoing cycle of action and reflection. When girls actively participate in meaningful activities and later reflect on them, they obtain a deeper understanding of concepts and are more likely to master the skills the activities require. So make sure girls always have a chance to talk with each other—and you—after an activity. It doesn’t have to be formal, just get them talking and see what happens.
- **Cooperative learning:** Girls learn to share knowledge and skills in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation as they work together on a common goal. Great teamwork helps girls in school now and on the job later. Look for ways to help each girl contribute her unique talents

and ideas to projects, help all girls see how their differences are valuable to the team, and coach girls to resolve their conflicts productively.

We call these three methods “processes.” You might be wondering how to put these processes into action with the girls in your group. These steps should help you get started:

1. The 3 Girl Scout Processes are already built into the activities. When you do the activities as written, you are already using the processes. As you read through that guide, look at how the activities, conversations, and choice-making options are set up using the three processes. Once you start practicing the processes, you'll probably find that they become second nature when you're with girls.
2. If you haven't already, watch [Girl Scouting 101](#), our online introduction to volunteering with Girl Scouts. (Contact your council for the password.) If you've already watched Girl Scouting 101, you may want to review its “What Girl Scouts Do” section to brush up on the processes.
3. Want more detail about the processes? Watch [“Having Fun with Purpose: The 3 Processes of Girl Scouting”](#) to see the processes in action.

One last tip about using the processes: Girls' time in Girl Scouting isn't a to-do list, so please don't ever feel that checking activities off a list is more important than tuning in to what interests and excites girls and sparks their imaginations. Projects don't have to come out perfectly, and girls don't have to fill their vests and sashes with badges: what matters most is the fun and learning that happens as girls make experiences their own.

The Girl Scout Program

At Girl Scouts, your girl will unleash her inner [G.I.R.L. \(Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader\)[™]](#)!

How? Through the **Girl Scout Leadership Experience**—a collection of engaging, challenging, and fun activities like earning badges, going on awesome trips, selling cookies, exploring science, getting outdoors, and doing community service projects.

At Girl Scouts, she'll get to lead her own adventure (it's her world!) and team up with other girls in an all-girl environment to choose the exciting, hands-on activities that interest her most.

The idea is to learn by doing, and at Girl Scouts, she'll do lots of it.

She'll be inspired to discover her talents and passions in a safe and supportive all-girl setting. She'll join with other Girl Scouts and people in her community—and *together*, they'll take action to change the world.

Along the way, she'll gain important skills in four areas that form the foundation of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience:

- [Science, technology, engineering, and math](#) (STEM)
- [Outdoors](#)
- [Life Skills](#)
- [Entrepreneurship](#)

While she may be exposed to these subjects at school, in other youth programs, or even on her own, at Girl Scouts she'll experience them in a unique way that puts her on a path to a lifetime of leadership, adventure, and success. And because our program is *girl-led*, girls decide what they'll do, together.

At Girl Scouts, "Can I?" quickly turns into "I will!" as girls transform their ideas into action, turn their questions into adventure, and grow their confidence through practice. And with more than 60 million other G.I.R.L.s to cheer them on every step of the way, there's no limit to what they can—and will—accomplish.

The Result? A Lifetime of Leadership!



5 Ways Girl Scouts Builds Girl Leaders

Girl Scouts' mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Since 1912, girls have explored new fields of knowledge, learned valuable skills, and developed strong core values through Girl Scouts. Today Girl Scouts is, as it always has been, the organization best positioned to help girls develop important leadership skills they need to become successful adults.

At Girl Scouts, guided by supportive adults and peers, girls develop their leadership potential through age-appropriate activities that enable them to *discover* their values, skills, and the world around them; *connect* with others in a multicultural environment; and *take action* to make a difference in their world. These activities are designed to be girl led, cooperative, and hands-on—processes that create high-quality experiences conducive to learning.

When girls participate in Girl Scouts, they benefit in 5 important ways:



STRONG SENSE OF SELF

Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and form positive identities.



POSITIVE VALUES

Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly, and show concern for others.



CHALLENGE SEEKING

Girls take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes.



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.



COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING

Girls desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create “action plans” to solve them.

Why do these five outcomes matter?

When girls exhibit these attitudes and skills, they become responsible, productive, caring, and engaged citizens. But don't take our word for it! Studies show that the development of attitudes, behaviors, and skills like confidence, conflict resolution, and problem solving are critical to well-being and rival academic and technical skills in their capacity to predict long-term positive life outcomes.¹

Youth who develop these five outcomes...



Are happier, healthier, and less likely to engage in problem behaviors or be victimized.

Youth who develop competencies such as perseverance, positive self-esteem, and sociability have lower rates of obesity, depression, and aggression, and show greater life satisfaction and well-being than those who do not develop such attributes/skills.²



Achieve more academically and feel more engaged in school. Youth who participate in programs that promote the attributes and skills linked with our five outcomes show stronger academic performance and school engagement compared to those who do not.³ When students are more self-aware and confident about their learning capabilities, they try harder and persist in the face of challenges.



Become strong job applicants. While employers want new hires to have technical knowledge related to a given job, those skills are not nearly as important as good teamwork, decision-making, and communication skills.⁴ Yet many employers around the world report that job candidates lack these attributes.⁵



Become successful, well-adjusted adults. Kindergarteners who learn how to share, cooperate with others, and be helpful are more likely to have a college degree and a job 20 years later than youth who lack these social skills.⁶ They are also less likely to have substance-abuse problems and run-ins with the law.

Join Girl Scouts today! girlscouts.org

¹ Child Trends. (2015). [Key "Soft Skills" that Foster Youth Workforce Success: Toward a Consensus across Fields](#).

² OECD. (2015). [Skills for Social Progress: The Power of Social and Emotional Skills](#). OECD Skills Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris.

³ Durlak, J., Weissberg, R., Dymnicki, A., Taylor, R., & Schellinger, K. (2011). [The impact of enhancing students' social and emotional learning: A meta-analysis of school-based universal interventions](#). *Child Development*, 82(1), 405-432.

⁴ National Association of Colleges and Employers. (2015). [Job Outlook 2016: Attributes Employers Want to See on New College Graduates' Resumes](#).

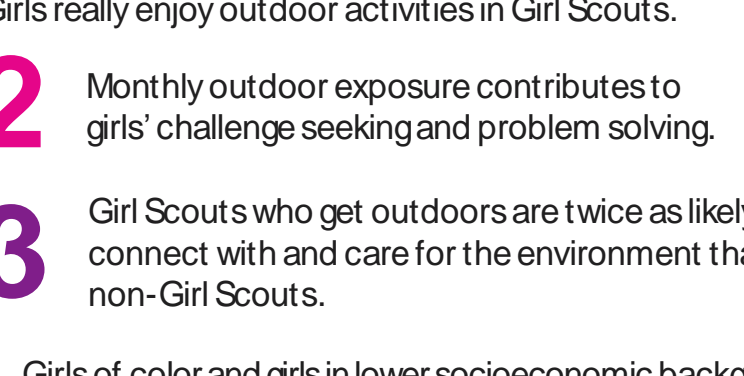
⁵ ManpowerGroup. (2015). [Talent Shortage Survey](#).

⁶ Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley (2015). [Early Social-Emotional Functioning and Public Health: The Relationship between Kindergarten Social Competence and Future Wellness](#). *American Journal of Public Health*, 105(11), 2283-2290.

Top Reasons Why Girls Should Get Outdoors

Findings from the 2014 *More than S'mores* Report*



- 
- 1 Girls really enjoy outdoor activities in Girl Scouts.
- 2 Monthly outdoor exposure contributes to girls' challenge seeking and problem solving.
- 3 Girl Scouts who get outdoors are twice as likely to connect with and care for the environment than non-Girl Scouts.
- 4 Girls of color and girls in lower socioeconomic backgrounds report even stronger benefits from outdoor experiences.



“It was my first time on the water, in a lake. I was scared at first but when I started to paddle I got the hang of it. I really loved it.”

10-year-old Girl Scout , Missouri

Because of Girl Scouts...

71% of girls tried an outdoor activity for the first time.

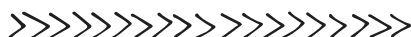
71% of girls improved an outdoor skill.

48% of girls helped other girls do an outdoor activity.

29% of girls overcame a fear of an outdoor activity.



More than S'mores



Start the fun now!

girlscouts.org/join

*More Than S'mores, a 2014 study by the Girl Scout Research Institute, talked to nearly 3,000 Girl Scouts in fourth-through-eighth-grade.

The National Program Portfolio

You'll use several books, awards, and online resources to bring the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to life with girls. We strongly recommend that each girl has her own books from the National Program Portfolio. These books—the Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*—and national program awards—like badges and pins—are an important part of how Girl Scouting helps girls experience the power of millions of girls changing the world together.

As you use the National Program Portfolio with girls, keep in mind that Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) creates materials to serve our vast and diverse community of girls. To help bring topics off the page and into life, we sometimes provide girls and volunteers with suggestions about what people across the country and around the world are doing. We also sometimes make suggestions about movies, books, music, websites, and more that might spark girls' interests.

At GSUSA, we know that not every example or suggestion we provide will work for every girl, family, volunteer, or community. In partnership with those who assist you with your Girl Scout group—including parents, faith groups, schools, and community organizations—we trust you to choose real-life topic experts from your community as well as movies, books, music, websites, and other opportunities that are most appropriate for the girls in your area to enrich their Girl Scout activities.

We are proud to be the premier leadership organization for girls. While girls and their families may have questions or interest in programming relevant to other aspects of girls' lives, we are not always the organization best suited to offer such information. Your council can recommend local organizations or resources that are best suited to do so.

Also note that GSUSA continuously reviews national program content to guarantee that all our resources are relevant and age appropriate, and that their content doesn't include violence, sex, inappropriate language, or risky behavior. We value your input and hope that you will bring to your council's attention any content that concerns you.

National Leadership Journeys

National Leadership Journeys help Girl Scouts learn and practice the Three Keys, aid their communities, and earn leadership awards, progressing up Girl Scouting's [Ladder of Leadership](#) as they do so.

Every Journey is topic-specific, includes hands-on activities, and incorporates Discover, Connect and a Take Action project. Depending upon the content, some Journeys are shorter and some are longer, but simpler to use and easier to deliver.

As of July 2017, the following Journeys are available for volunteers to choose from. They are:

- It's Your Planet—Love It!
- It's Your Story—Tell It!
- It's Your World—Change It! (Daisies ONLY)
- Outdoor
- Think Like an Engineer
- Think Like a Programmer
- Think Like a Citizen Scientist

It's Your World—Change It!:

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies—Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisies ONLY as part of a 15 meeting Year Plan

It's Your Planet—Love It:

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior as part of a 15 meeting Year Plan

It's Your Story—Tell It!:

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior as part of a 15 meeting Year Plan

Outdoor:

- Available on the VTK for Brownie and Junior as nine sessions in total, which includes three outdoor badges plus three Take Action meetings and is part of a 15 meeting Year Plan.
- Available on VTK for Daisies as seven sessions in total, which includes two outdoor badges plus three Take Action meetings and is part of a 15 meeting Year Plan.
- Available for Multi-level for Daisies-Juniors on the VTK.
- Cadette, Senior, Ambassador, and Multi-level on the VTK.

Think Like an Engineer:

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings, and is part of a 15 meeting Year Plan. Cadette, Senior and Ambassador plans will be available for Fall 2018.

Think Like a Programmer:

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings, and is part of a 15 meeting Year Plan. Cadette, Senior and Ambassador plans will be available for Fall 2018.

Think Like a Citizen Scientist:

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings, and is part of a 15 meeting Year Plan. Cadette, Senior and Ambassador plans will be available for Fall 2018.

***The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* and National Proficiency Badges**

In addition to the Leadership Journeys, girls at each Girl Scout grade level have their own edition of *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*—a binder full of information about being a Girl Scout and how to earn certain badges, including ones about financial literacy and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Girls who want to earn more badges can add a Skill Building Badge Set tied to the theme of the Journey they've chosen.

When a Girl Scout earns a badge, it shows that she's learned a new skill, such as how to make a healthy snack or take great digital photos. It may even spark an interest at school or plant the seed for a future career. Please remember that we don't expect you to be an expert in the badge topics; just have fun learning by doing with the girls!

While you're having fun, keep in mind: Badges are for educating girls, not for decorating their sashes and vests. The quality of a girl's experience—and the skills and pride she gains from earning leadership awards and skill-building badges—far outweigh the quantity of badges she earns.



Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards

As Girl Scouts progress from Daisy to Ambassador, the awards they earn symbolize new and higher levels of achievement—and ultimately a deeper understanding of what it means to be a leader. The Girl Scout [Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award](#)s recognize larger projects that girls complete with their troop or on their own. And based on their achievements, Girl Scouts can qualify for [special scholarships](#), or even be selected as one of GSUSA's [National Young Women of Distinction](#).

All the steps girls take toward earning awards are built into every part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Guidebooks for parents and volunteers also suggest meaningful ways to help girls celebrate earning awards and reflect on their accomplishments.

To earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level Journey (two Journeys for the Gold Award or a Silver Award and one Journey). With Journeys, girls experience the keys to leadership and learn to identify community needs, work in partnership with their communities, and carry out Take Action projects that make a lasting difference. They can then use the skills they developed during a Journey to develop and execute projects for their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.

Did you know that a Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one rank in all four branches of the U.S. Military? A number of college-scholarship opportunities also await Gold Award designees. A girl does not, however, have to earn a Bronze or Silver Award before earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. She is eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which she is registered.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, encourage girls to go for it by earning these awards at the Junior through Ambassador levels. Check out some of the award projects girls in your council are doing and talk to a few past recipients of the Girl Scout Gold Award. You'll be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish as leaders—and by the confidence, values, and team-building expertise they gain while doing so. And imagine the impact girls have on their communities, country, and even the world as they identify problems they care about, team with others, and act to make change happen!

All this, of course, starts with you—a Girl Scout volunteer! Encourage girls to go after Girl Scouting's highest awards—information on the awards and guidelines for you to use when helping girls earn their awards are also available [online](#).

Emblems and Patches

In addition to the leadership awards tied to the Journeys and the National Proficiency badges, girls can show they belong by adding emblems to the front of their vests or sashes and participation patches on the back.

- **Emblems** show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular council, a particular troop, or in some other Girl Scout group. These can be worn on the front of a sash or vest (see the diagram in the handbook section of *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* to see where these are placed).
- **Participation patches** represent activities girls have tried and are fun ways for girls to remember special events they've attended. Since these patches and pins aren't tied to skill-building activities, they are worn on the back of a girl's sash or vest.

You can purchase emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at your council's Girl Scout shop, by visiting the [council's online shop](#) or by visiting the [GSUSA online shop](#). There, you'll find a cool list of the earned awards for each grade level and a link that shows you exactly **where** girls can place their emblems, awards, badges, pins, and patches on their vests and sashes.

Other Initiatives and Opportunities

Other exciting initiatives and opportunities exist to support the GSLE. In the past, these have covered topics like the environment, robotics, and space exploration. You can find out how to engage your group in opportunities like these by contacting your council or by visiting www.girlscouts.org/program/basics and clicking on “Program Basics” on the left side of the screen. Note that councils may offer different experiences, based on availability of resources and partners in your area.

GSHG publishes an annual Program and Resource Guide, which is mailed to each member household and is also available at www.gshg.org. You will also find a calendar of events on the council website.

Girl Scout Traditions and Celebrations

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important and are still practiced today. This section gives you an overview of annual celebrations in the Girl Scout year, as well as other revered Girl Scout traditions. Be sure to look in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* and Leadership Journeys for more information on songs, outdoor activities, historical anecdotes, traditions, and ceremonies.

Girl Scout Calendar

Girl Scouts celebrate several special days each year, which you're encouraged to include in your group planning.

- **February 22:** World Thinking Day (the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the originators of Boy Scouts and the Scouting Movement worldwide).
- **March 12:** The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA. The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912. Note that Girl Scout Week begins the Sunday before March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sunday”) and extends through the Saturday following March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sabbath”).
- **April:** Volunteer Appreciation Week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders' Day (April 22), but expands the definition of volunteers beyond troop leaders to include all the volunteers who work in so many ways on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.
- **October 31:** Founder's Day (Juliette Gordon Low's birthday).

World Thinking Day: February 22

World Thinking Day, first created in 1926, offers a special day for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world to “think” of each other and give thanks and appreciation to their sister Girl Scouts. February 22 is the mutual birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, and his wife, Olave, who served as World Chief Guide.

Today, girls honor World Thinking Day by earning the [World Thinking Day award](#), which

focuses on an annual theme selected by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. They also show their appreciation and friendship on World Thinking Day not only by extending warm wishes but also by contributing to the [Juliette Low World Friendship Fund](#), which helps offer Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting to more girls and young women worldwide.

Time-Honored Ceremonies

Ceremonies play an important part in Girl Scouts and are used not only to celebrate accomplishments, experience time-honored traditions, and reinforce the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, but also to encourage girls to take a short pause in their busy lives and connect with their fellow Girl Scouts in fun and meaningful ways. Many examples of ceremonies—for awards, meeting openings and closings, and so on—are sewn right into the Journeys, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create.

Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons. Here's a brief list, in alphabetical order, so that you can become familiar with the most common Girl Scout ceremonies:

- **Bridging** ceremonies mark a girl's move from one grade level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. (Note that **Fly-Up** is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Juniors.)
- **Closing** ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.
- **Court of Awards** is a time to recognize girls who have accomplished something spectacular during the Girl Scout year.
- **Flag** ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.
- **Girl Scout Bronze (or Silver or Gold) Award** ceremonies honor Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award (Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award; Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award), and are usually held for a group and combined with council recognition.
- **Girl Scouts' Own** is a girl-led program that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic (such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from the Girl Scout Promise and Law) using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or volunteers, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, or Daisy Girl Scout pin at this time.
- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and volunteers to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Hosting a Girl-Led Event

If you're working with girls who want to host an event—large or small—be sure girls are leading the event-planning, instead of sitting by passively while you or another adult plans the event. To get girls started, ask them to think about the following questions:

- What sort of event do we have in mind?

- Who is our intended audience?
- Will it be outdoors?
- Does the audience have to be invited, or can anyone come?
- What's our main topic or focus?
- What's our objective—what do we hope to accomplish at the end of the day?
- Will one or more speakers need to be invited? If so, who? How do we find speakers?
- Where will the event take place?
- Is there a charge for this venue?
- Is the venue large enough to accommodate the audience?
- Do we have to obtain permission to use this venue? If so, from whom?
- Are there adequate facilities for the audience? If not, how much will extra portable toilets cost, and how many do we need?
- Is there adequate parking or a drop-off point for girls?
- Do we need tables? chairs? podiums? microphones? speakers?
- What sort of entertainment will we provide?
- Will we provide or sell refreshments? If so, what kinds?
- How many chaperones will we need? Who will we ask?
- What emergency care do we need to plan for? Is the event large enough that local police and fire departments need to be notified?
- Do we need to purchase additional insurance for non-Girl Scouts?
- How will we advertise the event?
- What decorations will we use?
- Will we give away any keepsakes?
- Will we charge for the event?
- Who will set up the event?
- Who will clean up after the event?
- How will we determine whether the event was a success?

Ideas for girl-led events with family, friends, and community experts are also available in the Leadership Journey adult guides!

Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

Over time, any organization is going to develop a few common signals that everyone understands. Such is the case with Girl Scouts, which has developed a few unique ways to greet, acknowledge, and communicate, some of which are listed here.

Girl Scout Sign



The idea of the sign came from the days of chivalry, when armed knights greeted friendly knights by raising the right hand, palm open, as a sign of friendship. To give the sign, raise the three middle fingers of the right hand palm forward and shoulder high (the three extended fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise). Girls give the sign when they:

- Say the Promise or Law.
- Are welcomed into Girl Scouts at an investiture ceremony that welcomes new members.
- Receive an award, patch, pin, or other recognition.
- Greet other Girl Scouts and Girl Guides.

Girl Scout Handshake



The handshake is a more formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts, and is also an appropriate way to receive an award. Shake left hands and give the Girl Scout Sign with your right hand.

Quiet Sign



The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer, so teach it to girls during your first meeting. Raise your right hand high with an open palm. As girls in the group see the sign, they stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

Girl Scout Slogan and Motto

The Girl Scout slogan is, “Do a good turn daily.” The Girl Scout motto is, “Be prepared.”

Songs

Whether singing around a campfire or joining a chorus of voices on the Mall in Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship of music. In fact, the first *Girl Scout Song Book*, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925.

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to <http://gsuniversity.girlscouts.org/resource/song-leading-workshops/>. A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out your council shop or visit the [GSUSA online shop](#).



Chapter 3: Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll have the opportunity to guide girls of all backgrounds, behaviors, skills, and abilities. You'll help her develop leadership skills she can use now and as she grows—all in a safe and accepting environment. This chapter gives you tips for doing just that.

Arranging a Time and Place for Girl-Led Meetings

When and how often to meet is up to you, your co-volunteers, parents, and girls: it may just be one time for this particular group of girls. Or, if you meet regularly, what day and time work best for the girls, for you, for your co-volunteers, and for other adults who will be presenting or mentoring? Once per week, twice a month, once a month? Is after-school best? Can your co-volunteers meet at that time, or will meetings work better in the evenings or on the weekends?

Where to meet can be a bit trickier: a meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls. You might consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, houses or worship, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. For teens, you can also rotate meetings at coffee shops, bookstores, and other places girls enjoy spending time.

Here are a few points to keep in mind as you consider meeting locations:

- **Cost:** The space should be free to use.
- **Size:** Make sure the space is large enough accommodate the whole group and all planned activities.
- **Availability:** Be sure the space is available for the day and the entire length of time you want to meet.
- **Resources:** Determine what types of furnishings (table? chairs?) come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby of some sort, where you can store supplies or a safe outdoor space for activities.
- **Safety:** Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards, and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure a first-aid equipment is on hand.
- **Facilities:** Sanitary and accessible toilets are critical.
- **Communication-friendly:** Be sure your cell phone works in the meeting space.
- **Allergen-free:** Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won't bother susceptible girls during meetings.
- **Accessibility:** Be sure the space can accommodate girls with disabilities, as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.

If this is your first time asking for a Girl Scout meeting place, here are a few speaking points to get you started:

"I'm a Girl Scout volunteer, with a group of _____ girls. We're doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like _____ and _____. We're all about leadership—the kind that girls use in their daily lives and the kind that makes our community better. We'd love to hold our meetings here because _____."

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia - Girl Scout Troop Size

GSHG has established troop minimums so that Girl Scout troops are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow for development of individual girls.

A Girl Scout troop must have at minimum, 6 girls and 2 approved adult volunteers to begin meeting as a troop; however, troops need to be open to accepting more girls until the troop reaches the recommended troop size (identified below).

Adults and girls registering in groups of less than 6 girls and /or 2 approved adult volunteers will be registered as individual Girl Scouts. Individual girls are still welcome to participate in Girl Scout activities and events to include the product sales.

Existing older girl troops (2016-17 membership year) will be grandfathered in at the old minimums of 5 girls and 2 approved adult volunteers for the 2018 Product Sales.

The recommended troop sizes are*:

- Girl Scout Daisies: 8-12 girls
- Girl Scout Brownies: 12-20 girls
- Girl Scout Juniors 12-25 girls
- Girl Scout Cadettes: 6-25 girls
- Girl Scout Seniors: 6-30 girls
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: 6-30 girls
- Girl Scout Multi-Grade level: 12-30 girls

How can you recruit more girls for your troop? Troops can be placed ~~in the troop~~ in the Troop Opportunity Catalog. Complete the Troop Opportunity Catalog and Information Update at this link:

<https://gshg.wufoo.com/forms/wv4dosu1kknqq2/> to have the troop placed in the Opportunity Catalog. Also, consult with your Membership Recruitment Manager for targeted recruitment information.

Any troop that participates in the Troop Opportunity Catalog and still doesn't meet the recommended troop size (listed above) will still have "troop status" participation for the product sales.

Understanding Healthy Development in Girls

Just being attentive to what girls are experiencing as they mature is a big help to girls. So take some time to understand the likes, needs, and abilities of girls at different ages.

As you listen and learn along with girls, you may find it useful to review the highlights of their development. What follows are the developmental abilities and needs of girls at various grade levels. You'll also find these listed in the adult guide of each Leadership Journey. Plus, the activities in the Journeys are set up with the following guidelines in mind! Of course, each girl is an individual, so these are only guidelines that help you get to know the girls.

GSRI reports in *More than 'S'mores* that participating in casual outdoor activities in Girl Scouts, like playing, walking, or taking field trips in the outdoors made girls stronger problem solvers and challenge seekers. These outdoor experiences often place girls in new physical, psychological, and social situations that motivate curiosity and foster a sense of discovery. These challenges "require girls to become more self-aware and to cooperate, communicate, and solve problems." (2014, page. 5)

Girl Scout Daisies

At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grade), girls . . .

This means . . .

Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.

They'll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.

Are great builders and budding artists, though they are still developing their fine motor skills.

Encouraging them to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need assistance holding scissors, cutting in a straight line, and so on.

Love to move and dance.

They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin, or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle.

Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.

Showing instead of telling, for example, about how animals are cared for. Plan visits to animal shelters, farms, or zoos; meet care providers; or make a creative bird feeder.

Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time, and money.

You'll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and, perhaps, the legs on a caterpillar!

Are just beginning to write and spell, and they don't always have the words for what they're thinking or feeling.

That having girls draw a picture of something they are trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them.

Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so.

Being specific and offering only one direction at a time. Acknowledge when girls have followed directions well to increase their motivation to listen and follow again.

Girl Scout Brownies

At the Girl Scout Brownie level (second and third grade), girls . . .

This means . . .

Have lots of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.

Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.

Are social and enjoy working in groups.

Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.

Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.

Letting girls lead, direct, and help out in activities whenever possible. Allow girls as a group to make decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.

Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.

Doing more than just reading to girls about the Brownie Elf's adventures. Ask girls questions to gauge their understanding and allow them to role

	<i>play their own pretend visit to a new country.</i>
Need clear directions and structure, and like knowing what to expect.	<i>Offering only one direction at a time. Also, have girls create the schedule and flow of your get-togethers and share it at the start.</i>
Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money, and distance.	<i>Offering support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings or performances, count out money for a trip, and so on.</i>
Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and can tie shoes, use basic tools, begin to sew, etc.	<i>Encouraging girls to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need some assistance, however, holding scissors, threading needles, and so on.</i>
Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.	<i>Girls might like to create a play about welcoming a new girl to their school, or tell a story through dance or creative movement.</i>
Know how to follow rules, listen well, and appreciate recognition of a job done well.	<i>Acknowledging when the girls have listened or followed the directions well, which will increase their motivation to listen and follow again!</i>

Girl Scout Juniors	
At the Girl Scout Junior level (fourth and fifth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Want to make decisions and express their opinions.	<i>Whenever possible, allowing girls to make decisions and express their opinions through guided discussion and active reflection activities. Also, have girls set rules for listening to others' opinions and offering assistance in decision making.</i>
Are social and enjoy doing things in groups.	<i>Allowing girls to team-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities.</i>
Are aware of expectations and sensitive to the judgments of others.	<i>Although it's okay to have expectations, the expectation is not perfection! Share your own mistakes and what you learned from them, and be sure to create an environment where girls can be comfortable sharing theirs.</i>
Are concerned about equity and fairness.	<i>Not shying away from discussing why rules are in place, and having girls develop their own rules for their group.</i>
Are beginning to think abstractly and	<i>Asking girls to explain why they made a decision,</i>

critically, and are capable of flexible thought. Juniors can consider more than one perspective, as well as the feelings and attitudes of another.	<i>share their visions of their roles in the future, and challenge their own and others' perspectives.</i>
Have strong fine and gross motor skills and coordination.	<i>Engaging girls in moving their minds and their bodies. Allow girls to express themselves through written word, choreography, and so on.</i>
Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.	<i>Girls might like to tell a story through playwriting, playing an instrument, or choreographing a dance.</i>
May be starting puberty, which means beginning breast development, skin changes, and weight changes. Some may be getting their periods.	<i>Being sensitive to girls' changing bodies, possible discomfort over these changes, and their desire for more information. Create an environment that acknowledges and celebrates this transition as healthy and normal for girls.</i>

Girl Scout Cadettes

At the Girl Scout Cadette level (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Are going through puberty, including changes in their skin, body-shape, and weight. They're also starting their menstrual cycles and have occasional shifts in mood.	<i>Being sensitive to the many changes Cadettes are undergoing and acknowledging that these changes are as normal as growing taller! Girls need time to adapt to their changing bodies, and their feelings about their bodies may not keep up. Reinforce that, as with everything else, people go through puberty in different ways and at different times.</i>
Are starting to spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>That girls will enjoy teaming-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities, as well as tackling relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects.</i>
Can be very self-conscious—wanting to be like everyone else, but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.	<i>Encouraging girls to share, but only when they are comfortable. At this age, they may be more comfortable sharing a piece of artwork or a fictional story than their own words. Throughout the activities, highlight and discuss differences as positive, interesting, and beautiful.</i>
Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what's known as</i>

adults—at school and at home.	<i>“fun failure:” girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>
Girl Scout Seniors	
At the Girl Scout Senior level (ninth and tenth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Are beginning to clarify their own values, consider alternative points of view on controversial issues, and see multiple aspects of a situation.	<i>Asking girls to explain the reasoning behind their decisions. Engage girls in role-play and performances, where others can watch and offer alternative solutions.</i>
Have strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills, and are able to plan and reflect on their own learning experiences.	<i>Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</i>
Spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>That girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They’ll also want to tackle relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.</i>
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.	<i>Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn’t just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.</i>
Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, and so on.	<i>Acknowledging girls’ pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.</i>
Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what’s known as “fun failure:” girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>

Girl Scout Ambassadors

At the Girl Scout Ambassador level (eleventh and twelfth grades), girls . . .

This means . . .

Can see the complexity of situations and controversial issues—they understand that problems often have no clear solution and that varying points of view may each have merit.

Inviting girls to develop stories as a group, and then individually create endings that they later discuss and share.

Have strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, and can adapt logical thinking to real-life situations. Ambassadors recognize and incorporate practical limitations to solutions.

Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.

Spend more time with peers than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.

Girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They'll also want to tackle relationship issues through artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.

Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.

Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn't just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality.

Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, etc.

Acknowledging girls' pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.

Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home—and are looking to their futures.

Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what's known as "fun failure." Girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.

Creating a Safe Space for Girls

A safe space is one in which girls feel as though they can be themselves, without explanation, judgment, or ridicule. Girl Scout research shows that girls are looking for an emotionally safe environment, where confidentiality is respected and they can express themselves without fear.

The environment you create is as important—maybe more—than the activities girls do; it's the key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of. The following sections share some tips on creating a warm, safe environment for girls.

Girl-Adult Partnership

Girl Scouting is for the enjoyment and benefit of the girls, so meetings are built around girls' ideas. When you put the girls first, you're helping develop a team relationship, making space for the development of leadership skills, and allowing girls to benefit from the guidance, mentoring, and coaching of caring volunteers.

The three Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) are integral to the girl-adult partnership. Take time to read about processes and think about how to incorporate them into your group's experiences. (See the [“Girl Scouting as a National Experience” chapter](#) of this handbook for more about using the Journey adult guides.)

Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl

Girls look up to their volunteers. They need to know that you consider each of them an important person. They can survive a poor meeting place or an activity that flops, but they cannot endure being ignored or rejected. Recognize acts of trying as well as instances of clear success. Emphasize the positive qualities that make each girl worthy and unique. Be generous with praise and stingy with rebuke. Help girls find ways to show acceptance of and support for one another.

Promoting Fairness

Girls are sensitive to injustice. They forgive mistakes if they are sure you are trying to be fair. They look for fairness in the ways responsibilities are shared, in handling of disagreements and in responses to performance and accomplishment. When possible, consult girls as to what they think is fair before decisions are made. Explain your reasoning and show why you did something. Be willing to apologize if needed. Try to see that the responsibilities, as well as the chances for feeling important, are equally divided. Help girls explore and decide for themselves the fair ways of solving problems, carrying out activities, and responding to behavior and accomplishments.

Building Trust

Girls need your belief in them and your support when they try new things. They must be sure you will not betray a confidence. Show girls you trust them to think for themselves and use their own judgment. Help them make the important decisions in the group. Help them correct their own mistakes. Help girls give and show trust toward one another. Help them see how trust can be built, lost, regained, and strengthened.

Managing Conflict

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, and when handled constructively can actually enhance communication and relationships. At the very least, Girl Scouts are expected to practice self-control and diplomacy so that conflicts do not erupt into regrettable incidents. Shouting, verbal abuse, or physical confrontations are never warranted and cannot be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment.

When a conflict arises between girls or a girl and a volunteer, get those involved to sit down together and talk calmly and in a nonjudgmental manner. (Each party may need some time—a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this.) Although talking in this way can be uncomfortable and difficult, it does lay the groundwork for working well together in the future. Whatever you do, **do not** spread your complaint around to others—that won't help the situation and causes only embarrassment and anger.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your volunteer support team. If the supervisor cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the supervisor), the issue can be taken to the next level of supervision and, ultimately, contact your council if you need extra help.

Inspiring Open Communication

Girls want someone who will listen to what they think, feel, and want to do. They like having someone they can talk to about important things, including things that might not seem important to volunteers. Listen to the girls. Respond with words and actions. Speak your mind openly when you are happy or concerned about something, and encourage girls to do this, too. Leave the door open for girls to seek advice, share ideas and feelings, and propose plans or improvements. Help girls see how open communication can result in action, discovery, better understanding of self and others, and a more comfortable climate for fun and accomplishment.

Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:

- **Listen:** Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do (no “you shoulds”) is the first step in helping them take ownership of their program.
- **Be honest:** If you're not comfortable with a topic or activity, say so. No one expects you to be an expert on every topic. Ask for alternatives or seek out volunteers with the required expertise. (Owning up to mistakes—and apologizing for them—goes a long way with girls.)
- **Be open to real issues:** For girls, important topics are things like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs, and other serious issues. (You'll also have plenty of time to discuss less weighty subjects.) When you don't know, listen. Also seek help from your council if you need assistance or more information than you currently have.
- **Show respect:** Girls often say that their best experiences were the ones where adults treated them as equal partners. Being spoken to as a young adult helps them grow.
- **Offer options:** Providing flexibility in changing needs and interests shows that you respect the girls and their busy lives. But whatever option is chosen, girls at every grade level also want guidance and parameters.
- **Stay current:** Be aware of the TV shows girls watch, movies they like, books and magazines they read, and music they listen to—not to pretend you have the same interests, but to show you're interested in their world.

One way to communicate with girls is through the LUTE method—listen, understand, tolerate, and empathize. Here is a breakdown of the acronym LUTE to remind you of how to respond when a girl is upset, angry, or confused.

- **L = Listen:** Hear her out, ask for details, and reflect back what you hear, such as, “What happened next?” or “What did she say?”
- **U = Understand:** Try to be understanding of her feelings, with comments such as, “So what I hear you saying is . . .” “I’m sure that upset you,” “I understand why you’re unhappy,” and “Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too.”
- **T = Tolerate:** You can tolerate the feelings that she just can’t handle right now on her own. It signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Say something like: “Try talking to me about it. I’ll listen,” “I know you’re mad—talking it out helps,” and “I can handle it—say whatever you want to.”
- **E = Empathize:** Let her know you can imagine feeling what she’s feeling, with comments such as, “I’m sure that really hurts” or “I can imagine how painful this is for you.”

Addressing the Needs of Older Girls

Consider the following tips when working with teenage girls:

- Think of yourself as a partner, and as a coach or mentor, as needed (not a “leader”).
- Ask girls what rules they need for safety and what group agreements they need to be a good team.
- Understand that girls need time to talk, unwind, and have fun together.
- Ask what they think and what they want to do.
- Encourage girls to speak their minds.
- Provide structure, but don’t micromanage.
- Give everyone a voice in the group.
- Treat girls like partners.
- Don’t repeat what’s said in the group to anyone outside of it (unless necessary for a girl’s safety).

Girl Scout Research Institute

It’s amazing what you can learn when you listen to girls.

Since its founding in 2000, the Girl Scout Research Institute has become an internationally recognized center for research and public policy information on the development and well-being of girls. Not just Girl Scouts, but **all** girls.

In addition to research staff, the GSRI draws on experts in child development, education, business, government, and the not-for-profit sector. We provide the youth development field with definitive research reviews that consolidate existing studies. And, by most measures, we are now the leading source of original research on the issues that girls’ face and the social trends that affect their lives. Visit www.girlscouts.org/research.

When Sensitive Topics Come Up

According to *Feeling Safe: What Girls Say*, a 2003 Girl Scout Research Institute study, girls are looking for groups that allow connection and a sense of close friendship. They want volunteers who are teen savvy and can help them with issues they face, such as bullying, peer pressure, dating, athletic and academic performance, and more. Some of these issues may be considered “sensitive” by parents, and they may have opinions or input about how, and whether, Girl Scouts should cover these topics should be covered with their daughters.

Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from your council.

When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult volunteer who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position.

You should know, GSUSA does not take a position or develop materials on issues relating to human sexuality, birth control, or abortion. We feel our role is to help girls develop self-confidence and good decision-making skills that will help them make wise choices in all areas of their lives. We believe parents and guardians, along with schools and faith communities, are the primary sources of information on these topics.

We at Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia also take no position on these issues and do not develop materials about them. Parents/guardians make all decisions regarding their girl’s participation in Girl Scout program that may be of a sensitive nature. As a volunteer leader, you must get written parental permission for any locally planned program offering that could be considered sensitive. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls will take when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep the forms on hand in case a problem arises. For activities not sponsored by Girl Scouts, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow your council’s guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Report concerns: There may be times when you worry about the health and well-being of girls in your group. Alcohol, drugs, sex, bullying, abuse, depression, and eating disorders are some of the issues girls may encounter. You are on the frontlines of girls’ lives, and you are in a unique position to identify a situation in which a girl may need help. If you believe a girl is at risk of hurting herself or others, your role is to promptly bring that information to her parent/guardian or the council so she can get the expert assistance she needs. Your concern about a girl’s well-being and safety is taken seriously, and your council will guide you in addressing these concerns.

If you are concerned about a girl or girls in your troop:

- Contact a staff member at your Girl Scout council and find out how to refer the girl and her parent/guardian to experts at school or in the community.
- Share your concern with the girl’s family, if this is feasible.

Here are a few signs that could indicate a girl needs expert help:

- Marked changes in behavior or personality (for example, unusual moodiness, aggressiveness, or sensitivity)
- Declining academic performance and/or inability to concentrate
- Withdrawal from school, family activities, or friendships

- Fatigue, apathy, or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Sleep disturbances
- Increased secretiveness
- Deterioration in appearance and personal hygiene.
- Eating extremes, unexplained weight loss, distorted body image
- Tendency toward perfectionism
- Giving away prized possessions; preoccupation with the subject of death
- Unexplained injuries such as bruises, burns, or fractures
- Avoidance of eye contact or physical contact
- Excessive fearfulness or distrust of adults
- Abusive behavior toward other children, especially younger ones

Working with Parents and Guardians

Most parents and guardians are helpful and supportive and sincerely appreciate your time and effort on behalf of their daughters. And you almost always have the same goal, which is to make Girl Scouting an enriching experience for their girls. Encourage them to check out www.girlscouts4girls.org to find out how to expand their roles as advocates for their daughters.

Advocating for Girls

The Girl Scouts Public Policy and Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., builds relationships with members of Congress, White House officials, and other federal departments and agencies, continuously informing and educating them about issues important to girls and Girl Scouting. The office also supports Girl Scout councils, at the state and local levels, as they build capacity to be the voice for girls. These advocacy efforts help demonstrate to lawmakers that Girl Scouts is a resource and an authority on issues affecting girls. Visit the Advocacy office at www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy.

Using “I” Statements

Perhaps the most important tip for communicating with parents/guardians is for you to use “I” statements instead of “you” statements. “I” statements, which are detailed in the *aMAZE* Journey for Girl Scout Cadettes, tell someone what you need from her or him, while “you” statements may make the person feel defensive.

Here are some examples of “you” statements:

- “Your daughter just isn’t responsible.”
- “You’re not doing your share.”

Now look at “I” statements:

- “I’d like to help your daughter learn to take more responsibility.”
- “I’d really appreciate your help with registration.”

If you need help with specific scenarios involving parents/guardians, try the following:

If a Parent or Guardian . . .	You Can Say . . .
Is uninvolved and asks how she can help but seems to have no idea of how to follow through or take leadership of even the smallest activity,	"I do need your help. Here are some written guidelines on how to prepare for our camping trip."
Constantly talks about all the ways you could make the group better,	"I need your leadership. Project ideas you would like to develop and lead can fit in well with our plan. Please put your ideas in writing, and perhaps I can help you carry them out."
Tells you things like, "Denise's mother is on welfare, and Denise really doesn't belong in this group,"	"I need your sensitivity. Girl Scouting is for all girls, and by teaching your daughter to be sensitive to others' feelings you help teach the whole group sensitivity."
Shifts parental responsibilities to you and is so busy with her own life that she allows no time to help,	"I love volunteering for Girl Scouts and want to make a difference. If you could take a few moments from your busy schedule to let me know what you value about what we're doing, I'd appreciate it. It would keep me going for another year."

Arranging Meetings with Parents/Guardians or a Friends-and-Family Network

A parent/guardian meeting, or a meeting of your friends-and-family network (as encouraged in many of the leadership Journeys), is a chance for you to get to know the families of the girls in your group. Before the meeting, be sure you and/or your co-volunteers have done the following:

- For younger girls, arranged for a parent, another volunteer, or a group of older girls to do activities with the girls in your group while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too)
- Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law; benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters, including how the GSLE is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have; expectations for girls and their parents/guardians; and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters' Girl Scout experiences
- Determined when product sales (including Girl Scout cookie activities) will happen in your council; parents/guardians will absolutely want to know
- Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting
- Used the Friends and Family pages provided in the volunteer guides for many of the Journeys, or created your own one-page information sheet (contact information for you and co-volunteers and helpers, the day and time of each meeting, location of and directions to the meeting place, what to bring with them, and information on how to get Journey resources—books, awards, and keepsakes—and other merchandise like sashes, vests, T-shirts, and so on)

- Gathered or created supplies, including a sign-in sheet, an information sheet, permission forms for parents/guardians (also available from your council), health history forms (as required by your council), and GSUSA registration forms
- Prepared yourself to ask parents and guardians for help, being as specific as you can about the kind of help you will need (the Journey's Friends and Family pages will come in handy here)

Registering Girls in Girl Scouting

Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). GSUSA membership dues are valid for one year. Membership dues (currently \$25) are sent by the council to GSUSA; no portion of the dues stays with the council. Membership dues may not be transferred to another member and is not refundable.

Pre-registration for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring. Girls are encouraged to register early to avoid the fall rush. Early registration helps ensure uninterrupted receipt of forms and materials from the council, helps girls and councils plan ahead, and gets girls excited about all the great stuff they want to do as Girl Scouts next year. Girl Scout grade level is determined by the current membership year beginning October 1.

Lifetime membership is available at a reduced rate. A lifetime member must be at least 18 years old (or a 17-year-old high-school graduate) and agree to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

You're free to structure the parent/guardian meeting in whatever way works for you, but the following structure works for many new volunteers:

- As the girls and adults arrive, ask them to sign in. If the girls' parents/guardians haven't already registered them online, you'll want to allow them a few moments to register using their smart phones, or email or hand out information so they can do so. If your council uses paper registration forms, you can pass them out at this time. Check with your council for its specific registration guidelines. You may also want to email or hand out a brief information sheet before or at this meeting.
- Open the meeting by welcoming the girls and adults. Introduce yourself and other co-volunteers or helpers. Have adults and girls introduce themselves, discuss whether anyone in their families has been a Girl Scout, and talk about what Girl Scouting means to them. Welcome everyone, regardless of experience, and let them know they will be learning about Girl Scouts today. (If you're new to Girl Scouting, don't worry—just let everyone know you'll be learning about Girl Scouting together!)
- Ask the girls to go with the adult or teen in charge of their activity and begin the discussion.
- Discuss the information you prepared for this meeting:
 - All the fun girls are going to have!
 - When and where the group will meet and some examples of activities the girls might choose to do
 - That a parent/guardian permission form is used for activities outside the group's normal meeting time and place and the importance of completing and returning it

- How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (a Facebook page or group, Twitter, email, text messaging, a phone tree, or fliers the girls take home are just some ideas)
 - The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law
 - The Girl Scout program, especially what the GSLE is and what the program does for their daughters
 - When Girl Scout cookies (and other products) will go on sale and how participation in product sales teaches life skills and helps fund group activities
 - The cost of membership, which includes annual GSUSA dues, any group payments (ask your council), optional uniforms, and any resources parents/guardians will need to buy (such as a girl's book for a Journey)
 - The availability of financial assistance and how the Girl Scout Cookie Program and other product sales generate funds for the group treasury
 - How a family may make a donation to the council—and why they might want to do that!
 - That you may be looking for additional volunteers, and in which areas you are looking (be as specific as possible!)
- If your council doesn't offer online registration and you've distributed paper registration forms, collect them.
 - Remind the group of the next meeting (if you'll have one) and thank everyone for attending. Hold the next meeting when it makes sense for you and your co-volunteers—that may be in two months if face-to-face meetings are best, or not at all if you're diligent about keeping in touch with parents/guardians via Facebook, Twitter, text messages, email, phone calls, or some other form of communication.
 - After the meeting, follow up with any parents/guardians who did not attend, to connect them with the group, inform them of decisions, and discuss how they can best help the girls.

Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

Girl Scouts embraces girls of all abilities, backgrounds, and heritage, with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl—without regard to socioeconomic status, race, physical or cognitive ability, ethnicity, primary language, or religion—is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.

Inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, about all girls being offered the same opportunities, about respect and dignity, and about honoring the uniqueness of and differences among us all. You're accepting and inclusive when you:

- Welcome every girl and focus on building community.
- Emphasize cooperation instead of competition.
- Provide a safe and socially comfortable environment for girls.
- Teach respect for, understanding of, and dignity toward all girls and their families.
- Actively reach out to girls and families who are traditionally excluded or marginalized.
- Foster a sense of belonging to community as a respected and valued peer.
- Honor the intrinsic value of each person's life.

A Variety of Formats for Publications

The Hispanic population is the largest-growing in the United States, which is why Girls Scouts has translated many of its publications into Spanish. Over time, Girl Scouts will continue to identify members' needs and produce resources to support those needs, including translating publications into additional languages and formats.

As you think about where, when, and how often to meet with your group, you will find yourself considering the needs, resources, safety, and beliefs of all members and potential members. As you do this, include the special needs of any members who have disabilities, or whose parents or guardians have disabilities. But please don't rely on visual cues to inform you of a disability: Approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population has a disability—that's one in five people, of every socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and religion.

As a volunteer, your interactions with girls present an opportunity to improve the way society views girls (and their parents/guardians) with disabilities. Historically, disabilities have been looked at from a deficit viewpoint with a focus on how people with disabilities could be fixed. Today, the focus is on a person's abilities—on what she *can* do rather than on what she cannot.

If you want to find out what a girl with a disability needs to make her Girl Scout experience successful, simply ask her or her parent/guardian. If you are frank and accessible, it's likely they will respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone.

It's important for all girls to be rewarded based on their best efforts—not on the completion of a task. Give any girl the opportunity to do her best and she will. Sometimes that means changing a few rules or approaching an activity in a more creative way. Here are some examples of ways to modify activities:

- Invite a girl to complete an activity after she has observed others doing it.
- If you are visiting a museum to view sculpture, find out if a girl who is blind might be given permission to touch the pieces.
- If an activity requires running, a girl who is unable to run could be asked to walk or do another physical movement.

In addition, note that people-first language puts the person before the disability.

Say . . .	Instead of . . .
She has a learning disability.	She is learning disabled.
She has a developmental delay.	She is mentally retarded; she is slow.
She uses a wheelchair.	She is wheelchair-bound.

When interacting with a girl (or parent/guardian) with a disability, consider these final tips:

- When talking to a girl with a disability, speak directly to her, not through a parent/guardian or friend.
- It's okay to offer assistance to a girl with a disability, but wait until your offer is accepted before you begin to help. Listen closely to any instructions the person may have.
- Leaning on a girl's wheelchair is invading her space and is considered annoying and rude.
- When speaking to a girl who is deaf and using an interpreter, speak to the girl, not to the interpreter.
- When speaking for more than a few minutes to a girl who uses a wheelchair, place yourself at eye level.
- When greeting a girl with a visual disability, always identify yourself and others. You might say, "Hi, it's Sheryl. Tara is on my right, and Chris is on my left."

Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities

Girls with cognitive disabilities can be registered as closely as possible to their chronological ages. They wear the uniform of that grade level. Make any adaptations for the girl to ongoing activities of the grade level to which the group belongs. Young women with cognitive disorders may choose to retain their girl membership through their 21st year, and then move into an adult membership category.



Chapter 4: Safety-Wise

(Revised April 2017)

In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is always a top priority. Here's what you need to know.

Knowing Your Responsibilities

You (the volunteer), the parents/guardians of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. The next three sections provide more details on everyone's responsibilities.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow these guidelines at all times.

1. Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from your council. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents and girls before engaging in activities with girls.

2. Points common to all Safety Activity Checkpoints include:

Girls plan the activity. Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.

Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls. Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary (this is dependent upon the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls). Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by your state, if it is older than 18), and must be screened by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.

Get parent/guardian permission. When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.

Communicate with council and parents. Follow council procedures for activity approval, certificates of insurance, and council guidelines about girls' general health examinations. Make arrangements in advance for all transportation and confirm plans before departure.

Be prepared for emergencies and compile key contacts. Work with girls and other adult volunteers to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults and site security. Give an itinerary to a contact person at home; call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls' parents/guardian contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and council contacts—keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories and contact information for girls' families. Check activity-specific Safety Activity Checkpoints to determine the type of first aider needed.

Get a weather report. On the morning of the activity, check [weather.com](https://www.weather.com) or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, and/or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

Use the buddy system. Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

3. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching and sexual activity of any kind with girl members, as well as physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is strictly forbidden. Follow your council's guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.
4. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer, age 21 or over and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
5. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
6. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls, unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.
7. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Volunteers are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior and discrimination.
8. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, planning and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
9. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group websites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.

10. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or are not Girl Scout–approved product sales and efforts.
11. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or are not Girl Scout–approved product sales and efforts.

CAUTION: When activities involve unpredictable safety variables, they are not recommended as Girl Scout program activities. These include but are not limited to:

- Bungee Jumping
- Flying in small private planes, helicopters or blimps
- Go-Carting
- Hang gliding
- Hot air ballooning
- Hunting
- Motor biking
- Parachuting
- Parasailing
- Riding all-terrain vehicles
- Riding motorized personal watercraft such as jet skis
- Skydiving
- Stunt skiing
- Outdoor trampolining
- Zorbing

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

You want to engage each parent or guardian to help you work toward ensuring the health, safety and well-being of girls. Clearly communicate to parents and guardians that they are expected to:

- Provide permission for their daughters to participate in Girl Scouting as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place. This can include such activities as: product sales, including Digital Cookie; overnight travel; the use of special equipment; or sensitive issues.
- Make provisions for their daughters to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner, and inform you if someone other than a parent or guardian will drop off or pick up their child.

- Provide their daughters with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or contact you before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and equipment.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their children to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/guardian meetings.
- Understand what appropriate behavior is for their daughters, as determined by the council and you.
- Assist volunteers if their daughters have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.

Responsibilities of Girls

Girls who learn about and practice safe and healthy behaviors are likely to establish lifelong habits of safety consciousness. For that reason, each Girl Scout is expected to:

- Assist you and other volunteers in safety planning.
- Listen to and follow your instructions and suggestions.
- Learn and practice safety skills.
- Learn to “think safety” at all times and to be prepared.
- Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation.
- Know how, when and where to get help when needed.



Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

Whatever the activity, from camping to cookies sales, adult supervision is required regardless of the grade level of the girls. The table below has been developed to show the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls (councils may also establish **maximums** due to size or cost restrictions). These adult-to-girl supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of all girls taking part in the activity. For example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you'll find the chart extremely helpful.

	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for every:	One additional volunteer to each additional:	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	One additional volunteer to each additional:
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K–1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

Here are some examples on utilizing the chart: If you're meeting with 17 Daisies, you'll need three volunteers, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, you and someone who is not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), and at least one of whom is female. This is determined as follows: for up to 12 Daisies you need two volunteers, and one more volunteer for up to six additional girls. Since you have 17 girls, you need three volunteers (2+1). If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting you need only two unrelated volunteers, at least one of whom is female, since the chart shows that two volunteers can manage up to 25 Cadettes.

In addition to the volunteer-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old, or the age of majority defined by your state if it is older than 18.

Adult supervision for all girls also extends to any online activity. For additional information on online safety, please consult:

- The “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge
- Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Girls, Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Parents/Guardians and Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Volunteers

Transporting Girls

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent’s individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities (outside the normal meeting time and place) in which a group will be transported in private vehicles keep in mind the following:

- Every driver must be an approved volunteer at least 21 years old, and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female. In addition, the girl-volunteer ratios in the “Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need” section must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in the “Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need” section must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats and chartered flights. Each driver of motorized private transportation must be at least **21** years old and hold a valid operator’s license appropriate to the vehicle. In addition, state laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here.

Anyone who is driving a vehicle with 12 or more passengers must be a professional driver who possesses a commercial driver’s license (CDL). Note, you must check with your council to determine specific rules about renting large vehicles. Fifteen passenger vans are not recommended.

Please keep in mind the following non-negotiable points regarding private transportation:

- Even though written agreements are always required when renting or chartering, you are *not* authorized to sign an agreement or contract, except for rental car agreements, even if there is no cost associated with the rental. Such agreements must instead be signed by the person designated by your council.
- Check with your council to make sure you are following accepted practices when using private transportation. This ensures that both you and your council are protected by liability insurance in the event of an accident.

- If your council has given permission to use a rented car, read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. For example, in many cases the minimum age of drivers is 25, and the maximum age is often under 70. In addition, make sure the car is adequately insured and you know who is responsible for damage to, or loss of, the vehicle. Finally, ensure you have a good paper trail that shows the vehicle rental is Girl Scout–related.
- Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.

Checklist for Drivers

When driving a car, RV or camper, take the following precautions and ask all other drivers to do the same:

- Ensure all drivers are volunteers at least 21 years old
- Girls should not be transporting other girls.
- Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer.
- Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first-aid kit and a flashlight.
- Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns and fluid levels before each trip, and recheck them periodically on long trips.
- Keep all necessary papers up to date including, but not limited to: your driver's license; vehicle registration; any state or local inspections; and insurance coverage.
- Wear your seat belt at all times, and insist that all passengers do the same. Girls under 12 must ride in the back seats.
- Follow all the established rules of the road in your state, including the speed limit. Some additional guidelines include: keeping a two-car-length distance between you and the car ahead of you; not talking or texting on a cell phone or other personal electronic device while driving; not using ear buds or headphones while driving; and turning your lights on when your windshield wipers are on.
- Plan rest stops every few hours and avoid driving for extended periods at night. If traveling with others, prearrange stopping places along the way. When planning longer trips, arrange for relief drivers.
- Do NOT drive when you are tired or taking medication that makes you drowsy.

Check with your council for any other specific guidelines or requirements they have.

Product Sales Program Safety

Girl Scout council-sponsored product sales, which include magazines and nuts, as well as cookies, give girls proven opportunities to earn money and/or credits for their Girl Scout program activities. These sales also contribute significantly to the girls' local councils and communities through take-action projects. In order to ensure the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls, which is always a top priority in any activity, you need to read and understand the following guidelines.

Prepare Early

Communicate with Parents

Ensure that the parents/guardians of all girls participating in product sales are fully informed about the activity including the:

- Safety precautions in place
- Need for appropriate clothing and/or supplies
- Need for advance arrangements for all transportation and confirmation of these plans
- Need for written permission from them in order for their daughter to participate
- Location of designated sale areas, which are also communicated to the Council

Communicate with Your Local Police Department

Establish a relationship with your local Police Department to determine any support they may be able to provide during product sales, especially those related to cookie booths, and any safety precautions they might suggest. While Police Departments vary from state to state and city to city, many of them have resources such as:

- School Resource Officers who have specific training for communicating with young people
- Community Volunteers who may be able to assist by being present during booth sales

Police departments can also provide information on areas and addresses to avoid, as well as access to known sex offender registries.

Prepare for Emergencies

Regardless of the type of activity, you need to be prepared for emergencies involving girls or other volunteers. This should include having a first aid kit always available and making sure that if someone is injured and needs help, that one volunteer cares for the injured person while another volunteer seeks help.

Arrange for Volunteer Supervision

Volunteers provide supervision and guidance for all grade levels, and must accompany Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors when they are selling, taking orders for or delivering products. Volunteers must be present at booth activities, regardless of the age of the girls (see also the section "Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need").

Volunteers who oversee Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors must:

- Be aware of how, when and where the girls are selling products

- Be on call when girls are participating in product sales
- Be readily available to them should they need assistance.
- Help girls understand how to be safe in their surroundings, and always enforce the use of the buddy system

Volunteer supervision for all Girl Scouts extends to any online activity. Consult the “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints for specific information about safe online practices for all activities, and to obtain a copy of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge.

Plan for Safeguarding Money

Girls should always have a plan for safeguarding money, which includes such things as:

- Not walking around with large amounts of money
- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
- Not keeping money at home or school
- Giving cookie money to supervising volunteers, who will deposit the money as soon as possible

Use the Buddy System

Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

Be Streetwise and Follow Your Instincts

In order to ensure the safety of girls while selling door-to-door, you and the girls should become familiar with the areas and neighborhoods in which girls would like to sell. In addition, girls should:

- Participate in door-to-door sales only during daylight hours
- Wear a membership pin, uniform, or Girl Scout clothing (e.g., Girl Scout T-shirt) to clearly identify themselves as Girl Scouts.
- Avoid a house or person that makes them uncomfortable. They should walk away and find the next person/place that does not make them uncomfortable
- Call 9-1-1 if they see someone that seems to be acting in a way that makes them feel unsafe. This could include, but is not limited to, any person who is staring at them for long periods, seems to be following them for no apparent reason or takes pictures of them
- Use safe pedestrian practices, such as crossing at corners and obeying walk signals
- Not enter the home or vehicle of a stranger, and to avoid selling to people in vehicles (except at drive-thru cookie booths) or going into alleys
- Should not carry large amounts of money (see “Plan for Safeguarding Money”, above)

Booth Sales

Cookie booths are a traditional and fun way of selling Girl Scout Cookies. Booth locations are approved by councils, facilitated within council jurisdiction and you must follow all council guidelines with regard to setting up, manning and taking down a booth.

. When setting up booth sales, it’s important that:

- Volunteers are present at all times

- There is adequate space at the booth for table, products and girls and to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes and cars.
- Girls are a safe distance from cars. If possible, set up a safety barrier between cars and the booth—perhaps a few volunteers could park their cars in spaces near the booth location
- The booth is not blocking a store entrance or exit
- Girls and volunteers do not confront or engage an irate customer, but call local authorities for assistance

While girls can receive cash from buyers and make change, they should hand the money to an volunteer for safekeeping. It is important that cash is kept safe and out of sight. This can be accomplished by:

- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
- Having an adult volunteer keep the money by, for example, securing it in a front-facing pouch tied around her waist.

If someone takes money or cookies from your booth, **do not** attempt to physically recover the stolen items and **do not** allow the girls to do so. Instead, get a good description of the offender(s), call 911, and alert local security (if applicable). Make sure girls know what to do in case of theft. Report any incidents to your local council according to its guidelines.

For additional information about setting up a booth and safety and security suggestions, consult your council guidelines.

Computer/Online Safety

Understand the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge

In order to make sure that girls are aware of how to safely use the Internet, you should discuss online safety issues with the girls and distribute copies of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge (the pledge is available at the end of this document and at www.girlscouts.org). The girls should also take a copy of the pledge home and go over it with their parents. Both the girl and her parent should sign the pledge.

Safeguard Information

Girls must understand that the Internet is an open means of communication that anyone can access. As such, websites will often attract people other than their intended users. It is therefore imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and volunteers not be disclosed on a website. The following measures will help to ensure girls' online safety:

- Girl Scouts should only use their first names
- A Girl Scout's last name, address, phone number, or e-mail address should never be posted. For Digital Cookie a girl may post her unique Digital Cookie URL on her Facebook page and may email it to friends and family (for additional information please refer to Safety Activity Checkpoint for Online Product Sales, Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Volunteers and Digital Cookie Pledge for Girls)
- Always have a parent's or guardian's permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old

- Do not post addresses of group meeting places, dates and times of meetings, events or trips on a website. Instead, a volunteer who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an e-mail to the families
- Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a website. All postings to message boards, social media and guest books should have volunteer oversight, and be screened prior to posting live.
- Ensure that websites do not show personal e-mail addresses of girls, but use a troop, group or volunteer's e-mail.

Safety in Technology Based Sales

Girl Scouts use the Internet for a variety of reasons including the online marketing and sale of approved Girl Scout related products. Below are some key points to keep in mind for all online sales and marketing:

- Girls must read, understand and accept the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, prior to conducting any online sales or marketing activities, which is available at the end of the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)
- Girls may send e-mail messages to alert friends and relatives about product sales and accept customer commitments via email
- Social media sites may be used to market product, however, all applicable GSUSA and council guidelines must be followed
- Girls writing product e-mails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name and their council name.
- Personal e-mails or street addresses of girls should never be used. Instead, use one of the following:
 - A blind return address account where the girls' name or personal e-mail is not revealed to the customer and is instead hosted on a secure site
 - A group account, monitored by a volunteer
 - An volunteer's e-mail account, which is supervised by that volunteer

For **Digital Cookie** there are additional, specific guidelines, some of which are:

- Girls must read and accept the Girl Scout Digital Cookie Pledge before they can participate in Digital Cookie
- Volunteers must read and accept the Digital Cookie Terms and Conditions for Volunteers before they can participate in Digital Cookie
- Girls may only post about their participation on Digital Cookie on social media that allows them to restrict access to friends and family (e.g. Facebook).
- Parents/guardians must approve the content of a girls Digital Cookie web page before it goes live
- For girls under 13 years old, a parent/guardian must manage the girl's web site and be responsible for all content. In other words, girls under 13 are not allowed to post anything to their websites; it must be done by their parent/guardian.

For additional information and guidance please see the "[Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale: Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)", "[Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)", the Digital Cookie "Terms & Conditions for Girl Scouts", "Terms & Conditions for Parents/Guardians" and "Terms & Conditions for Volunteers".

Approaching Activities

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate for Girl Scouts? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What's safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. An incoming storm, for example, might force you to assess or discontinue an activity. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, call your council staff with full details and don't proceed without approval. Remember, the safety of girls is your most important consideration.

Prior to any activity, read the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints (available on your council's website or from your support team in some other format) related to any activity you plan to do with girls. If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, check with your council **before** making any definite plans with the girls. A few activities are allowed only with written council pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely:

- **Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from your council for girls ages 12 and older who will:
 - Use firearms for target shooting (see Sport Shooting Safety Activity Checkpoints)
 - Take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable (See Whitewater Rafting Safety Activity Checkpoints)

CAUTION: When activities involve unpredictable safety variables, they are not recommended as Girl Scout program activities. These include but are not limited to:

- Bungee Jumping
- Flying in small private planes, helicopters or blimps
- Go-Carting
- Hang gliding
- Hot air ballooning
- Hunting
- Motor biking
- Parachuting
- Parasailing
- Riding all-terrain vehicles
- Riding motorized personal watercraft such as jet skis
- Skydiving
- Stunt skiing
- Outdoor trampolining
- Zorbing

When planning activities with girls, note the abilities of each girl and carefully consider the progression of skills from the easiest part to the most difficult. Make sure the complexity of the activity does not exceed girls' individual skills. Bear in mind that skill levels decline when people are tired, hungry or under stress. Also use activities as opportunities for building teamwork, which is one of the outcomes for the Connect key in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE).

Health Histories (Including Examinations and Immunizations)

Girl Scout health histories and records may be handled differently by each council. For example, the staff at your council office may take care of obtaining and storing girl health histories, including a physician's examination and list of required immunizations. In other councils, you may be asked to maintain these records for your group. Either way, keep in mind that information contained in a girl's health history is confidential and protected by law. This information may only be shared with people who have a need to know the information such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian and a healthcare provider.

You can find the Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia Girl Health History form at www.gshg.org. This completed form, along with other necessary paperwork, must accompany adult chaperones during all events/trips/activities. It must also accompany the girl to whom it refers in any vehicle transporting her. Girl health history forms should be maintained by the troop/pathway leader; they are not stored at the council offices.

For various reasons, some parents/guardians may object to immunizations or medical examinations. Councils must attempt to make provisions for these girls to attend Girl Scout functions in a way that accommodates these concerns.

It is important for you to be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have. Keep in mind the following

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's custodial parent or guardian (your council can provide the necessary form).
- Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, EpiPens or diabetes medication. You must have documentation from the girl's parent or guardian that it is acceptable for the girl to self-administer these medications
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts and seafood. This means that before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies or chips), **ask** whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products or wheat. Do this even if you are aware of which girls have specific allergies! Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with them and their parents/guardians is always a good idea.

Girl Scout Activity Insurance

Every registered Girl Scout and registered volunteer member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic Mutual of Omaha Activity Insurance plan upon registration. The entire premium cost for this protection is borne by Girl Scouts of the USA, and the basic plan is effective during the regular **fiscal** year (October 1 to the following October 1). Up to 14 months of insurance coverage is provided for new members who register in the month of August.

This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. This is one reason why all volunteers and girls should be registered members. It is important to remember that non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters and friends) and other persons are **not** covered by the basic plan.

This insurance coverage is **not** intended to diminish the need for, or replace existing, family health insurance. When \$130 in benefits has been paid under this plan for covered expenses, any subsequent

benefits from the basic plan will be payable (up to the specified maximum) only for expenses incurred that aren't covered under another insurance policy. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available under the basic plan.

An optional Activity Insurance plan is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips (longer than three days and two nights) and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These optional plans are secondary insurance that a council may offer to cover participants taking part in any council-approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. Contact your council to find out how to apply. In some cases, your council may make this insurance mandatory, particularly for overseas travel. Please note that you must apply for this insurance for no later than 10 business days prior to the event or activity.

Review the [Girl Scouts insurance plan](#) description here.

Experts

The Safety Activity Checkpoints for most activities require having an expert on hand to help girls learn an activity. Please remember that **all experts must be approved by your council**. To make it a bit easier, many councils keep lists of local experts (such as sailing instructors) and facilities (such as roller skating rinks) they've already approved. If your council doesn't keep these lists, you'll have to present an expert for the council's consideration. Some things to keep in mind:

- **Does the person have documented training and experience?** She or he should have documented experience for the activity in question, such as course completion certificates or cards, records of previous training to instruct the activity and letters of reference.
- **What does she or he need to be able to do?** This person should have the knowledge and experience to make appropriate judgments concerning participants, equipment, facilities, safety considerations, supervision and procedures for the activity. At the very least, she or he should be able to give clear instructions to girls and volunteers, troubleshoot unexpected scenarios and respond appropriately in an emergency. **** If you are unsure or have questions particularly with high risk activities please contact a GSHG Council Staff Person**

What to do if ...

There is an Accident

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe council procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident:

1. Provide any possible immediate care for the sick or injured person. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings.
2. Have a responsible adult move uninjured girls to a safe place.
3. Have someone at the scene dial 911 or contact local emergency responders to report the emergency and to request medical assistance. Always report a serious accident or fatality to the police. Follow their instructions.
4. Dial the council emergency number, **1-866-236-7944**. The emergency service will immediately contact the appropriate council staff members.
5. Once informed, Girl Scout staff will assist you in contacting parents/guardians or others who need to be informed.
6. Make sure that a responsible adult remains at the scene of the accident until the police and

emergency personnel have completed their reports.

Follow established council procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of council staff, parents/guardians and emergency services such as the police, fire department or hospital. You should also always have on hand the emergency hotline card provided by your council.

In case of an accident or other **emergency**, dial 911 first, then call the council's emergency hotline number at MedCom to report it. Be prepared to give information related to the emergency: name, nature of the emergency, location, number/type of injuries, property damage or threat and contact number. Med-Com will contact the appropriate representative/s from your council.

Med-Com Emergency Hotline for GSHG
1-866-236-7944

After receiving a report of an accident, council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance at the scene, if needed, and will notify parents/guardians, as appropriate. If a Girl Scout needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, let council-designated staff discuss the incident with media representatives.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, the police **must** be notified and a responsible volunteer must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings and follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, your council and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel. Only the council CEO or her designated spokesperson is authorized to talk to the media. Refer all media questions or requests for interviews to council staff.

Someone Needs Emergency Care

As you know, emergencies can happen. Girls need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting to volunteers any accidents, illnesses or unusual behaviors during Girl Scout activities. You can help girls by keeping in mind the following:

- **Know what to report.** See the "What To Do If There is an Accident" section earlier in this chapter.
- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.** Know the type of extreme weather to expect in your area (e.g. tornadoes, hurricanes and lightning). Please consult with your council for the most relevant information for you to share with girls.
- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost persons and building-security issues.** Every girl and adult volunteer must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.
- **Assemble a well-stocked first-aid kit that is always accessible.** First-aid administered in the first few minutes can make a significant difference in the severity of an injury. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911, and then administer first aid, if appropriately trained.

First-Aid/CPR

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. For many activities, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer be first-aid/CPR-certified. For that reason, if you have the opportunity to get trained in council-approved first-aid/CPR, do it! You can take advantage of first-aid/CPR training offered by chapters of the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, American Heart Association or other sponsoring organizations approved by your council. As a partner of GSUSA, American Red Cross offers discounts on certification courses. You may find information about available courses offered by GSHG on the council website at www.gshg.org.

Caution: First-aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts' requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you're taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous paragraph, or any course that has online components, get approval from your support team or council prior to enrolling in the course.

First-Aider

A first-aider is an adult volunteer who has taken Girl Scout-approved first-aid and CPR training that includes specific instructions for child CPR. If, through the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, or American Heart Association, you have a chance to be fully trained in first-aid and CPR, doing so may make your activity planning go a little more smoothly.

The Safety Activity Checkpoints always tell you when a first-aider needs to be present. Since activities can take place in a variety of locations, the presence of a first-aider and the qualifications they need to have are based on the remoteness of the activity. For example, if you take a two-mile hike in an area that has cell phone reception and service along the entire route and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) is no more than 30 minutes away at all times the first-aider will not need to have knowledge of wilderness first aid. If, on the other hand, you take the same two-mile hike in a more remote area with no cell phone service and where EMS is more than 30 minutes away, the first-aider must have knowledge of wilderness first aid (see the chart below).

Access to EMS	Minimum Level of First Aid Required
Less than 30 minutes	First Aid
More than 30 minutes	Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder

**Although a WFR is not required, it is strongly recommended when traveling with groups in areas that are greater than 30 minutes from EMS.*

It is important to understand the differences between a first-aid course, and a wilderness-rated course. Although standard first-aid training provides basic incident response, wilderness-rated courses include training on remote-assessment skills, as well as emergency first-aid response, including evacuation techniques, to use when EMS is not readily available.

Note: The presence of a first-aider is required at resident camp. For large events—200 people or more—there should be one first-aider for every 200 participants. The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders: physician; physician's assistant; nurse practitioner; registered nurse; licensed practical nurse; paramedic; military medic; and emergency medical technician.

First-Aid Kit

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its [Anatomy of a First Aid Kit](#) (note that the Red Cross's suggested list includes aspirin, which you will not be at liberty to give to girls without direct parent/guardian permission). You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites and the like.

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain your council and emergency telephone numbers (which you can get from your council contact). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms and health histories may also be included.

You Witness or Experience Abuse

Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. All states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands have statutes identifying persons who are **required** to report suspected child abuse to an appropriate agency. Therefore, if you witness or suspect child abuse or neglect, whether inside or outside of Girl Scouting, follow your council's guidelines for reporting your concerns to the proper agency within your state.

A list of local contact information may be found on page 24 of this document. For additional information please check the following resources:

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Child Welfare Information Gateway:
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/can/>
- How to Report Suspected Child Maltreatment:
<https://www.childwelfare.gov/topics/responding/reporting/how/>
- Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect:
https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm

Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances

Helping girls decide what they want to do, and coaching them as they earn and manage money to pursue their goals, is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). Your Girl Scout group plans and finances its own activities, with your guidance. At the same time, the girls learn many valuable skills that serve them throughout their lives.

Girl Scout groups are funded by a share of money earned through council-sponsored product sale activities (such as Girl Scout cookie activities), group money-earning activities (council-approved, of course), and any your group may charge. (This is in addition to the \$25 annual membership dues that go to the national organization.) This chapter gives you the ins and outs of establishing a group account and helping girls manage their group's finances, practice successful product-sales techniques, and understand how to collaborate with sponsors and causes.

For information and guidance on safety related to product sales see Chapter 4, Safety-Wise.

Establishing an Account

If your group is earning and spending money, the group needs to set up a bank account. If you're taking over an existing group, you may inherit a checking account, but with a new group, you'll want to open a new account. This usually happens when there is money to deposit, such as group dues or money from product sales or group money-earning activities. Consider these tips when working with a group account:

- Keep group funds in the bank before an activity or trip, paying for as many items as possible in advance of your departure.
- Use debit cards during the activity or trip.
- Make one person responsible for group funds and for keeping a daily account of expenditures.
- Have one or more back-up people who also have debit cards, in case the main card is lost.
- Handle a lost group debit card the same way you would a personal debit card: cancel it immediately

Follow your council's financial policies and procedures for setting up an account. Most council-sponsored product sale activities have specific banking and tracking procedures.

Unused Girl Scout money left in accounts when groups disband becomes the property of the council. Prior to disbanding, the group may decide to donate any unused funds to their Service Area, another troop or for girl activities. Girl activities can include purchasing materials to support another organization through take-action projects. When closing a personal account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it, and realize that you may have to close the account in person. Turn remaining funds over to a council staff member.

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia's Financial Management Policies may be found on pages 14-23 of this document.

Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program

Did you know that the Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led business in the country, with sales of more than \$700 million per year for girls and their communities nationwide?

That's right. The Girl Scout Cookie sale is the leading entrepreneurial program for girls: no university has produced as many female business owners as the Girl Scout Cookie Program has.

If you have a moment, watch the latest Girl Scout [What Can a Cookie Do?](#) video for an inspiring look into just how powerful those treats—and the girls who sell them—can be.

Council-sponsored product sales are really the best way for girls to earn money to pursue their goals: the sales are beloved by the community and come with program, sales, and marketing materials and support that help girls run a great business. And they're an integral part of the GSLE. With every season of cookies, another generation of girls learns five important skills:

- Goal setting
- Decision making
- Money management
- People skills
- Business ethics

And most of all, girls gain a tremendous amount of confidence. It's not easy to ask people to buy something—you have to speak up, look them in the eye, and believe in what you're doing—all skills that help a girl succeed now and throughout the rest of her life.

Before beginning any cookies or other product sales with your group, refer to the cookies section of [Girl Scout Central](#) and www.girlscoutcookies.org

A Sweet Tradition

It has been decades since Girl Scouts began selling home-baked cookies to raise money. The idea was so popular that, in 1936, Girl Scouts enlisted bakers to handle the growing demand. For more on Girl Scout Cookie History, visit http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gsc_cookies/history.asp

Two commercial bakers are currently licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies—Little Brownie Bakers and ABC/Interbake Foods—and each council selects the baker of its choice. Each baker gets to name its own cookies (which is why some cookies have two names) and gets to decide which flavors it will offer in a given year, besides the three mandatory flavors (Thin Mints, Do-Si-Dos®/Peanut Butter Sandwich, and Trefoils/Shortbread). For additional information on cookie varieties, including nutritional details, visit www.girlscoutcookies.org.

Your Council's Role

Each year, your council provides learning opportunities on the procedures to follow during each sale. Your council also establishes guidelines and procedures for conducting the sale and determines how the proceeds and girl reward system will be managed.

Knowing Where Proceeds Go

Your council will provide a breakdown of “how the cookie crumbles” in your council. Please share this information with girls and their parents/guardians so everyone’s clear on how revenue raised through product sales makes it possible for your Girl Scout council to serve girls. Proceeds resulting from product sales support program activities—in fact, council-sponsored product sales are a primary way in which your council raises funds to support Girl Scouting. The percentage of money to be allocated to participating groups (like yours) is determined by your council and explained to girls and volunteers as part of the product sale activity orientation.

The income from product sales does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for incentives and credits that they put toward Council sponsored camps, programs and programmatic materials.

Girls may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate rewards related to product sale activities, and each council may choose to provide items such as participation patches, rewards, and council credit for event fees, camp fees, grants for travel and Take Action projects, as well as materials and supplies for program activities. The council plan for rewards applies equally to all girls participating in the product sale activity.

One critical task for each troop/group, is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the group’s volunteer, you’re in charge of making sure money is spent wisely, excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and all income is tracked, too. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as they learn to keep impeccable records.

The Girl/Volunteer Partnership

Underlying all the lessons that girls can learn from their participation in the Girl Scout Cookie Program is the girl/volunteer partnership. Ideally, this is a partnership between the girl and her leader and between the girl and her parents or guardian. Volunteers do not sell cookies, they participate only in supporting the direct involvement of girls.

During the Girl Scout Cookie Program the girl/volunteer partnership may look like this:

- A volunteer and girl working together to make plans and set goals.
- A volunteer assisting a girl by giving her access to the information and training she needs but letting the girl do the selling and delivering of cookies.
- A volunteer guiding a girl in understanding the finances and letting her practice the skills.
- A volunteer advising a girl on how to market her cookies but allowing her to make her own decisions.
- A volunteer helping a girl understand her responsibility to support her local council but ensuring that her participation is voluntary.

Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies:

Girl safety is the top priority while selling Girl Scout Cookie and other products. Volunteers, Parents and girls should be familiar with and practice the following:

Chapter 4 Safety Wise – Volunteer Essentials

Girl Scout Cookie/Council – Sponsored Product Sale Safety Activity Checkpoints

Safety Tips for Product Sales

Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints

Preparing for your Girl Scout Cookie Booths

Cookie booths, or temporary sales set-ups in areas with lots of foot traffic, are a popular way for girls to sell cookies as a team. Your council may have established cookie booth locations; contact the council before planning a cookie booth of your own.

Once you've gotten council approval, check out the booth site before the day of the sale. Talk to business owners in the area so they'll know what to expect. Find out what security measures are in place—these may include lights for evening sales and whether a security camera watches the booth area—and where the nearest bathrooms are located. In addition, review the Girl Scout Cookie/Council-Sponsored Product Sale Safety Activity Checkpoints, as well as Chapter 4, Safety-Wise to make sure you and the girls are as prepared as possible.

On the day of the sale, these tips will help make booth sales enjoyable for everyone:

- Ensure that you have adequate space at the booth (table, products, and girls) to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes, and cars.
- Plan to have at least two volunteers and one girl at the booth at all times. At least one of those volunteers must be registered with the council and have a background check. From time to time, volunteers might want to take breaks or will have to accompany young girls to the bathroom, so make sure to have a few extra volunteers on hand.
- Girls make **all** sales, except in cases where volunteers are helping Daisies handle money.
- Respect the surrounding businesses by making sure your booth isn't blocking a store entrance or exit.
- Attract customers with colorful signs. Remind girls to be polite and to have their sales pitch ready for interested shoppers.
- Report any suspicious people in the area to local security.

Should an incident cause concern, speak to a store manager or security guard at the booth location. If the incident appears serious, dial 911, then call the council's emergency hotline to report it.

Cookie Donation Programs

Your council may have a cookie donation program established where customers may purchase cookies for the sole purpose of having them donated to an organization coordinated by your council. This is a great talking point for girls to share with their customers and a great way to help teach girls that the cookie program can make a big impact in their community and to others.

Here are some things to remember about cookie donations:

- All cookie donation programs must be approved by your council
- Donated cookies must stay within the council jurisdiction unless your council has the approval from other council jurisdictions
- Donated products cannot be resold and must be used in a responsible and ethical way.
- Donated products are used in a way that does not undermine the work of councils or jeopardizes the integrity of the Girl Scout Brand

Handling Product Complaints

It has always been the practice of Girl Scout councils and the bakers to guarantee customer satisfaction with their cookies. If a customer for some reason is not satisfied with the quality of their cookies they can contact the baker via the number printed on the side of the box of cookies.

Troops/group should notify their council if they are aware of any customer dissatisfaction.

Using Online Resources and Social Media to Market Cookies and Other Products

Girls may use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, text messages, IMs, and emails as online marketing tools to let family, friends, and former customers know about the sale and collect indications of interest. All are effective ways that girls 13 and older can promote cookie and other product sales. Girls under 13 cannot independently set up online marketing sites. Girls under 13 can use their parent or guardians online sites with their approval and supervision.

The following sections detail how girls can use electronic marketing, social media, and group websites to gather sale commitments from family, friends, and previous customers. But first, please keep in mind that girls:

- **Can market to and collect indications of interest from customers within their councils' zip codes.** Refer prospects that come from outside council jurisdiction to the council finder at www.girlscoutcookies.org. Family members and Digital Cookie sales are the exception to this rule.
- **Must sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge** (available at http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp) before doing any online activities, and all online activities must be under the supervision of volunteers.
- **Cannot expose their own or any other girl's email address, physical address, or phone number to the public.** When writing e-mail messages or online announcements, girls should sign with their first name only, along with their group number or name and their council name.

See Chapter 4, Safety-Wise for additional information and guidance regarding online product marketing and sales.

Setting Up a Troop/Group Website

Troops whose girls meet age criteria (13 years or older) and have parental permission may set up a group Facebook page or website. This site must be approved by the council, yes, but it can be a fantastic way for girls to share information, market Girl Scout products, and talk about their Take Action projects.

Don't violate copyright law by using designs, text from magazines or books, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder (and, generally, this permission is pretty tough to get!). Girl Scout trademarks (such as the trefoil shape, Girl Scout pins, and badges and patches) can be used only in accordance with guidelines for their use. (The Girl Scout trefoil, for example, may not be animated or used as wallpaper for a website.) Check with your council's website for complete graphics guidelines and approvals.

It is important to remember the twofold purpose of the Girl Scout Cookie Program when selling cookies or other products. The primary purposes of these sales are to help girls grow and develop and to generate the revenue necessary to provide Girl Scouting to as many girls as possible. For this reason, girls should be directly involved in any sales that are made, whether in person or over the Internet.

Money-Earning Basics

Groups earn money for their troop in two distinct ways:

- **The Girl Scout Cookie Program and other sales** of Girl Scout–authorized products (such as Girl Scout cookies, calendars, magazines, or nuts and candy), organized by your council and open to all Girl Scouts. Girls can participate in two council-sponsored product sale activities each year: one of which may be the cookie sale and one other council-authorized product sale. All girl members who take part in any way of Girl Scouting (troop, camp, travel, etc.), including Daisies, are eligible to participate in council-sponsored product-sale activities, with volunteer supervision. Please remember: volunteers and Girl Scout council staff don't sell cookies and other products—girls do.
- **“Group money-earning”** refers to activities organized by the group (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with volunteers) and that earn money for the group.

Girls' participation in both council-sponsored product sale activities and group money-earning projects is based upon the following:

- Voluntary participation
- Written permission of each girl's parent or guardian
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed
- An understanding that money-earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its activities
- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities, as well as health and safety laws
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl (see Chapter 4 for guidance)
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

There are a few specific guidelines—some required by the Internal Revenue Service—that ensure that sales are conducted with legal and financial integrity. To that end, consider the following reminders and cautions:

- All rewards earned by girls through the product-sale activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel, and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).
- Rewards are based on sales ranges set by councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
- Troops and Groups are encouraged to participate in council product sales as their primary money-earning activity; any group money-earning shouldn't compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other council product sales.
- Obtain written approval from your council before a group money-earning event; most councils ask that you submit a request for approval. GSHG's Fundraising Request Forms can be found at www.gshg.org.

- Girl Scouts discourages the use of games of chance. Any activity which could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo) must be approved by the local Girl Scout council and be conducted in compliance with all local and state laws.
- Girl Scout Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash. Girls can collect partial payment towards the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and Girl Scout Fall Product Program products through participation in Council approved product sale donation programs.
- Girl Scouts forbids product demonstration parties where the use of the Girl Scout trademark increases revenue for another business (For example: in home product parties). Any business using the Girl Scout trademark must seek authorization from GSUSA
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the GSLE.
- Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product sales. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following council procedures.

Other money earning activities may include:

Collections/Drives:

- Cell phones for refurbishment
- Used ink cartridges turned in for money
- Christmas tree recycling

Food/M Meal Events:

- Lunch box auction (prepared lunch or meal auctioned off)
- Themed meals, like high tea, Indian meal, Mexican dinner (if girls are earning money for travel, tie the meal to their destination)

Service(s):

- Service-a-thon (people sponsor a girl doing service; funds go to support trip)
- Babysitting for holiday (New Year's Eve) or council events
- Raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, shoveling snow, walking pets
- Cooking class or other specialty class

The best way to earn money for your group is to start with Girl Scout cookie activities and other council-sponsored product sales. From there, your group may decide to earn additional funds on its own.

Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Sponsors help Girl Scout councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations, and individuals may be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, offer in-kind donations, provide activity materials, or loan equipment. The sponsor's contribution can then be recognized by arranging for the girls to send thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony, or working together on a Take Action project.

For information on working with a sponsor, consult your council; it can give you guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting responsibility, and any council policies or practices that must be followed. Your council may already have relationships with certain organizations, or may know of some reasons **not** to collaborate with certain organizations.

It takes money to make good things possible for girls. Board members, staff, individuals in the community, businesses, foundations and United Ways all give support to Girl Scouts. Support from all donors helps Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia build better programs and offer more activities for girls. The annual membership fee goes directly to Girl Scouts of the USA for program development, girl research and activity insurance. Not a penny of the registration fee stays with Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia. The Friends and Family Campaign solicits funds from the friends and families of Girl Scouts to support the work of the council to provide outstanding opportunities and programs for girls throughout Historic Georgia.

The GSHG volunteer board of directors approves the annual budget that has first been reviewed and recommended by the volunteer finance committee. The money is used, in part, for financial assistance for girls in need, leader recruitment, training, printed materials, patches, maintenance and support of camps and council properties, and the development of new programs and events. Adult financial support for Girl Scouts is vital. Your contribution, along with others, provides materials, programs, training and support for your daughter and her troop leader. It also helps maintain the camp properties your daughter enjoys. Your contribution shows you care. Participation in the Family & Friends Campaign is not a requirement for membership. However, most parents can give at some level and every donation is needed and appreciated.

What your contributions provide for the girls during the membership year:

1. Grants for girls, including Destination & Camperships
2. Membership assistance – which is on the rise
3. Service Unit assistance – website, materials, training & support
4. Troop assistance – website, materials, trainings & support
5. Beautiful, safe camp properties
6. Council sponsored events
7. Equipment that is available for checkout



What the contributions provide for troops and Service Unit/Service Area/District volunteers:

1. Material for each troop
 - Up-to-date information via the website
 - *Volunteer Essentials*
 - Program calendar

- Volunteer orientation and reduced cost or FREE training opportunities
2. Other benefits offered to all Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia
 - Online Volunteer Tool Kit (coming August 2017!)
 - Program, Resource & Summer Camp Guide
 - Centralized calling system throughout the council
 - Monthly electronic newsletter – Samoa News, and Five on Friday updates

Any girl can qualify to become a member of the Daisy Society and receive a segment of the Daisy Society patch (pictured above) when the following criteria are met:

- When a donation of \$25 or more is made in honor of a girl to the Friends and Family Annual Giving Campaign, the girl will receive a segment of the Daisy Society patch. (One piece of the patch can be received each calendar year.)
- Donation may be made on the girl's registration form or at any time during the calendar year. (Donations made other than at the time of registration will need to have a note accompanying them. The note needs to include the name of the girl the gift is honoring, a mailing address and the girl's troop number.)
- The patch will be mailed with the thank you acknowledgment to the parent/guardian of the girl.

Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is so well known in communities, it's likely that your girls will already know a bit about it and want to get out there to start selling as soon as possible. But it's important that the girls have a clear plan and purpose for their product-sale activities. One of your opportunities as a volunteer is to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps for the girls:

1. **Set goals for money-earning activities.** What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities present themselves?
2. **Create a budget.** Use a budget worksheet that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, and so on) and available income (the group's account balance, projected cookie proceeds, and so on).
3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.
4. **Make a plan.** The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans. Will cookie and other product sales—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the group's goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference in anticipated expense and anticipated income? Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group's financial goals? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.
5. **Write it out.** Once the group has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out an application for approval from your council and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created.

Remember: It's great for girls to have opportunities, like the Girl Scout Cookie Program, to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals as part of the GSLE. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and

spending money. Take Action projects, for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money!

Reviewing Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level

As with other activities, girls progress in their financial and sales abilities as they get older. This section gives you some examples of the abilities of girls at each grade level.

Girl Scout Daisies

The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and does all group budgeting.

Parents/guardians may decide they will contribute to the cost of activities.

Girls can participate in Girl Scout cookie activities and other council-sponsored product sales.

Daisies are always paired with a volunteer when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but volunteers handle the money and keep the girls secure.

Girl Scout Brownies

The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and shares some of the group-budgeting responsibilities.

Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on).

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls may decide to pay dues.

Girl Scout Juniors

The group volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record-keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer (selected by the girls).

Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group, on the basis of plans and income from the group dues.

Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.

Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.

Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

Girls estimate costs based on plans.

Girls determine the amount of group dues (if any) and the scope of money-earning projects.

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.

Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning projects.

Girls budget for extended travel, Take Action projects, and leadership projects.

Girls may be involved in seeking donations for Take Action projects, with council approval.

Girls keep their own financial records and give reports to parents and group volunteers.

Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Silver or Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.

When collaborating with any other organization, keep these additional guidelines in mind:

Avoiding fundraising for other organizations: Girl Scouts are not allowed, when identifying ourselves as Girl Scouts (such as wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on), to solicit money on behalf of another organization. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. You and your group can, however, support another organization through take-action projects. Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose, as long as they're not wearing anything that officially identifies them as "Girl Scouts."

- **Steering clear of political fundraisers:** When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your group may not participate (directly or indirectly) in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Letter-writing campaigns are not allowed, nor is participating in a political rally, circulating a petition, or carrying a political banner.
- **Being respectful when collaborating with religious organizations:** Girl Scout groups must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice of the sponsoring group.

- **Avoiding selling or endorsing commercial products:** “Commercial products” is any product sold at retail. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell such products.



Appendix: For Troop Volunteers

Girls and volunteers participating in troops can meet once a week, once a month, or twice a month for several months—how often is up to you and the girls. Troops can meet just about anywhere, as long as the location is safe, easily accessible to girls and volunteers, and within a reasonable commute (“reasonable” having different definitions in different areas: In rural areas, a two-hour drive may be acceptable; in an urban area, a 30-minute subway ride may be too long). In each meeting, girls participate in fun activities that engage them in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE).

Troops provide a flexible way for girls to meet. Some ideas include:

- Fourteen Girl Scout Brownies who meet twice a month from November through March at a local community center
- Seven girls who are homeschooled and meet weekly as a Girl Scout Cadette troop
- Girls who meet together once a week at their juvenile detention center to participate in Girl Scout activities

Forming a Troop Committee

You’ll want to involve other adults in the troop—there’s no need to go it alone or depend on too few adults! Many hands make light work, and the role is more fun when it’s shared. Think about the people you know whom you admire, who can connect with girls, who are dependable and responsible, and who realistically have time to spend volunteering. (Remember that these volunteers will need to register as Girl Scout members, fill out volunteer application forms, take online learning sessions, and review written resources.) Consider business associates, neighbors, former classmates, friends, and so on. If you have trouble finding reliable, quality volunteers to assist, talk to your volunteer support team for advice and support. And feel free to use the sample welcome letter and friends/family checklist in the Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie, and Junior Leadership Journeys to assist you in expanding your troop’s volunteer network.

Remember: Be sure every volunteer reviews and follows the 12 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, available both in the Quick-Start Guide to this handbook and in the “Safety-Wise” chapter.

Your troop committee members might help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Locating volunteers with expertise on a topic of special interest to girls
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Managing troop records

A troop committee may be made up of general members or may include specific positions, such as:

- **Cookie Manager:** A volunteer who would manage all aspects of Girl Scout cookie activities
- **Transportation Coordinator:** The volunteer you’d look to whenever you need to transport girls for any reason; this person would have volunteers available to drive and chaperone
- **Record Keeper:** A treasurer/secretary rolled into one person—someone to keep track of the money and keep the books

Set up roles that work for you, and draw on other volunteers who possess skill sets that you may lack. When you're ready to invite parents, neighbors, friends, colleagues, and other respected adult volunteers to partner with you, send them a letter and invite them to their first troop committee meeting.

Holding Troop Meetings

The sample sessions in the Leadership Journey adult guides will give you ideas about how to plan and hold successful troop meetings that allow girls to Discover, Connect, and Take Action as they have fun with a purpose. (See the “Girl Scouting as a National Experience” chapter of this handbook for more on the three processes.) Many volunteers find it helpful to think of meetings having six parts, as outlined below, but feel free to structure the meeting in a way that makes sense for you and the girls.

As Girls Arrive	Start-up activities are planned so that when girls arrive at the meeting they have something to do until the meeting begins. For younger girls, it could be coloring pages; teen girls might jot down a journal entry or just enjoy a little time to talk.
Opening	The opening focuses the meeting and allows girls to start the meeting. Each troop decides how to open their own meeting—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and then add a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other ceremony designed by the girls. Girl Scout Brownies, for example, might create a new tradition by skipping in a circle while singing a song. Ceremonies, even when brief or humorous, make Girl Scout time special. The Journey adult guides contain ideas about openings that correspond to Journey themes.
Business	Troop business may include taking attendance, collecting dues, making announcements, and planning an upcoming event or trip. This is a good time for girls to take turns leading, especially as they grow up! (Some troops may move the business portion of the meeting to an earlier or later slot.)
Activities	<p>Activities will depend on what the girls want to do in their troop and how they want to spend their collective time. Outdoor time is important, so encourage the girls to do an activity in a park or forest. If girls are interested in animals, encourage the girls to plan a visit to a zoo or animal shelter. As you engage in one of the three National Leadership Journeys, review the “Sample Sessions at a Glance” in the adult guide for Journey activity ideas.</p> <p>Treats are an option some troops decide to include in their meetings and range from a bottle of soap bubbles or a jump rope to a food snack. If girls choose to include snacks, guide them to consider the health of a potential snack, as well as possible food allergies. Enlist the help of parents or guardians by asking them to sign up and bring a treat. You'll also find plenty of snack ideas and sign-up forms in the adult guide of most Leadership Journeys.</p>
Clean-up	Clean-up is a great habit for girls to get their meeting space back to the way it was when they arrived—maybe even cleaner! Girls can also take leadership of the cleaning themselves, deciding who does what. They might even enjoy the tradition of a kaper chart (a chore chart that lists all the chores and assigns girls' names to each), so that everyone takes turns at each responsibility.

Closing

The closing lets the girls know that the troop meeting is ending. Many girls close with the friendship circle, in which each girl stands in a circle, puts her right arm over her left, and holds the hand of the girl standing next to her. The friendship squeeze is started by one girl, and then passed around the circle until it comes back to the girl who started it. When the squeeze is finished, girls twist clockwise out of the circle lifting their arms and turning around and out of the circle. In addition, you may find some helpful, Journey-related closing ceremony ideas in the Journey's adult guide.

You help each troop member do her part to ensure the meeting and activities are enriching and fun. Based on their grade levels and abilities, girls may decide and plan opening and closing activities, bring and prepare treats, teach songs or games, and clean up. As girls grow, they can show and teach younger members about Girl Scouting. They can also assist you in preparing materials for activities. For trips, campouts, parent meetings, and multi-troop events, girls may be responsible for shopping, packing equipment, handing out programs, cleaning up, gathering wood, and so on. As long as you pay attention to grade level and maturity, what girls can do is endless!

Letting Girls Lead

Many troops employ a democratic system of governance so that all members have the opportunity to express their interests and feelings and share in the planning and coordination of activities. Girls' partner with you and other volunteers, and you facilitate, act as a sounding board, and ask and answer questions. Girls from Daisies through Ambassadors will gain confidence and leadership skills when given the opportunity to lead their activities, learn cooperatively as a group, and learn by doing instead of by observing.

The following are some traditions troops have used for girl-led governance, but these are just examples. National Leadership Journeys offer examples of team decision-making, too.

- **Daisy/Brownie Circle:** While sitting in a circle (sometimes called a ring), girls create a formal group decision-making body. The circle is an organized time for girls to express their ideas and talk about activities they enjoy, and you play an active role in facilitating discussion and helping them plan. Girls often vote to finalize decisions. If girls are talking over each other, consider passing an object, such as a talking stick, that entitles one girl to speak at a time.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Patrol or Team System:** In this system, large troops divide into small groups, with every member playing a role. Teams of four to six girls are recommended so that each girl gets a chance to participate and express her opinions. Patrols may be organized by interests or activities that feed into a Take Action project, with each team taking responsibility for some part of the total project; girls may even enjoy coming up with names for their teams.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Executive Board:** In the executive board system (also called a steering committee), one leadership team makes decisions for the entire troop. The board's responsibility is to plan activities and assign jobs based on interests and needs, and the rest of the troop decides how to pass their ideas and suggestions to the executive board throughout the year. The executive board usually has a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer and holds its own meetings to discuss troop matters. Limit the length of time each girl serves on the executive board so all troop members can participate during the year.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Town Meeting:** Under the town meeting system, business is discussed and decisions are made at meetings attended by all the girls in the troop. As in the patrol and executive board systems, everyone gets the chance to participate in decision-making

and leadership. Your role is to act as a moderator, who makes sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that all ideas are considered.

Transporting Girls

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities—outside the normal time and place—in which a group will be transported in private vehicles:

- Every driver must be an approved adult volunteer, at least **21** years of age, and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) has at least two girls, and is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

For more about driving, see the [“Transporting Girls”](#) section of the [“Safety-Wise”](#) chapter of this handbook.

Looking at a Sample Troop Year

Beginning in August 2017, you will be able to plan your year using fabulous online resources via the Volunteer Tool Kit (VTK). Check with your membership representative after August 14, 2017 to receive a direct link to the VTK.

Here is just one example of how you and the girls could set up your troop year.

- Hold a parent/guardian meeting.
- Open a checking account, if needed.
- Register all the girls in the troop.
- Meet together for the first time, allowing the girls to decide how they can learn each others' names and find out more about each other.
- Kick off a Leadership Journey with the opening ceremony recommended in the first sample session, or a trip or special event that fits the theme. Have the girls brainstorm and plan any trip or event.
- Enjoy the full Journey, including its Take Action project.
- Along the way, add in related badge activities that girls will enjoy and that will give them a well-rounded year.

- Have the girls plan, budget for, and “earn and learn” in the Girl Scout Cookie Program.
- Help girls plan a field trip or other travel opportunity.
- Encourage girls to plan a culminating ceremony for the Journey, including awards presentations, using ideas in the Journey girls’ book and/or adult guide.
- Pre-register girls for next year.
- Camp out!
- Participate in a council-wide event with girls from around your region.
- Have the girls plan and hold a bridging ceremony for girls continuing on to the next Girl Scout grade level.



Appendix: For Travel Volunteers

Not only do some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout's life happen while taking trips, but travel also offers a wealth of opportunities for girls to develop leadership skills. This appendix helps you prepare girls for local, regional, or international travel of any scope and duration.

Juliette Low World Friendship Fund

To honor Juliette Gordon Low's love of travel, of experiencing different cultures, and of making friends, Girl Scouts created the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund in 1927. Today, this fund supports girls' international travel, participation in adult learning, and attendance at other international events—any event that fosters global friendships that connect Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 145 nations. Click [here](#) to find out more or to donate to the fund.

Traveling with Girls

Girls love trips. And Girl Scouts is a great place for them to learn how to plan and take exciting trips, because travel is built on a progression of activities—that is, one activity leads to the next. Girl Scout Daisies, for example, can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and experience and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips. The Journey Adult Guides have a lot of other ideas about trips that bring the Journey to life. Here are some examples of the progression of events and trips in Girl Scouting's Ladder of Leadership:

- **Short trips to local points of interest (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.
- **Overnight Camping (Daisies and older):** A Daisy troop may participate in an occasional overnight camping experience. Daisies who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Daisies who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights.
- **Day trip (Brownies and older):** An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home.
- **Overnight trips (Brownies and older):** One (or possibly two) nights away to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground. These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not long enough to generate homesickness.
- **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three or four nights camping or a stay in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls' home region (for example, New England, the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest,

and so on). Planning a trip to a large museum—and many offer unique opportunities for girls to actually spend the night on museum grounds—makes for an exciting experience for girls.

- **National trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of ordinary recreational trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component such as incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country.
- **International trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation.

International trips are available to Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who have successfully participated in a progression of overnight trips with Girl Scouting. When girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact your council to get permission to plan the trip and download the [Global Travel Toolkit](#). Adult volunteers should ensure that girls are mature enough to participate in the trip. Factors to consider are adaptability, good decision-making, previous cross-cultural experience, group dynamics, team capability, language skills (where applicable), and specific skills and interests related to the trip. Visiting one of the [four World Centers](#) is a great place to start, but also consider traveling with international service-learning organizations. Girls have traveled to rural Costa Rica to volunteer at elementary schools, to Mexico to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, and to India to work with girls living in poverty in urban slums. WAGGGS World Centers or your Girl Scout Council may have additional guidelines regarding age requirements.

Using Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* in Their Travels

Girl Scout travel is an ideal way to offer girls leadership opportunities. Encourage girls to choose one of the National Leadership Journeys. The Journey's theme will give girls a way to explore leadership through their travels. Use the adult guide to incorporate activities and discussions that help girls explore the Three Keys to Leadership (Discover, Connect, and Take Action) as they plan their trip and eventually travel.

Tying your trip to the topic of a Leadership Journey is a cinch. For example, if Cadette girls have chosen *MEdia*, before their trip they can read online newspapers from the area to which they're traveling—and evaluate when they arrive how well the media reflects the realities there. If Senior girls are using *SOW WHAT*, they can plan to observe agricultural practices in other parts of the country or around the world. Ambassadors using *BLISS: Live It! Give It!* can build a trip around dreaming big—and empowering others in their community to dream big, too.

If girls also want to complete skill-building badge requirements as part of their trip, they can. The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, which fits perfectly into planning a trip. In addition, girls can explore other badge topics, depending on the focus of their trip. For examples, Cadettes can explore the food in other regions or countries for their New Cuisines badge, Seniors can find out about international business customs as part of their Business Etiquette badge, and Ambassadors can work on their Photography badge while documenting their trip.

Be sure to visit the “Girl Scouting as a National Experience” chapter in this handbook to find out more about the Journeys and *The Girls Guide to Girl Scouting*.

To ensure that any travel you do with girls infuses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience at every opportunity, limit your role to facilitating the girls’ brainstorming and planning—but never doing the work for them. Allow the girls to lead, learn collaboratively, and learn by doing (and by making mistakes). All the while, however, provide ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

Include girls with disabilities. Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Make sure that reasonable accommodations are made for girls with disabilities. Learn more about the resources and information that [Global Explorers](#) and [Wilderness Inquiries](#) provide to people with disabilities.

Travel Progression Checklist

If your group is thinking about travel, consider first whether the girls are mature enough to handle the trip. Determine a group’s readiness for travel by assessing the girls’:

- Ability to be away from their parents and their homes
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations
- Ability to make decisions for themselves and the good of the group well and easily
- Previous cross-cultural experiences
- Ability to get along with each other and handle challenges
- Ability to work well as a team
- Skills, interests, and language skills (where applicable)

Seeking Council Permission

Before most trips, you and the girls will need to obtain council permission, although your council may not require this information for trips of one day with no overnight stay. Check with your council for specifics, and also see whether specific forms must be filled out before traveling.

Please review Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia’s troop trip procedures and complete the troop trip application before embarking on any trip.

Encourage the girls to submit much of the information themselves, including the following:

- A detailed itinerary, including specific activities involved, mode of travel, and all dates and times
- Location and type of premises to be used
- Numbers of girls who will be participating (parental permissions must be obtained)
- Names and contact information for the volunteers participating
- Any other groups, organizations, consultants, or resource people who will be involved

- Participants' skill levels, if applicable (language skills, backpacking or camping experience, and so on)
- Any specialized equipment that will be used, if applicable
- Required agreements or contracts (for example, hiring a bus, use of premises)

From the Birth of Girl Scouting to the World Centers

[The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace](#) and [Girl Scout First Headquarters](#) in Savannah, Georgia, are fantastic places for Girl Scout Juniors and older to visit. Reservations are required to take a group of girls to visit the birthplace, or First Headquarters, and most educational opportunities are booked in advance, so book early!

In addition, four lodges are available in England, Mexico, Switzerland, and India for use by Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, each with hostel- or dormitory-style accommodations. The [world centers](#) are operated by WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) and offer low-cost accommodations and special programs. They are also a great way to meet Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world.

Closer to home, check with your council to see whether council-owned camps and other facilities can be rented out to the group of girls with whom you're working.

Involving Chaperones

To determine how many volunteer chaperones the girls will need with them on the trip, see the [adult-to-girl ratios](#). As you ask for chaperones, be sure to look for ones who are committed to:

- Being a positive role model
- Respecting all girls and adults equally, with no preferential treatment
- Creating a safe space for girls
- Prioritizing the safety of all girls
- Supporting and reinforcing a group agreement
- Handling pressure and stress by modeling flexibility and a sense of humor
- Creating an experience for and with girls
- Getting fit (appropriate to the trip)

Be sure every chaperone reviews and follows the 12 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, available both in the Quick-Start Guide to this handbook and in the "Safety-Wise" chapter.

Letting Girls Lead

Whether the trip is a day hike or a cross-country trek, the basic steps of trip planning are essentially the same. It's true that as the locale gets farther away, the itinerary more complex, and the trip of greater duration, the details become richer and more complex, but planning every trip—from a day-long event to an international trek—starts by asking the following:

- What do we hope to experience?
- Who will we want to talk to and meet?
- What will we ask?

- Where are we interested in going?
- When are we all available to go?
- Will everyone in our group be able to go?
- Are there physical barriers that cannot be accommodated?
- What are visiting hours and the need for advance reservations?
- What are our options for getting there?
- What's the least and most this trip could cost?
- What can we do now to get ourselves ready?
- How will we earn the money?
- What's the availability of drinking water, restrooms, and eating places?
- Where is emergency help available?
- What safety factors must we consider?
- What will we do as we travel?
- What will we do when we get there?
- How will we share the Take Action story?

As girls answer these questions, they begin the trip-planning process. In time, girls can make specific arrangements, attend to a myriad of details, create a budget and handle money, and accept responsibility for their personal conduct and safety. Later, after they've returned from an event or trip, girls also have the chance to evaluate their experiences and share them with others.

Tips for Girls Traveling Alone

If a Girl Scout Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador will be traveling alone during any part of a trip, use the opportunity to help her feel comfortable with and capable of being on her own. Always talk first with her parents to assess her maturity and ability to handle herself, and have them complete an emergency form. If she is flying, discuss the possibility of booking a nonstop flight to make her trip less stressful, and ask parents to contact the airline, which will make special arrangements for any unaccompanied minor. With the girl herself, develop a trip plan, discuss hotel security and safety, and talk about avoiding excess communication with strangers, **not** wearing a nametag, and avoiding exposing money or other items (such as smartphones, iPads, and iPods) that are attractive to pickpockets.

Staying Safe During the Trip

Be sure to discuss the following items with the girls and their parents before you leave on any trip (you may also want to put this information in writing and have girls sign it):

- Who her buddy is—and how the buddy system works
- What to do if she is separated from the group, whether by accident or because of a crime
- What to do if she loses something significant: money, passport, luggage
- How to report a crime
- What to do if emergency help is needed
- How to perform basic first-aid procedures

- How to deal with a large crowd (if applicable)
- What to do in the event of a crime
- What behaviors you expect—and what consequences exist for not living up to those behaviors

Travel Security and Safety Tips

Share these safety tips with girls before you leave on any trip that involves a stay at a hotel, motel, hostel, or dormitory:

- Always lock the door behind you, using the deadbolt and the chain or anchor.
- Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff claims to be at the door, call the front desk to confirm.
- Don't mention or display your room number when in the presence of strangers.
- Never leave jewelry, cameras, electronics, cash, or credit cards in your room.
- Never leave luggage unattended in the hotel lobby (or in an airport or train or bus station).
- When arriving at the hotel, locate emergency exits.
- Keep a small flashlight on your bedside table, along with a small bag with your room key, wallet, passport, and cell phone. Take the flashlight and bag with you if you have to leave the room in an emergency.
- If a fire alarm goes off, get out as quickly as possible. Don't stop to pack your suitcase.
- Before leaving your room, feel the door: If it is warm, do not open it. Stay in your room and stuff towels around the door. Call the hotel operator immediately. If the door is cool, proceed slowly out the door, looking for flames or smoke. Repeat these instructions for any door you encounter.
- Contact the front desk to make sure girls' rooms are cleared of any minibars or refrigerators. Also be sure the hotel doesn't provide access to inappropriate movies on TVs and does not allow long-distance calls. Alert the hotel management that underage girls are staying in the hotel, and ask them to contact you if any girls are seen out of their rooms after bedtime.

Forms

Most forms needed to deliver the Girl Scout program can be found at www.ghsg.org. Many of the forms and documents available there require updated versions of Adobe Reader® for viewing (free downloads are available). You'll also find directions for completing forms to register your troop on the site, as well as other resources to assist you with delivering troop program.

TROOP FORMS AND HOW TO USE THEM				
All forms can be found at www.gshg.org				
Name of Form	Form Deadline	Purpose	Submit to	Other
Accident or Incident Report	Immediately after accident or incident	Clear documentation of accident or incident	Membership Representative	N/A
Adult Health History	At the beginning of every year and as things change	To provide necessary information in case of a medical emergency during a Girl Scout function	Troop Leadership	N/A
Adult Training Registration	10 days prior to the training event, unless otherwise noted	Registers an adult Girl Scout member for a volunteer training opportunity	Complete registration online (preferred) or email trainingregistrar@gshg.org	N/A
All Star Award – for all grade level troops/groups	Required report forms and payment due by October 31	Documents that your troop/group is getting the most out of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience	Nearest GSHG Service Center	N/A
Annual Performance Review/Intent Form	Due June 1	Provide volunteer review and discover volunteer's intent to continue	Service Unit/Service Area Manager or District Chair	N/A
Detail Cash Record for Troop	Due April 1 & October 1	Record troop financial transactions as they occur	Service Unit/Service Area Manager or District Chair	Should be available for review throughout the year
Financial Aid Information & Application	Membership – N/A Camp & Events – 4 wks. prior to the event or camp Training – 4 wks. Prior to the training event	Request for financial assistance when a family cannot meet the expense of membership dues (GSUSA) or a council-sponsored program or training event	Membership: Membership Representative Camp & Events: Program Manager Training Event: Volunteer Development – pending available funds	Form is confidential. Please discuss with your Membership Representative.

Name of Form	Form Deadline	Purpose	Submit to	Other
Girl Health History	At the beginning of every year and as things change	To provide necessary information in case of a medical emergency during a Girl Scout function	Troop Leadership	N/A
Individual Girl and Troop Program Registration	As individual girls or troops register for council programs	Register girls – either as troop or individuals – for council program events and activities	Complete registration online (preferred) or email to programregistrar@gshg.org	N/A
Parade Application	As a troop participates in a parade	Request permission from Program Representative	Program Representative	N/A
Parental Permission Form	Prior to conducting activity	Request approval from parents for their girl(s) to participate in a trip or sensitive issue activity/discussion	Troop Leadership	N/A
Troop Status Report	June 1	Provide information on status of troops for the following year (returning, disbanding, etc.)	Membership Representative	N/A
Troop Trip Application (May also be requested from the SU/SA Manager or District Chair)	3 wks. Prior for field/day trip or overnight camping. 3 mos. Prior for a trip of more than 2 nights. 1 yr. prior for international trip	Request approval for non-council/non-SU/SA sponsored troop trips away from regular meeting place and time	Program Representative	Must have first aider & Beyond the Meeting Place qualified person on the trip. If trip is over 2 nights, must apply for extra GS insurance. Some trips require special certifications
Troop Trip Log (Log is held by the SU/SA Manager)	Prior to any trip within an hour's travel time (one-way) of troop meeting site	Request approval for non-council/non-SU/SA sponsored troop trips away from regular meeting place and time	SU/SA Manager. May be filled out at SU/SA meeting or by phone or email	Failure to properly document trips could result in loss of insurance and liability
Volunteer Agreement & Position Description	Prior to assuming the duties of the position and completed yearly	Indicates volunteer is willing to assume the responsibilities outlined in the position description	Membership, Volunteer Development and Program Staff (MVP)	N/A
Troop/Group Monthly Report	At end of each month	Provides a report of troop/group activities for that month	Membership Representative	This information is critical to report to our funders.

Name of Form	Form Deadline	Purpose	Submit to	Other
Recognizing Child Abuse	Prior to assuming duties of the position. Must sign yearly Acknowledgement Form	Indicates volunteer acknowledges responsibility as mandated reporter	Membership Representative or Customer Care Staff	N/A
Volunteer Application	Every volunteer before working directly with girls or handling money; completed every three years	To protect the safety of our girls, every volunteer working with girls or handling money must complete this application and consent to a background check	Membership Recruitment Representative	Volunteers cannot work directly with girls or handle money until the application is submitted and a clear background check received.



Additional Resources

Raising Awesome Girls

From the time she came into your life, you've only wanted the best for your daughter. You want to see her feel happy and loved, be confident, make new friends, stay healthy, excel in school, and eventually rise up the ranks in a career she finds fulfilling. But you also want your girl to be independent, grow into her own person with her own unique strengths and beliefs, and to learn to use her voice. And all of that? Well, it can be overwhelming at times to say the least.

That's why we're happy to share straightforward, realistic, and proven parenting advice on everything and anything you might deal with when raising girls. From when to get a family pet and how to help her make new friends to more serious issues like bullying, discussions about current events, and school struggles, we've got you covered. Hand-in-hand, we can take the guesswork out of parenting and bring the fun back in.

For the full list of articles, visit: <http://www.girlscouts.org/en/raising-girls.html>

Steps to Getting Started – Troop /Group Leadership

- _____ 1. I have registered as an adult member of Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia, Inc.
- _____ 2. A clean background check has been secured.
- _____ 3. I received an approval notice providing me with a link to *Volunteer Essentials* and a training calendar with information on my next steps.
- _____ 4. I completed Girl Scouting 101 (online) and New Leader Orientation. (Must be completed before your first troop /group meeting).
- _____ 5. I have read my Position Description and signed and returned my Position Agreement.
- _____ 6. I contacted my Membership Representative (staff person) or Service Unit/Area Contact (volunteer) to confirm troop membership and receive contact information for service team members who will be my support system.
- _____ 7. I have secured a location for troop meetings. (Local schools often require a certificate of insurance, which you can get from your Membership Representative.)
- _____ 8. I have scheduled a parents' meeting. At the time of meeting, parents who have not registered may register online at www.gshg.org and pay the \$25 registration fee. They may also complete a medical history form, which can be downloaded from the website. Parents are encouraged to register, but it is not required.

CONGRATULATIONS! You are now ready to hold your first troop meeting!

- _____ 9. I have contacted my Membership Representative for assistance and information about troop bank accounts (you will need the names and addresses of the volunteers who will be on the troop bank account), opened up a troop bank account, and deposited the registration money and any other money collected at the parents' meeting in my troop account.

Your membership representative will first notify the bank with the proper paperwork. Then you will go to the bank and open your troop bank account. All volunteers on the account will need to go to the bank to sign the signature card. Everyone being placed on the account should bring two forms of ID with them to the bank; a driver's license and social security card are preferred. Go on the council website at www.gshg.org, go to the forms page and print the cash record from troop forms. Troops are responsible for keeping track of the troop income and expenses; financial reports are due twice a year.

- _____ 10. I reviewed the registration forms for accuracy, completed the dues summary, and wrote one check made payable to Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia for the full amount of all registrations. I turned all three in to the Service Unit/Area Registrar immediately. (Your troop is not registered until the registrar has the forms.) This may also be done on line by visiting www.gshg.org and click Join Us, then click Join.

NOTE: If using paper registration forms for girls, make copies of them you turn them in to the registrar.

FOR FAMILIES- NEW REGISTRATION

Girl Registration

- Visit www.GSHG.org and click Join Us, then click Join
- Enter basic information about your girl
- Search for a troop using your zip code or 5-digit troop number. When searching by zip code enter the mile radius you are willing to travel for a troop meeting. You will now see options for troops in your area.
- Put a check mark next to the troop you'd like to select then click Next to submit additional information.
- If you are searching for a particular troop and it does not appear in the search, please select "Unsure." A box will appear asking you why you are unsure. Type in your desired troop number then continue. Someone from council will contact you soon.
- Complete the rest of your membership information.

Adult Registration

- From the Registration Summary page, click Add Another Membership to begin your adult registration
- Verify your information is correct then select the Volunteer option
- Enter your girl's 5-digit troop number
- Select your volunteer role or adult member then click Next to submit additional information (link expires after 72 hours)
- Click Checkout to update your preferences then submit your payment to complete your registrations (a confirmation email will be sent to you)

Background Screening

- If you choose a volunteer role, then upon completion of your adult membership, check your email for a message from our background vendor, Asurint, and follow the link provided to complete your online adult screening (link expires after 72 hours)
- In about 3-7 days, check your email for the status of your screening from GSHG

FOR TROOPS- MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

1. Sign in to MyGS on our website, www.gshg.org
2. Go to the **TROOP** tab and choose the **NEXT YEAR** for renewal
 1. If you have more than one troop, your troops will be listed in the drop-down menu
3. Select your **RENEWAL CHOICE*** for each troop member
 - ***YOUR SELECTION MATTERS:** Parents and/or guardians of girls in your troop will receive confirmation emails based on your choices!
 - **RENEW:** Select for all girls who will return to your troop next year through payment in this transaction.
 - **DON'T RENEW:** Select only for girls who will NOT be joining your troop again next year. If this option is selected in error the Registration Help Desk must be contacted to correct it before the girl can be renewed.
 - **I'LL DECIDE LATER:** Select for girls who might return next year but are not paying at this time. You can return to renew them any time!
4. On the payment screen you can choose to upgrade any adults to lifetime membership and complete your transaction

To request financial assistance using PeachCare insurance plans visit our website www.gshg.org/join.
5. After you've confirmed the renewals and clicked **SUBMIT**, you can share the excitement on social media!

Get acquainted with the **TROOP** tab! From here you can:

- Add a new member by selecting GIRL or ADULT at the bottom and press GO
- Select VIEW/EDIT TROOP INFORMATION to ensure we have up-to-date troop information
- Edit contact information if something changes
- Add a volunteer role to an adult member

FOR FAMILIES- MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Another year full of giggles is ahead for your and your Girl Scout! You can renew her membership in just a few steps:

1. Click SIGN IN at the top of this page — your username is your email address
2. Choose MEMBER PROFILE
3. Navigate to the HOUSEHOLD tab and choose the current year or next year for renewal
4. Select your renewal choice for each member of your household
5. Once you reach the payment screen you can choose to donate to Family Partnership or upgrade any adults to lifetime members, and complete your transaction.
6. After you've confirmed your family's renewals and clicked SUBMIT, you can share the excitement on social media!

Girl Scouts of Historic Georgia

Parent Interest Survey

The purpose of this form is to gather information for troop leaders about the families of the girls in their troop. It will also give troop leaders information about how parents may be able to assist with troop activities. Parent support of Girl Scout Program is invaluable. Your time and effort expended on behalf of your daughter's troop will be an investment in her future.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: home (____) _____ Alternate # (____) _____

E-mail _____

Because I know the success of my daughter's troop depends on my willing support, I would like to assist in the following ways. (Note: Checking items below only indicates your interest and does not commit you to volunteering).

- ☐ Assist with troop money-earning projects
- ☐ Lend my kitchen, living room, back yard or basement for an occasional troop meeting
- ☐ Babysit for leader or assistant leader
- ☐ Telephone parents for last minute messages or announcements
- ☐ Lend tools and equipment
- ☐ Help the leaders keep records and shop for supplies
- ☐ Be a point of contact when the troop goes on field trips
- ☐ Provide access to a copy machine or make copies for troop newsletters or troop information
- ☐ Offer a tour or a program at my place of work or share information about my career
- ☐ Assist the leader with finding activities or service projects for the girls to enjoy
- ☐ Serve as snack coordinator

Please use the space below to tell your daughter's troop leader about special interests or skills that you, your daughter, or your family has that would be fun to share with the troop:

Do you know someone else who might enjoy helping?

(Name)

(Phone)

Thank You!