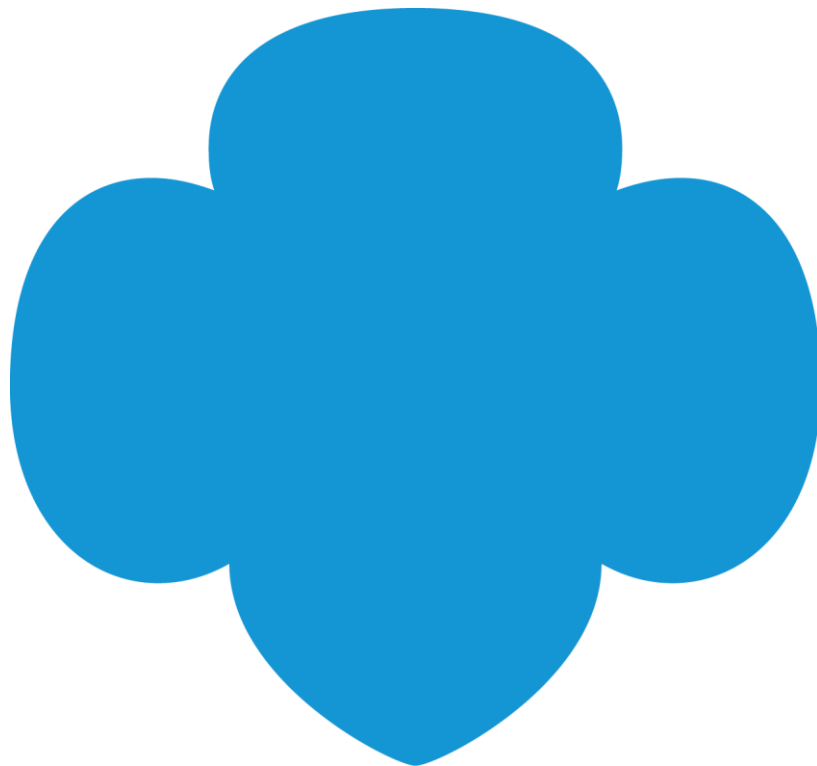


# Volunteer Essentials

2024 - 2025 Edition



## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Welcome! Adventures Ahead! .....  | 2  |
| All About Girl Scouts.....  | 3  |
| All About Girl Scouts of Citrus Council .....                               | 4  |
| Girl Scout Volunteers.....  | 6  |
| Participating in the Girl Scout Program.....                                | 7  |
| Safety and Risk Management – Planning Troop Activities and Adventures ..... | 16 |
| Girl Scout Travel.....  | 21 |
| Troop Management .....  | 23 |
| Adult Learning Opportunities .....  | 32 |
| Troop Finances.....   | 36 |
| Engaging Girl Scouts and Families.....                                      | 47 |
| Creating a Safe Space for Girls .....                                       | 55 |
| Girl Scout Product Programs .....   | 60 |
| Additional Resources and Support .....                                      | 73 |

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Volunteer Essentials\_v1 – 2024-2025

## Welcome! Adventures Ahead!

You're her hero—and ours too! Thanks to you, girls will learn to listen to their hearts, think on their feet, and raise their voices for what they believe in. From all of us at Girl Scouts, thank you for sharing your time and talents as a Girl Scout volunteer!

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you are a community-builder, mentor, champion of fun, and a role model for what it means to lead with your heart. And because of you, Girl Scouts of all ages will have the opportunity to discover that a little imagination can go a long way as they chase their dreams, explore the world around them, take action to improve their communities, and make the world a better place.

Whether you're supporting them through their Girl Scout experience, guiding them as they choose the way they will run their Girl Scout Cookie business, or encouraging them as they raise their voices on issues, they care about most, you'll be their cheerleader, guide, and mentor as they develop essential life skills and gain the confidence, they will rely on throughout their lives. The best part of this experience is while you're teaching them important life lessons and setting them up for happy, successful lives, you'll grow too! Because when you embrace leadership in all forms and show girls what it means to be resilient and strong, they learn, grow, and thrive. Before you know it, you'll be trying to keep up with your unstoppable troop. Imagine the excitement, the impact, and the memories that will be made—those are the moments you'll enjoy as a Girl Scout volunteer.

Thank you and welcome. We are glad you are here!

### What's Inside?

This guide is designed to support busy, on-the-go troop volunteers. Inside you will find details and information to help you get started on your newest adventure—being an awesome leader for girls. We recommend that you begin by browsing the sections below and come back throughout the year to find answers to your questions as they arise. Ready to get started? Let's go!

- [All About Girl Scouts](#)
- [Troop Management](#)
- [Troop Finances](#)
- [Engaging Girls](#)
- [Creating a Safe Space for Girls](#)
- [Engaging Families](#)
- [Girl Scout Product Programs](#)
- [Additional Resources and Support](#)

New troop leader? We've got you covered. Please feel free to reach out to Customer Care with any questions at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) or 407-896-4475.

## All About Girl Scouts

At Girl Scouts, girls' dreams are our dreams and Girl Scouts is where girls see the limitless possibilities ahead, because they are encouraged to aim for the stars and reach them! Whether she's making a new friend on the playground, raising her hand in class, starting her own nonprofit, or advocating for climate change or social justice, a Girl Scout builds a better world—just as Girl Scouts have been doing for over a century. With programs in every zip code, coast-to-coast and around the globe, every girl can find her place in Girl Scouts and start creating the world she wants to see.

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.

### 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.

\*Members may substitute for the word God  
in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.

### 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 Council

Girl Scout councils are chartered by the national office (GSUSA) 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.

## All About Girl Scouts of Citrus Council

Girl Scouts of Citrus Council was chartered in 1956 and is one of more than 100 councils chartered by the Girl Scouts of the USA and is responsible for administering Girl Scouting in the following Central Florida counties: Brevard, Lake, Orange, Osceola, Seminole, and Volusia.

### **How We Function**

Girl Scouts of Citrus is governed by a policy-making volunteer Board of Directors who represent all of the communities served. Nearly 6,000 adults volunteer their time and talents as co-leaders, mentors, service community leaders, troop committee members, resource consultants, trainers, program facilitators and task force members. The Council has a staff of more than 50 employees responsible for directing the day-to-day operations of the organization.

Girl Scouts of Citrus is the leading organization for girls in Central Florida. Our focus is the wholesome development of girls. We see girls as emerging leaders in every field, as visionaries for local and global change, and capable of incredible influence.

We create opportunities for girls to discover their own potential, connect with their peers and adult mentors, and take action in big ways. Their growth is our goal.

### **Facilities**

Girl Scouts of Citrus Council has seven properties located throughout Central Florida. The Council Service Center, which is our main headquarters, is located in downtown Orlando. Mah-Kah-Wee Program Center, which is our largest property and spans over 200 acres, is located in Chuluota. Riverpoint Program Center is located directly on the Banana River in Merritt Island. There are also four Scout Houses: Celia Lane Little House in downtown Orlando, Eustis Scout House in Eustis, Pine Castle Scout House in the Pine Castle neighborhood of Orlando and Melbourne Scout House in Melbourne.

For more information regarding Girl Scouts of Citrus Council properties, activities and reservations, please refer to the [GSC Properties Page](#) on our website and the [GSC Property Guide](#).

### **Council Service Center**

Girl Scouts of Citrus Council's Service Center is in beautiful downtown Orlando, convenient to both Interstate 4 and the East-West Expressway (408).

In our Service Center you will find:

- The Council Shop is located on the first floor.
- The Women's History and Cultural Center is located on the second floor.
- The Administrative Offices are located on the third floor.

Girls and volunteers are welcome to stop by the Council Shop and Council Service Center Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m. and Wednesday 9 a.m. – 7 p.m.

The Council Service Center and Council Shop are closed on Fridays and other days throughout the year. Please check our website or social media for the most recent updates regarding special events and/or council closings.

## **Council Shop**

There are a variety of ways to purchase items in person or online from our Council Shop.

Come and visit our Council Shop in person. This provides an opportunity for you to bring your Girl Scout and/or troop in to browse and see all the awesome items the Council Shop has to offer. Please click on the Council Shop link to see more information about the Council Shop, Super Saturdays, and other events throughout the year. <https://www.citrus-gs.org/en/citrus-shop.html>

You can also place orders by email for store pickup. You may order your items by filling out our online order form below. You will receive a call from one of our retail staff members to collect payment and set up a pick-up time for you to come in during business hours. <https://girlscoutsc.wufoo.com/forms/citrus-council-shop-order-form>

## **Women's History and Cultural Center - WHCC**

In 2005, a group of local Girl Scout alumnae began adding to the Citrus Council collection of vintage Girl Scout items, forming the GSC Archive Team. As the collection grew, they leveraged opportunities to exhibit both locally and nationally – and the dream of establishing a museum was born. With Council leadership, a wider vision evolved, resulting in a facility that celebrates the contributions that all women and girls have made to our history and rich cultural diversity, while establishing a permanent exhibit of Girl Scout memorabilia.

In June of 2019, Orange County Government, through the Arts & Cultural Affairs Program, established a grant to partially fund construction of the Women's History & Cultural Center. Together with funding provided by the GSC Archive Team and other donors, the dream was ready to become reality.

Following a celebrational groundbreaking on March 12, 2020, construction of the facility was challenged by the COVID-19 outbreak. Determined to succeed, the GSC team made design revisions, overcame supply-chain delays and labor shortages, and figured out ways to raise additional funds to meet escalating costs.

Three years later, the Women's History & Cultural Center is open to the public. The facility features:

- A permanent Girl Scout exhibit.
- Rotating exhibit space to focus on women's contributions throughout our history.
- An exhibit celebrating our rich cultural diversity.
- An inspiration room for youth with fun activities.
- Community meeting space providing a place for people to gather to learn and collaborate.
- An outdoor pavilion.

Hours of operation are: Monday – Thursday, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. and on select Saturdays.

## Girl Scout Volunteers

Girl Scout volunteers are a dynamic and diverse group. Whether you're a recent college graduate, parent, retiree, or really, anyone with a sense of curiosity and adventure (of any gender, who is 18 years or older, has a current Adult GSUSA membership, and has a favorable background check), your unique skills and experiences have the power to change girls' lives. With you as their mentor, girls will grow and thrive.

Girl Scout members and volunteers are united by the values in the [Girl Scout Promise and Law](#) and their shared commitment to embrace leadership in all forms. Each member agrees to follow Girl Scouts safety guidelines and pay annual membership dues of \$25. Volunteers and adults also have the option to purchase a [Lifetime membership](#).

### Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

From troop meetings to camping weekends and product booths, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure Girl Scouts have fun and stay safe, no matter their grade level. If you are not sure about the number of adults you will need for your activity, the chart below breaks down the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of Girl Scouts; GSC may also establish maximums due to size or cost restrictions, so be sure to check with them as you plan your activity.

Always remember that there must be a minimum of two unrelated adults that have: a current membership, a favorable background check, and that at least one who is female and is always present with the troop.

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

## Participating in the Girl Scout Program

### Girl Scout Grade Levels

Girls can join the fun at any point from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Girl Scouts six grade levels are:

- [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)

### The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience provides the foundation for all we do. It is the core of our program and encompasses everything from our Promise and Law to our badges, activities, and Journeys.

At Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl: Activities are girl-led, which gives girls the opportunity to take on leadership roles and learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment. It's what makes Girl Scouts truly unique - our program is designed by, with, and for girls.

Although girls may start building their leadership skills in school and on sports teams, [research shows](#) that the courage, confidence, and character girls develop as Girl Scouts stay with them throughout their lives. Our program and outcomes are based on research and our studies show that Girl Scouting has a measurable positive impact on girls. In fact, we can proudly say Girl Scouts are almost 10% more likely than non-Girl Scouts to have positive expectations about their future based on our studies. We encourage you to learn more about our program and outcomes as you [check out our studies and in-depth research](#) for insights and information.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience has been purposefully designed to include a variety of fun and challenging activities to help girls learn, grow, and thrive. And at the base of it all are three keys and three processes.

What girls *do* in Girl Scouting all fit within our three keys: **Discover**, **Connect**, and **Take Action**.

- **Discover.** When Girl Scouts take part in fun and exciting [badge activities](#), earn a [Girl Scout Journey](#) award, go camping, or attend an amazing Girl Scout program or event, you are helping them *discover* who they are, what they care about, and where their talents lie.
- **Connect.** When Girl Scouts collaborates with others—including the members and leaders of their troop, Girl Scouts from their local community, or community partners and experts—they *connect* and expand their horizons. This helps them care about, support, inspire, and team up with others both locally and globally.
- **Take Action.** When girls deepen their relationship with the world around them, they're eager to *take action* to improve the local community and the greater global community and make the world a better place.



So how do we *do* it? The Girl Scout Leadership Experience draws on three unique processes— **Girl-led**, **Learning by Doing**, and **Cooperative Learning**—that encourage girls to try new things, write their own stories, and develop the skills and confidence to say, “I know I can do this!”

- **Girl-led.** Girl Scouts takes the lead, no matter their age. From selecting the badges they’ll pursue to how they’ll organize an activity; Girl Scouts has the chance to follow their dreams and grow their skills—and gain the confidence that comes with that.
- **Learning by Doing.** Hands-on activities are fun for Girl Scouts of any age, but they also help them feel empowered to shape their own experience. Girl Scouts unlocks their “I got this” attitude as they discover they can always dust themselves off and try again when things don’t go according to plan.
- **Cooperative Learning.** There’s power in having a tight-knit group of friends who will learn with you, grow with you, and always cheer you on. Girl Scouts see firsthand that teamwork, respect, and collaboration can fuel them through any challenge that comes their way.

As a volunteer, you’ll draw on these Girl Scout processes as you lead girls of any age. Girl-led at the Daisy level will look very different from the Ambassador level, of course. What’s most important is that girls make decisions about the activities to do together and that they also make choices within that activity. As they learn from their successes and failures—and gain a major confidence boost in the process—their girl-led process will give them the opportunity to lead within their peer group. By the time girls are Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, they’ll be using the leadership skills they’ve developed to mentor younger Girl Scouts and take action to make the world a better place.

One last tip about following these processes. Girl Scouting isn’t a to-do list, so please don’t feel that checking activities off a list is more important than tuning in to what interest girls and sparks their imaginations. Projects don’t have to come out perfectly—in fact, it’s a valuable learning experience when they don’t—Girl Scouts don’t have to fill their vests and sashes with badges. What matters most is the fun and learning that takes place as they have experiences on their own, so don’t be afraid to **step back and let your girls take the lead!**

### **Reflection**

Was a badge-earning activity a resounding success? Or was it derailed by something your troop hadn’t factored in? No matter an activity’s outcome, you can amplify its impact by encouraging your girls to reflect on their latest endeavor.

Reflection is the necessary debrief that reinforces what girls learned. As they explore the “what’s” and “why’s”, girls make meaningful connections between the activity at hand and future challenges that come their way. In other words, reflection gives girls the confidence boost they need to pick themselves up, try again, and succeed.

Keep in mind that reflection does not need to be a formal process, but you can kick-start the conversation with three simple questions: What? So what? and Now what?

**What? Go over the “what” of the activity. For example, ask:**

- What did we do today?
- What part was your favorite?
- If we did it again, what would you want to do differently and what would you want to repeat?

**So what? Next, move to the “so what.” You might ask:**

- So, what did you learn by doing this activity?
- So, what did you learn about yourself?
- So, what did you learn about your community (or environment, school, or others) that you didn’t know before?

**Last, review the now what. Say something like:**

- Now that we’ve done this, what would you like to do next?
- Now that you know this about yourselves, what would you like to try next?
- Now that we’ve completed this Take Action™ project, what do you think we should do next to make sure it continues?

This form of reflection, or whatever style of reflection you choose to use with your girls, is a powerful component of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience that helps girls to carry these lessons with them for the rest of their lives.

**Progression**

Although program elements—like outdoor expeditions or entrepreneurial ventures—align across all grade levels, Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors won’t be doing the same activities as Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors. But with your support, they will get there!

Girl Scout programming is designed to be progressive and it’s what makes Girl Scouting fun and effective! By building on the knowledge and skills they gain year after year, your girls’ confidence will grow exponentially, and they’ll be eager to try new things and take on new challenges. As a volunteer, you will cultivate a [supportive, nonjudgmental space](#) where your Girl Scouts can test their skills and be unafraid to fail.

Keep in mind that progression drives success for your troop. In the following links, we’ve outlined some suggestions that will help you determine when your girls are ready for their next adventure:

- [Outdoor Progression Chart](#)
- [Travel Progression Chart](#)
- [Entrepreneurship Progression Chart](#)

## **Inclusion**

Girl Scouts has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, and we welcome and embrace girls of all abilities and backgrounds into our wonderful sisterhood.

Inclusion is at the core of who we are; it's about being a sister to every Girl Scout and celebrating our unique strengths. Part of the important work you will do includes modeling friendship and kindness for your girls and showing them what it means to practice empathy. Through equal treatment, you can nurture an inclusive troop environment.

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.

## **Participation**

Girls can participate in a variety of ways:

- **Traditional Troops** – When girls participate in a troop, they work collaboratively together to earn badges, plan activities, participate in service projects and more! Troop meetings can take place weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly.
- **Juliette/IRG** – As a Juliette/IRG (Individual Registered Girl), they can participate in events and activities on their own, as long as they have a registered parent/guardian with them. They can create their own year plan to include which badges, Journey's, or activities they would like to complete or participate in.
- **Clubs/Special Interest Troops** – This is for girls that may have an interest in a specific topic such as Media, Mariners, Trailblazers, Citrus Singers, Rocketry etc. Girls can participate as individuals and still be part of a traditional troop.

All girls whether they are in a troop or Juliette are Girl Scouts who can choose their own Girl Scout journey based upon what their interests are.

## **The Girl Scout Program: National Program Pillars & More**

**Girl Scouts four Program Pillars**—STEM, Life Skills, Outdoors, and Entrepreneurship—form the foundation of the Girl Scout program and work together to build girls' curiosity, kindness, and can-do spirit. In fact, every aspect of our program, and every Girl Scout adventure, can be traced back to one of our four program pillars.

**STEM** (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). Girls are naturally curious and have a strong desire to help others. Whether they're building a robot, developing a video game, or studying the stars, Girl Scouts become better problem-solvers and critical thinkers through STEM and gain the confidence to turn their ideas into breakthrough inventions to help others.

**Life Skills**. Girl Scouts life skills programming includes a mix of practical skills, tools, and activities that foster positive values in girls like financial literacy, civic engagement, and community service. Skills that help them discover that they have what it takes to raise their voices as community advocates, make smart decisions about their finances, and form strong, healthy relationships—skills that inspire them to accept challenges and overcome obstacles, now and always.

**Outdoors.** Girl Scouts has been building girls' outdoor confidence and skills for over one hundred years through a variety of outdoor adventures like camping and nature focused badges that inspire them to spend time outdoors and develop a lifelong appreciation of nature. An appreciation that sparks girls' desire to take action as environmental stewards in their community and across the globe.

**Entrepreneurship.** Starting with Girl Scouts iconic Girl Scout Cookie Program and growing to include the Sweets 'N' Treats Fall Product Program. There are a series of entrepreneurship badges, this pillar instills and nurtures an entrepreneurial mindset and fuels girls' curiosity and confidence as they learn the essentials of running their own businesses and how to think like entrepreneurs.

There are many ways to make your troop year plan exciting for all! The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) can provide inspiring ideas for engaging your troop in an exciting mix of activities all year long. If you are not sure where to start you can always select from the many troop year plan options that are pre-built. These online or print ready turn-key plans allow for girl-led customization and are designed to work with matching tracks in the Volunteer Toolkit! Please refer to the VTK section for more information.

### **Important Differences: Journeys and Badges**

Journeys and badges are designed to give girls different leadership-building experiences, all while having fun!

- **Journeys** are multi-session leadership experiences through which girls explore topics such as bullying, media literacy, or environmental stewardship. They'll do hands-on activities, connect with experts, and take the reins on age-appropriate Take Action projects. Because of their leadership focus, Journeys are also a prerequisite for Girl Scouts highest awards, the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.
- **Badges** are about skill building. When a Girl Scout earns a badge, it shows that she's learned a new skill, such as how to make a healthy snack, build and test a toy race car, or take great digital photos. Badges may even spark an interest at school or plant the seed for a future career.

If they choose, your Girl Scouts can pursue badges and Journey awards in the same year. If they do choose to take this approach, encourage them to find the connections between the two to magnify their Girl Scout experience. While you're having fun, keep in mind that the quality of a girl's experience and the skills and pride she gains from earning Journey awards and skill-building badges far outweigh the quantity of badges she earns.

As a volunteer, you don't have to be the expert in any badge or Journey topic. In fact, when you show that you're not afraid to fail and willing to try something new, you are modeling what it is to be a Girl Scout. Our badge and Journey requirements are structured so your girls can learn new skills without you having to be an expert in all the assorted topics, including STEM.

### **Important Differences: Community Service and Take Action Projects**

As your Girl Scouts look for meaningful ways to give back to their community, you can help sharpen their problem-solving skills and expand their definition of doing good by discussing community service and Take Action projects. [Both projects serve essential needs, but at different levels.](#)

- When a Girl Scout performs **community service**, she is responding to an immediate need in a one-off, “doing for” capacity. In other words, she is making an impact right now.
- Through **Take Action/service learning**, girls explore the root causes of a community need and address it in a lasting way; they truly make the world—or their part of it—a better place.

If your troop members want to pursue their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award, they’ll develop a Take Action project on an issue that’s close to their hearts. To make Take Action projects even more impactful for your Girl Scouts, set time aside for them to reflect on their projects. When they take time to internalize the lessons they’ve learned, they’re more likely to find success in their future projects—or anything else they put their minds to.

### **Special Girl Scout Days, Ceremonies and Traditions**

During special days, time-honored traditions and ceremonies unite Girl Scout sisters, and the millions of Girl Scout alums who came before them—around the country and around the globe—and remind girls how far their fellow trailblazers have come and just how far they’ll go.

#### **Special Girl Scout Days include:**

- [World Thinking Day](#) February 22 – Every year on this day Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world celebrate international friendship, by hosting events and activities to celebrate each other and explore a common theme around the world.
- [Girl Scouts’ Birthday](#) March 12 - Commemorates the day in 1912 when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the organization's first 18 girl members in Savannah, GA
- **Girl Scout Week** This is the week that March 12 falls in. Girl Scouts celebrate different activities and events during this week including Girl Scout Sunday/Sabbath
- [Girl Scouts Celebrate Faith](#) events give Girl Scouts an opportunity to be recognized at their places of worship during Girl Scout Week, share their legacy of service to others, and deepen their connection to their faith and Girl Scouting. Celebration days include Girl Scout Sunday, Girl Scout Jummah, and Girl Scout Sabbath/Shabbat.
- **Volunteer Appreciation Day** April 22 - This is the day when Girl Scout Volunteers are appreciated for all their hard work and dedication.
- [Founder's Day or Juliette Low’s Birthday](#) October 31 - Born on this day in 1860 in Savannah, Georgia.

## **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 are some examples of 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 Juniors.)
- Opening ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- 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 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. New Girl Scouts receive their membership pin as well as their grade-level pin at this ceremony.
- Rededication ceremonies are opportunities for girls and volunteers to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

## **Traditions**

Throughout the rich history of Girl Scouts, traditions have been passed down through the years from troop to troop. Below are just a few examples of some traditions you can incorporate into your Girl Scout troop/group:

- SWAPS- "Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere."
- S'mores
- Campfires
- Singalongs
- Skits

Whether they're making cool SWAPS to share with new friends or closing meetings with a friendship circle, your troop won't want to miss out on these traditions, ceremonies, and special Girl Scout days.

So, whether they're working on a new badge, making new friends, or closing meetings with a friendship circle, your troop won't want to miss out on Girl Scouts' treasured [traditions, ceremonies, and special Girl Scout days](#).

## **Girl Scouts Awards and Recognitions**

### **Highest Awards**

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards honor girls who become forces for good and create a lasting impact in their communities, nationally and around the world.

As your Girl Scouts discover the power of their voices, they'll want to take on an issue that is close to their hearts and meaningful to them. Encourage them to turn their ideas into reality by pursuing Girl Scouts' highest awards.

- [The Girl Scout Bronze Award](#) can be earned by Juniors. The prerequisite is completion of one Junior Journey and the associated Take Action project. The Bronze Award is earned by the group.
- [The Girl Scout Silver Award](#) can be earned by Cadettes. The prerequisite is completion of one Cadette Journey and the associated Take Action project. The Silver Award can be earned by an individual girl or by a small group of three or four girls.
- [The Girl Scout Gold Award](#) can be earned by Seniors and Ambassadors who have completed either two Girl Scout Senior/Ambassador level Journeys and the associated Take Action project or earned the Silver Award and completed one Senior/Ambassador level Journey.

Did you know that a Gold Award Girl Scout is entitled to enlist at a higher paygrade when she joins the U.S. military? Gold Award Girl Scout's achievements also prime her for the fast track when it comes to college admissions and make her an outstanding candidate for academic scholarships and other financial awards.

Girl Scouts are eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which they are registered. Any Girl Scout is eligible to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award even if she joined Girl Scouts for the first time in high school.

Ask GSC about Girl Scout Gold Awardees in your community and how they're doing their part to make the world a better place. For inspiration, consider inviting a local Gold Awardee to speak to your troop about how she took the lead and made a difference. You'll be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish when they take the lead—and by the confidence, grit, problem-solving, time and project management, and team-building expertise they gain while doing so!

### **Leadership Awards**

There are many other opportunities outside of patches and badges for girls to shine! Girl Scouts that are in 6th grade and above can earn a variety of Leadership Awards from the Torch Award to Community Service Bars! Earning leadership awards, recognizes all the amazing work that a Girl Scout does and is a great way for girls to give back and serve their community! For more information: [Leadership Awards](#)

### **Girl Mentoring Awards**

Girl Scouts is an environment that teaches girls to embrace their inner leadership and develop skills that they can use throughout their life. To be an effective leader, girls should display a level of enthusiasm and have a genuine passion for mentoring others. Girl Scouts that choose to take on one of these positions should understand that they are a role model and an inspiration for the girls they are working with.



Girl Scouts that are in 6<sup>th</sup> grade and above, have the opportunity to earn the following official awards based on their grade level, by working with younger girls in a troop/group or outdoor setting.

- Leader in Action (LiA)
- Cadette Program Aide (PA)
- Counselor-in-Training (CIT)
- Counselor-in-Training (CIT) II
- Volunteer-in-Training (VIT)

### **Girl Scouts and Faith**

Everything in Girl Scouting is based on the Girl Scout Promise and Law, which includes many of the principles and values common across religions. So, while we are a secular organization, Girl Scouts has always encouraged girls to take spiritual journeys via their faiths' religious recognitions. To learn more: <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/girl-scouts-and-faith.html>

### **My Promise, My Faith**

Girls of all grade levels can now earn the My Promise, My Faith pin, which complements existing religious recognitions and allows girls to further strengthen the connection between their faith and Girl Scouts. Once each year, a girl can earn the My Promise, My Faith pin by carefully examining the Girl Scout Law and tying it directly to tenets of her faith. Requirements for this pin are included in all levels in the handbook.

- [My Promise, My Faith Fact Sheet \(PDF\)](#)

### **Religious Recognitions**

Created by national religious organizations to encourage the spiritual growth of youth members, religious recognition programs reinforce many of the value's integral to Girl Scouting and help girls grow stronger in and learn more about their chosen faith.

Each religious organization develops and administers its own program. The brochure below lists the religious recognitions created by various faith groups. You can find this brochure, a video explaining religious recognition programs, and other resources for collaborating with faith communities at [P.R.A.Y. Publishing](#).

- [To Serve God Brochure \(PDF\)](#)

Some religious organizations are not affiliated with P.R.A.Y. or may not have a national office. To learn about their religious recognitions, contact local leaders.

If you have any questions about Girl Awards, please reach out to Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) or 407-896-4475



## Safety and Risk Management – Planning Troop Activities and Adventures

The emotional and physical safety and well-being of Girl Scouts is our top priority. [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) outline the Safety Standards and Guidelines used in Girl Scouting, which apply to all Girl Scout activities.

All volunteers should review the *Safety Activity Checkpoints* manual when planning activities with girls in order to manage safety and risk in Girl Scout-sanctioned activities.

In **Safety Activity Checkpoints**, you will find:

- Girl Scouts Safety Standards and Guidelines, which apply to all Girl Scout activities, including requirements for adult supervision, permission slips, preparation, field trips and overnight trips, and other vital information.
- Activities that are not permitted by Girl Scouts of the USA and actions that girls and volunteers should not take.
- Policies surrounding chartered aircraft trips and aviation.
- First aid and overall health information.
- Transportation guidelines
- Standards for well-being and inclusivity along with ways to include Girl Scouts with disabilities and ways to ensure girls' emotional safety.
- Individual safety activity checkpoints for specific activities—such as camping, internet use, and water sports, which provide activity-specific safety information.

The document is laid out in three primary sections, Safety Standards and Guidelines, Activities at a Glance, and individual safety activity checkpoint pages.

1. **Safety Standards** are general guidelines that address a variety of topics to assist in how to participate in all activities successfully and safely from troop meetings through camping. These guidelines are not specific, but provide the required guidance that volunteers need for their troops.
2. **Activities at a Glance** table provides a quick look at the safety standards for that activity with a focus on two critical points to keep in mind when considering and planning activities for you troop:
  - age-appropriate activities and participation by grade level, and
  - whether prior approval from GSC is required before girls participate in a specific activity.
3. **Individual Safety Activity Checkpoints** pages provide activity-specific safety measures and guidance on the individual activities that troops and girls may choose to participate in.

Whenever planning any kind of activity, from a simple nature hike to an overnight trip, the safety of the girls and adults attending the activity should always be your priority. To ensure this is the case there are guidelines in place to make this happen.

Please follow these steps when planning your activities:

- Review the most current version of [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) that can be found on our website, which is the Girl Scout guidelines for all activities. Take time to evaluate the activities that the troop has planned, to ensure it meets the requirements such as grade level, vendor approval, specific training, etc.
- Review the [Troop Activity Request \(TAR\)](#) to see if the activity your troop would like to participate in is on the form, then submit the completed form to your Community Safety Coordinator for approval within the approved timeframe.
- GSC may also have additional resources and approval processes. Please review the Girl Scouts of Citrus [Approved Vendor/Partner List](#) for the most up to date High Risk activities and programs that the girls can participate in.
- To request a new high adventure vendor, complete the [Vendor Request Form](#) for review. Be sure to follow all the basic safety guidelines, like the buddy system and first aid requirements, in addition to the specific guidelines for travel.
- Please review the activity chart below for the basic steps to help you prepare for an activity.

For Troop Travel or extended Camping Trips review the Troop Travel Packet and submit to Customer Care at [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) for approval within the approved timeframe.

Always remember the following:

- For **all** activities outside of your regular meeting place, including any overnight, community partner events and/or Council sponsored events, you must always have with you a designated Troop First Aider that has a current certification. They must also be listed on your roster for the event.
- For any camping trips, you must always have with you a designated Troop Camper with a current certification for the level of camping you are participating in. They must also be listed on your roster for the event.
  - Reminder: Each position must be held by a separate person
- Please keep in mind that most events require the participants to be registered members, if Tagalongs are permitted, it will state it on the registration,
- **Please Note:** For all overnight activities, events and/or trips all participants must have a current GSUSA membership with a favorable background check and have completed the GSUSA Abuse and Neglect training in gsLearn. (Non-members - adults/youth are not permitted at any overnight Girl Scout event, trip or activity unless specifically designated by the Council).
-

## **Community and/or Large Events**

For events that are hosted by the Service Community or individual troops that are open to multiple troops or communities (including their own), must complete a [Community/Large Group Activity Request Form \(CAR\)](#) and submit it to their Community Safety Coordinator 1 month prior to the date of the event.

### **Reminders:**

- All troops attending these types of events must still submit a TAR to their Community Safety Coordinator a minimum of 2 weeks prior to the event.
- If the event is open to non-members, additional insurance must be purchased. See insurance for more information.

For additional questions regarding how to plan and prepare for activities safely, contact the Community Safety Coordinator in your community and they will be able to guide you.

You can also send your questions to Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org)

### **Activity Accident Insurance.**

Activity accident insurance is supplemental insurance that protects registered Girl Scout members in case of an accident. Registered members are automatically covered under activity accident insurance when participating in all approved Girl Scout events and activities. Invited non-member participants are also covered for day only events. When planning extended trips, always consult with your Girl Scout council to see if extra activity accident insurance is needed. International trips and all cruises, require Activity Accident Insurance.

## Girl Scout Travel

Contact GSC as soon as you start thinking about planning a trip to find out more about their approval process for overnight and extended travel. They will also likely have training programs that will raise your confidence as a chaperone.

If you're planning any kind of trip—from a short field trip to an overseas expedition—the “Trip and Travel” section of *Safety Activity Checkpoints* is your go-to resource for safety.

For all Troop Travel, Camping, Extended Travel, and International Travel, please refer to the Girl Scouts of Citrus Council Website for specific travel packet information: [Forms and Documents](#)

Not sure where to begin? Check out the [Girl Scout Guide to U.S. Travel](#). This resource is designed for Juniors and older Girl Scouts who want to take extended trips—that is, longer than a weekend—but also features tips and tools for budding explorers who are just getting started with field trips and overnights.

Once girls have mastered planning and embarking upon trips in the United States, they might be ready for a global travel adventure! Global trips usually take a few years to plan, and the [Girl Scout Global Travel Toolkit](#) can walk you through the entire process. Remember to review all travel guidelines in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) to prepare for any troop travel.

**Reminder:** For international travel, Girl Scouts are never allowed to travel to locations that have a travel advisory of a Level 4 and locations with a Level 3 travel advisory are highly recommended to be reconsidered.

Note that extended travel (more than three nights) is not covered under the basic Girl Scout insurance plan and will require additional coverage. For insurance information please refer to the Girl Scouts of Citrus Council Website: [Forms and Documents](#)

| <u><b>Type of Activity/Travel</b></u>   | <u><b>Guidelines</b></u>  |
|---|---|
| <b><u>Overnight Trips/Travel lasting 3 nights or more.</u></b><br><br>➤ Sleeping or camping for 3 nights or less in a cabin, structured building, tent, hotel, Air B&B, etc.<br>➤ These can takeplace inside/outside Council Jurisdiction including other Councils. | ✓ Review the activity in Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) for guidelines around safety and compliance. This would include: appropriate grade level, equipment, weather, certifications, etc.                                   |
|   | ✓ Review and complete <b>Troop Travel Packet</b> located on the Girl Scouts of Citrus Council website under forms. Submit the completed paperwork to <a href="mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org">customercare@citrus-gs.org</a> |
|   | ✓ Review and complete all additional paperwork when traveling out of the country.   |
|   | ✓ Request and pay for Additional Accident Insurance which is required for all participants. For out of state trips, review other additional insurance options.(Review plans 3E or 3P)   |
|   | ✓ Complete a Parent Permission Form for each girl attending   |
|   | ✓ Verify all adults have a current GSUSA membership and favorable background check  |
|   | ✓ Have an Annual Health History Form for Girls and Participating Adults on file with the troop.   |
|   | ✓ Have a currently certified Troop First Aider, present and on the roster.  |
|   | ✓ Have a currently certified Troop Camper in the level of camping you are participating in, present and on the roster (if applicable)   |
|   | ✓ Verify if additional activity waivers or other vendor paperwork are required  |

## **Destinations**

Girl Scouts encourages girls to try new things and see the world with fresh eyes, both inside and outside of their usual troop meetings. As COVID-19-related travel restrictions are lifted across the globe and you and your troop feel safe doing so, you may be excited to travel and explore the world as a troop.

Traveling as a Girl Scout is a more engaging experience than traveling with family, school, or other groups because [girls take the lead](#). They'll make important decisions about where to go, what to do, and take increasing responsibility for the planning of their trips. During this process, they will also build their organizational and management skills—skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Girl Scout travel is built on a [progression of activities](#), so girls are set up for success. Daisies and Brownies start with field trips and progress to day trips, overnights, and weekend trips. Juniors can take their adventures farther with longer regional trips. And Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors can travel the United States and then the world. There are even opportunities for older girls to travel independently by joining trips their council organizes or participating in GSUSA's travel program, [Destinations](#).

## **Travel and Girl Scout Program Connections**

It's easy to connect eye-opening travel opportunities to the leadership training and skill building your girls are doing in Girl Scouts! When girls are ready to travel together, girls can use their creativity to connect any leadership Journey theme into an idea for travel. For example, girls learn where their food comes from in the *Sow What?* Journey. That would connect well with a trip focusing on sustainable agriculture and sampling tasty foods!

There are abundant opportunities to build real skills through earning badges too. The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, but there are plenty more, such as Eco Camper, New Cuisines, Coding for Good, and, of course, all the financial badges that help girls budget and earn money for their trips.

Want to include Girl Scout traditions in your trip? Look no farther than the [Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace](#) in Savannah, Georgia! Your girls also have the chance to deepen their connections to Girl Scouts around the world by visiting one of the WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) [World Centers](#), which offer low-cost accommodations and special programs in five locations around the world.

And if your troop is looking to stay closer to home this year? Ask GSC about council-owned camps and other facilities that can be rented out.

As your Girl Scouts excitedly plan their next trip, remember to limit your role to facilitating the girls' brainstorming and planning, never doing the work for them. Share your ideas and insights, ask tough questions when you must, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

## Troop Management

Leadership is more than “being in charge” or having a title; it’s recognizing that you are part of a team and understanding that team’s needs and interests. Here’s how you’ll do that with your troop!

### Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is based on three keys—discover, connect, and take action—but it’s not just for your troop. As a Girl Scout leader, you will embark on your own leadership journey as you help girls develop the leadership skills, they’ll use to make the world a better place.

Here are a few basic concepts that outline what leadership means in Girl Scouting.

#### **The safety and wellbeing of your Girl Scouts is your priority:**

- Always follow all guidelines set forth by GSUSA, GSC and any other governing bodies.
- Follow and adhere to all guidelines in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Ensure that the activities that your Girl Scouts are participating in are safe!
- Always be sure that the environment of your meetings and your activities is comfortable for everyone.
- Be sure that all parents/guardians are aware of activities and all the guidelines that apply.

#### **Leadership is teaching your Girl Scouts:**

- That they can do and be anything!
- That they are decision makers and should own their decisions.
- How to live the Girl Scout Law by modeling it for them.

#### **As a leader, see yourself as a coach who:**

- Advises, discusses, and cheers on your troop, not as a teacher with a planned lesson or activity but as a mentor and coach.
- Ensures each member understands and can carry out their responsibilities within the troop.
- Encourages Girl Scouts to build their skills and their ethics.
- Gives more responsibilities to the girls as they grow and develop.

#### **It is important to remember that:**

- You cannot know everything that your Girl Scouts might ever want to learn.
- You’ll explore and learn alongside your girls and grow your confidence in the process.
- You’re not expected to know everything about Girl Scouting, but you should know where to go for information—and to ask for help when you need it.

## **Your Responsibilities as a Girl Scout Volunteer**

Your responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the [Girl Scout Promise and Law](#).
- Understanding and coaching Girl Scouts Three Keys to Leadership—discover, connect, and take action—that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach.
- Working in a partnership with your Girl Scouts so that their activities are girl-led and that they learn by doing, individually and as a group. 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 troop families 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 GSC.
- Facilitating a safe experience for every Girl Scout.

**Girl Scouts of Citrus (GSC) may release a volunteer for any reason, concern or situation listed below, from any and all roles held, at its sole discretion, including but not limited to:**

- Restructuring of volunteer roles.
- Elimination of the volunteer role in which a person serves.
- Inability or failure of the volunteer to complete the requirements for the role.
- Failure to complete training required for the volunteer role in the designated timeframe.
- Misappropriation of any/or all funds
- Failure to cooperate in any type of financial review of a troop or service community account.
- Failure to pay product sales amount owed.
- Failure to adhere to GSC's product program guidelines.
- Inability or failure to perform to GSC's satisfaction.
- Failure to comply with GSC or GSUSA policies, procedures, or guidelines.
- Failure to support the mission and values of the organization and GSC's goals.
- Improper use of prescription drugs, over the counter drugs, illegal drugs, or alcohol directly before or during Girl Scout activities
- Failure to model the right behavior in front of any Girl Scout member, staff, volunteer, or constituent, which includes but is not limited to: using inappropriate gestures, language, and dancing, provocative or inappropriate displays of public affection, any sexually explicit intent, behavior, or

use of foul language. In addition smoking of any form is not permitted including, but not limited to: any form of tobacco, vaping, THC based products, etc.

- Failure to adhere to any GSUSA and/or GSC's guidelines regarding drugs and alcohol found in Safety Activity Checkpoints: Volunteers and adults may not purchase, consume, possess or be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs/substances, prescription drugs, or over-the-counter medications which impair performance or judgment while participating in Girl Scout sanctioned activities, in the presence of Girl Scout members, while conducting Girl Scout business, or in Girl Scout branded clothing. Alcohol or any substance which may impair one's judgment must never be used by volunteers, adult members, or any other adult in the presence of a youth member, or immediately prior to a Girl Scout activity with your troop.
- When transporting Girl Scout members, always obey all laws including, but not limited to: having seatbelts for all passengers, adhering to all speed limits, driving laws, moving traffic violations, taking, or texting on the phone or using social media while driving or stopped at a light.
- Disclosure, or dissemination, of copy written and trademarked assets owned by Girl Scouts now or heretofore used in carrying out Girl Scout program; this includes but is not limited to service marks, emblems, badges, titles, fonts, descriptive or designating marks, artwork, and program curriculum.
- Disclosure or misuse of membership data and personal girl and/or adult member contact information not related to official Girl Scout business.
- Listed in the sex offender registry of any state or conviction of a sexual or related offense.
- Providing false, incomplete, or misleading information on the volunteer application
- Inappropriate behavior including, but not limited to, physical violence, abuse, unauthorized carrying of firearms, stalking, threatening, menacing, lying, harassment, sexual harassment, or falsification of documents.
- An unacceptable criminal background check or failure to report arrest or conviction.
- Entering into a contract or agreement with any agency, on behalf of GSC, without approval from the CEO or CEO designee
- Hostile acts, malicious gossip, harassment, or derogatory attacks concerning anyone associated with the GSC; including girls, registered volunteers, parents of members and/or employed staff.
- The use of Girl Scouts as a basis for initiating or perpetuating personal disagreements.



## Planning for Your First Troop Meeting

Depending on the ages of your girls, you might take the lead in guiding the structure and experiences of your troop—from how and when meetings are held to how the troop communicates, from steering girl-led activities to setting financial expectations. You'll make these decisions collaboratively with your volunteer team or co-leader, as well as with input from the girls and their parents and caregivers.

Use the questions below to guide your conversations with your troop committee volunteers or co-leader before discussing these topics with parents and caregivers.

- When will we meet and for how long? How frequently should we schedule troop meetings?
- Where will we meet? Your meeting space should be somewhere safe, clean, and secure that allows all girls to participate. Some great meeting space ideas include schools, places of worship, libraries, and community centers. If working with teens, consider meeting at coffee shops, bookstores, or another place they enjoy.
- Which components of the uniform will families need to purchase? Which uniform components will the troop provide for each girl?
- Will our troop be a single-grade level or [facilitated as a multi-level troop](#) with girls of many grade levels combined into one troop? If multi-level, how will we make sure they each get an age-appropriate experience?
- How will we keep troop activities and decisions girl-led? Use the Volunteer Toolkit to help you through this process by exploring options for activities and reviewing the meeting plans and resource lists.
- How often are we going to communicate with troop families? Which channels will we use to keep families in the loop? Effective communication [will help set expectations](#) and clarify parent/ caregiver responsibilities.
- Will our troop charge dues, use product program proceeds, and/or charge per activity? How much money will we need to cover supplies and activities? What should our financial plan look like?

## Choosing a Public Meeting Place

What makes a great meeting space? It depends on your troop, but here are a few considerations as you visit potential locations:

- **Cost.** The space should be free to use.
- **Size.** Make sure the space is large enough for 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.** Ask if tables and chairs come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby of some sort where you could store supplies or a safe outdoor space for activities.
- **Safety.** Potential spaces must be safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards, and have at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure first-aid equipment is on hand.
- **Facilities.** It goes without saying, but make sure that toilets are sanitary and accessible.

- **Communication-Friendly.** Check for cell reception in the potential space and whether Wi-Fi is available.
- **Allergen-Free.** Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won't bother susceptible girls during meetings.
- **Accessibility.** Your space should accommodate girls with disabilities as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.

Need a few talking points to get the conversation started? Try...

"I'm a Girl Scout volunteer with a group of [number of girls] girls. We're doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like [something your group is doing] and [something else your troop is doing]. 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 [reason why you'd like to meet there]."

Stuck and need additional support? Contact GSC or your service unit support team for help with a troop meeting place.

## Virtual Meetings

If your group or troop can't meet in person or hold a traditional meeting, there are many ways to bring the power of Girl Scouting home! Meeting virtually can be a fun and engaging option for your troop.

Before setting up a virtual meeting, you'll want to:

- Partner with troop families to make sure the girls are safe online.
- Select a meeting platform that allows families who may not have internet access to call in.
- Think about logistics. Work with the girls to set up ground rules; consider how you will incorporate in-person meeting traditions in your virtual space and how you'll keep meetings on track.
- Talk with families on how to keep activities girl-led if your girls will be completing them from home.

And don't worry if your girls want to use a web or social platform you're not as familiar with, because you'll learn alongside them! For more tips on successful virtual meetings, check out [Tips, Tools, and Ideas for Planning a Great Virtual Meeting](#).

## Girl Scout Troop Size

The troop size "sweet spot" is large enough to provide an interactive and cooperative learning environment and small enough to encourage individual development. Though the ideal troop size is 12 girls, we recommend that groups be no fewer and no larger than:

- Girl Scout Daisies: 5–12 girls
- Girl Scout Brownies: 10–20 girls
- Girl Scout Juniors 10–25 girls
- Girl Scout Cadettes: 5–25 girls
- Girl Scout Seniors: 5–30 girls
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: 5–30 girls

A Girl Scout troop/group must have a minimum of five girls and two approved adult volunteers. Be sure to double-check the [volunteer-to-girl ratio table](#) below to make sure you have the right number of adults present for group meetings, events, travel, and camping. Adults and girls registering in groups of fewer than five girls and two approved, unrelated adult volunteers, at least one of whom is female, will be registered as individual Girl Scouts to accurately reflect their status and program experience. Individual girls are always welcome to participate in Girl Scout activities and events.

### **Registering Girls and Adults 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 cannot be transferred to another member and are not refundable.

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

[Lifetime membership](#) is available to anyone who accepts the principles and beliefs of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, pays the one-time lifetime membership fee, and is at least 18 years old (or a high school graduate or equivalent). Volunteers with ten or more years of service can become lifetime members at the discounted young alum rate.

### **Adding New Girls to Your Troop**

Growing your troop is a great way to share the power of the Girl Scout experience and [there are many ways to get the word out](#), like hanging posters at your girl's school, using social media to reach families in your community, or including your troop in GSC's Opportunity Catalog or Troop Catalog.

If you have any questions about recruiting or adding new members to your troop, please reach out to Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) or 407-896-4475

## Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

Girl Scouts is for every girl, and that's why we embrace girls of all abilities and backgrounds with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl—regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, physical or cognitive ability, sexual orientation, primary language, or religion—is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.

We believe inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, all girls being offered the same opportunities with respect, dignity, and celebration of their unique strengths. It's about being a sister to every Girl Scout. 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.

If you have questions about accommodating an individual girl, please reach out to Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) or 407-896-4475

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 or caregiver. If you are open and honest, they'll likely 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 adapting a program 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 a 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.

Focus on a person's abilities—on what she can do rather than on what she cannot. In that spirit, use people-first language that 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 slow.     |
| She uses a wheelchair.         | She is wheelchair bound.  |

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

- When talking to a girl with a disability, speak directly to her, not through a family member 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 twenty-first year, and then move into an adult membership category.

### **Getting Support for Your Troop**

Just as your Girl Scouts rally around each other for support, you will also have a dedicated Girl Scout support team, consisting of council staff and passionate volunteers like you. Your support team, which may be called a service unit at GSC, is ready to offer local learning opportunities and advice as well as [answer your questions](#) about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, product sales, and much more.

Before you hold your first troop meeting with girls, consider the support and people resources you'll need to cultivate an energizing troop experience. Parents, friends, family, and other members of the community have their own unique strengths and can provide time, experience, and ideas to a troop, so get them involved from the very beginning as part of your volunteer troop team. This team is made up of troop leaders (like you) and troop committee volunteers.

Your [troop committee volunteers](#) are the extra set of eyes, ears, and hands that help the troop safely explore the world around them. Depending on your troop's needs, they can play a more active role—for instance, someone can step up as a dedicated troop treasurer—or simply provide an occasional helping hand when you need to keep a meeting activity on track.

If a parent or caregiver isn't sure if they can commit to a committee or co-leader role, encourage them to try [volunteering in a smaller capacity](#) that matches their skill set. Just like your young Girl Scouts, once troop parents and caregivers discover they can succeed in their volunteer role, they'll feel empowered to volunteer again.

## Troop Management Tools and Resources

From toolkits and guides to regular contact with experienced individuals, you'll have all the support you need to be a Girl Scout volunteer. Here's a list of some important resources you'll want to check out.

### The Volunteer Toolkit

#### Girl Scouts Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)

The Volunteer Toolkit is a customizable planning tool where you can find suggested meeting plans for most badges, access activity guides and badge requirements, track your Girl Scouts' achievements, and so much more. With inspiring ideas so you can engage your troop in a mix of activities all year long, it's the digital planning assistant that will help you power a fun-filled—and organized—Girl Scout year. Be sure to look for helpful icons to identify activity focus areas like the evergreen icon which tells you the activity can be taken outside or the globe icon which lets you know you can bring a global perspective to the activity. You'll find the Volunteer Toolkit in the left menu bar under My GS / My Account. VTK is accessible on any desktop, tablet, or mobile device.

With the Volunteer Toolkit, girls and leaders can explore meeting topics and program activities together and follow the fun as they plan their Girl Scout year. Using the Volunteer Toolkit:

#### Troop Leaders can:

- Plan the troop's calendar year and meeting schedule.
- Email parents/caregivers with one click.
- View the troop roster, renew girls' memberships, and update girls' contact information.
- View meeting plans for Journeys and badges, including suggested tracks for multi-level groups (K–5 and 6–12).
- Customize meeting agendas to fit your troop.
- Explore individual meeting plans that show a breakdown of every step, including a list of materials needed, editable time allotments for each activity within a meeting, and printable meeting aids.
- Record attendance at meetings and their troop's badge and Journey achievements.
- Add council or custom events to the troop's calendar.
- Submit troop finance reports (depending on the council's process).
- Easily locate both national and local council resources, such as *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

#### Parents and Caregivers can:

- View the troop's meeting schedule and individual meeting plans to stay up to date on the badges and Journeys the troop is working on.
- Renew their memberships and update their contact information.
- View their Girl Scout's attendance and achievements.
- See upcoming events the troop is planning or attending.
- Easily locate both national and local council resources.
- View the troop's finance report (depending on the council's process).

## Adult Learning Opportunities

We know that when you have the knowledge and skills you need to manage your Girl Scouts, both you and your troop will thrive. Depending on your volunteer role there is an entire virtual training library available to help you get started, these courses are not just for the Troop Co-Leaders but for all registered volunteers that have an approved background check.

Once you become a volunteer and you have been assigned a volunteer role, any required training along with other supportive courses will be available. By participating in additional ongoing learning opportunities, you will be able to grow your skills and confidence, while providing great opportunities for your Girl Scouts.

Our training is delivered as a multifaceted approach, which includes completing courses in our online learning platform: **gsLearn**, by attending our in-person trainings and workshops, and by receiving support within your local Girl Scout Service Community by fellow volunteers.

As a **Troop Co-Leader**, you are required to complete the Co-Leader Training Track

The Co-Leader training track consists of an intentional, three-part foundational training series. Each series builds the knowledge and skills needed to ensure the adults are able to provide a girl-led experience, focusing on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, progression, the Girl Scout Mission, providing a safe environment, and other elements of Troop Management.

- **Part 1** - The Co-leader Foundation is a series of virtual training and connection with a local service community of volunteers. Throughout the Foundation series a Co-leader will learn about our local council, The role of a Co leader, what is a Service Community, Getting started, A year in view, your first troop meeting, What do Girl Scouts do, Troop finances, Product program, Engagement with families, Troop year plans and the Volunteer Toolkit platform.

Foundation series training begins when an adult says yes, I want to be a co leader! This training is to be completed within the first 90 days.

- **Part 2** - The Co-Leader Building Further is a series of virtual training and connection with a local service community of volunteers. Throughout the Building Further Series, a Co leader will learn about leader expectations, the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, Girl and Troop safety, The Cookie program, and Troop finance reports.

Co-Leader Building Further series is to be completed within the first 6 months.

- **Part 3** - The Co-Leader Broadening the Opportunities is a series of virtual training and connection with local service community volunteers. Throughout the Broadening the Opportunities series, a Co-Leader will learn about Delivering inclusive programming, Mental Wellness, The GSUSA Brand, managing their troop, what is girl program, and various adult enrichment opportunities.

Broadening the Opportunities series is to be completed within the first 9 months.



## **Additional Adult Training Opportunities**

Most of these adult trainings along with other opportunities, are available through our [Event Calendar](#) or through the Council office or within your Service Community:

- CPR/First Aid - [First Aider Training](#)
- Troop Camper Series
- Camporee Coordinator
- Product Program Trainings – Cookies and Sweets N Treats
- Community Team Role Trainings

## **Troop Camper Series**

The Troop Camper series consists of three levels each level builds on foundation skills that provides the adult knowledge and skills to ensure outdoor and camping experiences are girl-led, girl program focused, safe environments and engage the GSUSA progression chart.

- **Troop Camper Level 1 - Camp Out** training course qualifies a Troop Camper to camp in a non-primitive setting and supports up to thirty fellow Girl Scout campers in a group setting. Training is blended: Virtual and one day In-person skill day. 2-year certificate.
- **Troop Camper Level 2 – Adventure Out** training course qualifies a Troop Camper to camp in a semi-primitive setting. Training is blended, Virtual and overnight in-person skills training. 3-year certificate. **Prerequisite:** Troop Camper Level 1 and have been camping with the troop.
- **Troop Camper Level 3 - Backpacking** training provides you with the knowledge and skills to take your girls camping in a tent in a primitive setting. Training is blended: virtual, classroom and in-person overnight skills training. 3-year certificate. **Prerequisite:** Troop Camper Level 1, Troop Camper Level 2 and have been camping with the troop.

For more information regarding adult training opportunities, please refer to the Girl Scouts of Citrus Council's [Learning Opportunities](#) page on the website.



## Know How Much You are Appreciated!

What begins with Girl Scouts speaking up at a troop meeting can go all the way to speaking in front of their city council for a cause they champion—and they will have your support to thank for that. Your volunteer role makes a powerful difference. Thank you for all you do.

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

If you're ready for more opportunities, be sure to let GSC 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 yearlong 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.

If you are interested in volunteering in a troop or in another capacity, please reach out to Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) or 407-896-4475

### Volunteer Appreciation

Without our passionate and dedicated volunteers, there would be no Girl Scouting. That's why we celebrate National Volunteer Month every April and turn up the party as we ring in National Girl Scout Leader's Day on April 22.

Girl Scouts also celebrates National Volunteer Week, which falls during the third day of April. What can we say, we love our volunteers!

## Troop Finances

With your guidance, your Girl Scouts will learn money skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Your Girl Scout troop will plan and finance its own activities, and you'll coach your girls as they earn and manage troop funds. Troop activities are powered by proceeds earned through council-sponsored product program activities (such as the Girl Scout Cookie Program), group money-earning activities (council approved, of course), and any dues your troop may charge.

Remember that all funds collected, raised, earned, or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting belong to the troop and must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Funds are administered through the troop and do not belong to individuals.

### **Opening a Troop Account**

A troop bank account should be opened as soon as the troop has started collecting funds, especially because a bank account is required for all product sales and makes financial record keeping easier. *Petty cash not deposited in troop accounts should always be kept to a minimum.*

Girl Scout bank accounts in Citrus Council must be opened under the Council's name and tax ID number by corporate resolution. Due to audit regulations, Citrus Council is the legal co-owner of every account, and all troop accounts are always accessible for review. We currently recommend either BB&T, Fairwinds Credit Union, Fifth Third, TD Bank or Wells Fargo for troop banking.

- The name of the troop account should be:
  - Girl Scouts of Citrus Council, Inc.,
  - Troop#

*Note: this may require two lines for the troop number to be visible on mailings, checks, etc.*

- The primary account address should be the Council's address (341 N Mills Ave Orlando, FL 32803) Signers on account have online access.
- Girl Scouts of Citrus Taxpayer Identification Number is: 59-0696293.
- Every account must have a minimum of two, non-related currently registered approved volunteers as approved signers on the account. All bank account signers must complete the Volunteer Financial Agreement, available on the council website.
- Each troop may have only one checking account. Multiple or interest-earning accounts are not permitted.

### **Establishing a Troop 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 program 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 activities or trips.
- 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 GSC'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 Unit, another non-profit organization, 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.

### **Troop Finance Policies**

- **Bank account signers will be held personally responsible for all financial activity.**
- All account signers and persons handling bank statements or troop money must be a registered member of Girl Scout of the USA and have an eligible background check on file. *Signers may not be related or live in the same household.*
- Every purchase made by cash, check or debit card should be supported by a receipt or similar document. Troops are encouraged to use their debit card at every possible opportunity.
- Mileage for short excursions and troop errands may be reimbursed at the troop's discretion. Attach a travel log or similar document to your Troop Expense Reimbursement form.
- Fuel may only be purchased directly from a gas station for long trips which will use all the fuel for troop travel purposes. This must be agreed on by the troops and included in the trip budget.
- No personal expenses or other banking activity may occur through the troop bank account.
- This applies to any purchases or withdrawals "to be paid back". Troops may not lend money in anyway.
- No one may write a check to reimburse themselves for expenses at any time. An Expense Reimbursement Form is required for each occurrence and the check is to be signed by another account signer.
- Girls may not have individual bank accounts, or individual "sub-accounts" recorded on a separate ledger.
- A Juliette (Individually Registered Girl) is not permitted to have a bank account, even if there is more than one signer on the account. Each Juliette has a holding account at the Council Service Center for their funds and product sale credits. All money earned or donated should be submitted to be put in this account.

- Money earned collectively (i.e. product sale) is not the property of individual girls.
- Money remains with the troop; troops disbanding should see Troop Disband - Finance Guidelines.
- Per GSUSA guidelines, proceeds received by a troop/group are non-transferable. Girls who leave the troop or leave Girl Scouting, are not entitled to proceeds earned while in the group, when they leave. **PROCEEDS DO NOT FOLLOW THE GIRLS.**
- Girl Scout of Citrus staff can call an audit of the troop bank account at any time.
- **Abuse of troop funds or bank accounts will result in Girl Scout of Citrus action including, but not limited to, staff oversight, termination from the volunteer position, and/or restrictions on further fundraising activities until the matter is resolved. Legal action will be taken if necessary-to include pursuit of prosecution.**
- It is the responsibility of all adult volunteers to always protect the girls money. Any indications of abuse of troop funds or bank accounts need to be reported to a council staff person immediately.

### **Debit Cards**

GSUSA recommends the use of Debit Cards and/or ACH transfers to facilitate future online registration processes for membership and activities through the Council Enterprise System (CES). Debit cards will only be issued to troop bank account signers and should be used for most troop purchases. Credit cards will not be authorized as troops and communities are not permitted to borrow money.

### **Checks**

- All troops should have checks for reimbursements and as a back-up should debit cards be unusable.
- All checks accepted and deposited on behalf of GSC must include name, residence address (no P.O. Boxes) and phone number with area code. Temporary checks and checks lacking this information should never be accepted. If possible, use the reference line to list the troop number and activity (example: Troop 1111/cookies).
- Should you receive a check returned to your troop, you may contact GSC for collections assistance. Contact information is required for collections, funds will be returned to the troop once/if collected.

Any checks returned by our bank as NSF (insufficient funds), account closed, refer to maker, etc. will be immediately forwarded to collections for processing. GSC will not attempt to redeposit bad checks.

- Bank account signers will be held personally responsible for all financial activity.
- All account signers and persons handling bank statements or troop money must be a registered member of Girl Scout of the USA and have an eligible background check on file. *Signers may not be related or live in the same household.*
- Every purchase made by cash, check or debit card should be supported by a receipt or similar document. Troops are encouraged to use their debit card at every possible opportunity.

- Mileage for short excursions and troop errands may be reimbursed at the troop's discretion. Attach a travel log or similar document to your expense on the [Troop Expense Reimbursement form](#)
- Fuel may only be purchased directly from a gas station for long trips which will use all of the fuel for troop travel purposes. This must be agreed on by the troops and included in the trip budget.
- No personal expenses or other banking activity may occur through the troop bank account. Troop expenses should be documented using the [Troop Expense Reimbursement form](#)
- This applies to any purchases or withdrawals "to be paid back". Troops may not lend money in any way.
- No one may write a check to reimburse themselves for expenses at any time. An Expense Reimbursement Form is required for each occurrence and the check is to be signed by another account signer.
- Girls may not have individual bank accounts, or individual "sub-accounts" recorded on a separate ledger.
- A Juliette (Individually Registered Girl) is not permitted to have a bank account, even if there is more than one signer on the account. Each Juliette has a holding account at the Council Service Center for their funds and product sale credits. All money earned or donated should be submitted to be put in this account.
- Money earned collectively (i.e. product sale) is not the property of individual girls.
- Money remains with the troop; troops disbanding should see Troop Disband – Finance Guidelines
- Per GSUSA guidelines, proceeds received by a troop/group are non-transferable. Girls who leave the troop or leave Girl Scouting, are not entitled to proceeds earned while in the group, when they leave. **PROCEEDS DO NOT FOLLOW THE GIRLS.**
- Girl Scout of Citrus staff can call an audit of the troop bank account at any time.
- **Abuse of troop funds or bank accounts will result in Girl Scout of Citrus action including, but not limited to, staff oversight, termination from the volunteer position, and/or restrictions on further fundraising activities until the matter is resolved. Legal action will be taken if necessary-to include pursuit of prosecution.**
- It is the responsibility of all adult volunteers to protect the girls money at all times. Any indications of abuse of troop funds or bank account need to be reported to a council staff person immediately.

## Service Community Policies

- Service Communities follow all troop account regulations including Finance Report reporting periods. If there is not a bank account, a zero report should be turned in.
- The Service Community accounts are to be used for Service Community events that are not hosted as troop money earning events. The funds are to be used to serve the service community as a whole.
- Service Community accounts should not have funds in excess of current budgetary needs. This can include camporee deposits but should not include a "safety net" beyond any budgeted recurring charges (i.e. a storage unit).

- Please use additional funds to defray the cost of events to benefit all girls in the service community.
- Service Community financial status, including bank balance, must be presented to the group at each meeting to ensure everyone is aware of the availability of funds.

### **Troop/Group Finance Report Guidelines**

- Each troop is required to submit a troop finance report annually.
- Finance reports are submitted through the troops' Volunteer Toolkit by May 31st.
- A copy of the troop's latest 2 bank statements must be submitted with the finance report.
- Every troop co-leader is responsible for accounting for all troop/group funds.
- The Troop/Group Finance Report should be made available to each parent.
- Retain a copy of all Troop financial records – they should be available to girls, parents, Service Community Team and Council staff at any time.
- If the co-leader does not submit the troop finance report on or before the Council deadline, the co-leader will have an additional 10-day grace period to submit.

If the finance report is not submitted at the end of the 10-day grace period:

- The troop bank account will be subject to an audit by Girl Scouts of Citrus.
- The troop bank account will be subject to being frozen, to prevent withdrawals until the audit is concluded.
- The troop co-leader will be subject to removal from her/his volunteer position.

### **Disbanding Troops and Unused Troop Funds**

When a troop disbands, any unused Girl Scout money left in the account becomes the property of the council. Troop funds are not the property of any individual member. Before disbanding, ask your girls how they want to pay it forward. They may decide to donate any unused funds to their service community, to another troop, GIFTs for Girls, or to pay for Girl Scout activities. Activities can also include purchasing materials to support another organization through Take Action projects.

### **Closing the Troop Account**

When closing a troop account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it. Remember, you may have to close the account in person. Always be sure to bring any remaining funds to the Council office.

If you have questions about closing troop accounts, please reach out to Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) or 407-896-4475

## **Money – earning basics for troops.**

Troops flex their financial muscles in two distinct ways:

- **The Girl Scout Cookie Program and other product sales of Girl Scouts** (authorized product sales such as magazines or nuts and candy) organized by GSC. All girl members are eligible to participate in two council-sponsored product program activities each year with volunteer supervision—the Girl Scout Cookie Program and one other council-authorized product program. Please remember, volunteers and Girl Scout council staff don't sell cookies and other products—girls do.
- **Group money-earning activities** organized by the troop (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with volunteers) and that earn money for the group.

## **Participation Guidance**

Girls' participation in both council-sponsored product program activities and group money-earning projects is based on 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 program 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.
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money.

## **Additional Guidelines**

Keep these specific guidelines—some of which are required by the Internal Revenue Service—in mind to ensure that sales are conducted with legal and financial integrity.

- **All rewards earned by girls through the product program 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 are encouraged to participate in council product programs as their primary money-earning activity**; any group money earning shouldn't compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other council product programs.
- **Obtain written approval from GSC before a group money-earning event**; by submitting this completed application at least 30 days in advance for approval. [Money Earning Project - Application](#)
- **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 Scouts' *Blue Book* policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash.** Girls can collect partial payment toward the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and other Girl Scout–authorized products through participation in council-approved product program donation programs.
- **Girl Scouts forbids product demonstration** parties where the use of the Girl Scout trademark increases revenue for another business, such as in-home product parties. Any business using the Girl Scout trademark or other Girl Scout intellectual property must seek authorization from GSUSA.
- **Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the ages and abilities of the girls** and consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- **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 programs. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group according to council procedures.

### **Sample Money-Earning Activities**

#### ***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 a high tea or a build-your-own-taco bar, related to activities girls are planning; for instance, if girls are earning money for travel, they could tie the meal to their destination.

#### ***Service(s)***

- Service-a-thon (people sponsor a girl doing service and funds go to support a trip or other activity)
- 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
- Holiday gift wrapping

### **Help Your Troop Reach Its Financial Goals**

We get it—there's something exciting about opening that first case of Girl Scout Cookies. However, before your girls take part in all the cookie program fun, it's important they have a clear plan and purpose for their product program activities. As a volunteer, you have the opportunity 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 programs—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? 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 GSC 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 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!

### **Money Earning Projects During Product Sale**

Conducting a money earning project during a council sponsored product sale is generally not allowed for many reasons. If a troop would like to carry out a money earning project during the council sponsored product sales (September - November or January - March) they must qualify for an exception to the rule using the following criteria:

- Cadette troops and above only.
- May not sell a competing product - i.e. selling cookies during the Girl Scout Cookie Sale.
- Troops must participate in both the Fall Product and the Cookie product programs.
- Must show that additional money earning is necessary.
- Troop must commit to utilizing the current product sale for money earning by meeting the following per girl averages:
  - Fall Product: \$350 per girl average.
  - Cookies: 297 box per girl average.

Complete the Money Earning Application Packet, a letter stating why you are requesting a project during the product sale and submit to Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org)  
This request will be reviewed by the designated GSC staff to ensure it meets the money earning project requirements, does not compete with the sale and will not lead to market saturation due to too many money earning projects taking place concurrently.

## **Financial Management and Product Program Abilities by Grade Level**

As with other Girl Scout activities, girls build their financial and sales savvy as they get older. Every girl will be different, but here you'll find some examples of the abilities and opportunities for progression of girls at each grade level.

### **Girl Scout Daisies**

- The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and does all group budgeting.
- Parents/caregivers may decide they will contribute to the cost of activities.
- Girls can participate in Girl Scout Cookie Program activities and other council-sponsored product programs.
- 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 safe.
- Girls should be given the opportunity to practice identifying money and counting back change with an adult during each transaction.

### **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) with guidance from their volunteer(s).
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.
- Girls may decide to pay dues to contribute to the cost of activities.

### **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 programs.
- 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 based on their 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 programs.
- Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning programs.
- 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 Girl Scout Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.

## Working with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Local sponsors can help councils power innovative programs for Girl Scouts. 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. Encourage your girls to celebrate a sponsor's contribution to the troop by sending 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 GSC, which can give you guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting guidelines, and any council policies or practices that must be followed. GSC may already have relationships with certain organizations or may know of some reasons not.

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

**Avoid fundraising for other organizations.** Girl Scouts are not allowed to solicit money on behalf of another organization when identifying themselves as Girl Scouts by wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. However, you and your group can support another organization through Take Action projects. Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose as long as they are not wearing anything that officially identifies them as Girl Scouts.

**Steer 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.

**Be 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.

**Avoid selling or endorsing commercial products.** A commercial product is any product sold at a retail location. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell such products.

### **Request for Cash Gifts**

Per national Girl Scout policy, no Girl Scout is permitted to ask for gifts of cash from any entity. However, if a leader, parent, or adult volunteer has a connection in your community for possible cash gifts, please consult with the Fund Development Department where it will be determined how to work in partnership to secure the gift. Girl Scouts of Citrus Council, Inc. is the only legal entity that can secure and process cash gifts as a condition of our 501(c) (3) status.

### **Donor Designated Gifts**

If an individual donor or business wishes to make a gift of cash to a specific troop/group/community then the individual donor or business must send their donation directly to council with a note including the troop/group/community name that they wish their gift to be directed.

As the registered 501(c)(3) organization in receipt of donated funds and good stewards of all donations made through our organization, it is Girl Scouts of Citrus's responsibility to ensure that all designated troops/groups/communities are active and in adherence with Council financial requirements.

When a donor check stipulates that a specific donation is to be designated to a troop, checks will be processed through the Council's finance department and then issued to the troops to be deposited into the troop account. Council will process payment only if the following information is current:

- All active Girl Scouts of Citrus troops are required to have a troop bank account with two (2) unrelated signers on the account.
- The bank name, routing and account number, and the names of all signers on the troop account.
- A copy of last month's bank statement for the troop account must be on file.
- The date of the last troop finance report submission to Girl Scouts of Citrus.

Once the check has been processed, the council will remit the donation to the appropriate troop/group/community. Note that the council keeps a small fee (percentage of donation) to cover processing costs.

For questions regarding any Fund Development or Donor Designated topics, please reach out to Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) or 407-896-4475

## Engaging Girl Scouts and Families

Creating the kind of environment in which girls are unafraid to try new things and to be who they want to be starts with you!

By meeting your girls where they are, you'll help them develop the leadership skills they'll use today and in the future.

If you want your Girl Scouts to have fun, be inspired, take risks, and learn about themselves and the world—that's why you're a Girl Scout troop leader or troop volunteer! Parents and caregivers want the same thing for their girls but getting families to pitch in and play an active role in the troop while also enhancing the experience for their girl and themselves can be tricky for many volunteers. It doesn't have to be this way.

### Kick the Year Off Right by Engaging Parents and Other Caregivers

Girl Scouting provides the best opportunities for girls when families step up and play an active part in troop life, your troop can shine its brightest! Plus, girls feel a special sense of pride when their families take part and show interest in the things they are doing.

### What Is a Parent and Caregiver Meeting?

It's the first meeting you have to start each troop year—whether you are a new or returning troop, it's valuable for all troops.

**Why Hold a Meeting?** [Kicking off each year with a parent and caregiver meeting](#) sets the troop up for success. Outlining clear expectations, building a team, and engaging parents in the Girl Scout experience is a great way to start off on the right foot. When parents are involved, leaders have support, the troop has a plan, and girls' benefit! The meeting helps:

- Families understand what Girl Scouting can do for their girl.
- Families and leaders identify ways they will work as a team to support the troop.
- Families and leaders agree about what the troop pays for and what families pay for individually.
- You fill key troop positions—you never know which parent will make an awesome assistant leader or troop cookie manager.
- Families know how the troop will communicate things like upcoming events or schedule changes.
- Families learn about uniforms, books, and other important basics.

For even more tips on working with troop families, check out [Girl Scouts' Tips for Troop Leaders](#) hub.

## **How to Keep Parents and Caregivers Engaged**

**Make the Ask(s).** The main reason people don't take action is because they were never asked to in the first place. That's why hearing one out of three Girl Scout parents say no one had communicated expectations around involvement with their girl's troop is so troubling. Parents may have many talents, but they're certainly not mind readers. If you're nervous about getting turned down, don't be. Sure, a few parents might be unable to lend a hand, but the helpers you do get will be worth their weight in gold. And just because someone wasn't available a month or two ago doesn't mean they won't be free to help now. Loop back, follow up, and ask again!

**Make Sense of "Why."** Explain that not only does the whole troop benefit with extra help from parents and other caregivers, but also that girls feel a special sense of pride in seeing their own family member step up and take a leadership role. Getting involved can strengthen the caregiver/girl bond and is a meaningful way to show daughters that they are a priority in their parents' lives.

**Make It Quick and Easy.** Everybody's got a full plate these days, so instead of starting conversations with a list of tasks or responsibilities that parents and other caregivers could take on (which can be intimidating), ask how much time each week they might be able to dedicate to the troop, then go from there. For instance, if a troop mom or dad has 15 minutes each week to spare, they could organize and manage the calendar for troop snacks and carpools. If a grandparent has one to two hours, they could assist with leading the troop through a specific badge on a topic they're already comfortable with. For more ways parents and other caregivers can help out when faced with a tricky schedule, check out the Family Resource tab in the Volunteer Toolkit.

**Make Family Part of the Formula.** While Girl Scout programming is always focused on the girls themselves, it's important and helpful to open up a few events to their families throughout the year. Inviting the whole crew to celebrate her accomplishments in Girl Scouting—whether at a holiday open house, a bridging ceremony, or a fun "reverse meeting" where girls take the role of leaders and guide the adults, including caregivers, through an activity—will help parents better understand the value of Girl Scouts and they'll be more likely to invest their time and talents to the troop.

That said, there's no need to wait for a special event to engage families in their girls' Girl Scout life. Keep communication lines open throughout the year—whether it's through your troop's social media page, personal emails, or in-person chats—to keep parents in the loop on what the girls are doing and learning during each meeting and encourage them to let their daughters "be the experts" at home, explaining or teaching the new skills they've learned. You can get everyone in on the fun and keep Girl Scouts strong at home by sharing the family badge guides on the Volunteer Toolkit with parents and caregivers.

## Understanding Healthy Development in Girls

It sounds simple, but just being attentive to what girls are experiencing as they mature is a big help to them—and to you, as you guide and mentor them! You'll experience different joys and challenges with each Girl Scout level, but here are some guidelines for meeting girls' needs and abilities at different grade levels, you'll also find these listed in the adult guide of each leadership Journey.

| Girl Scout Daisies  |  |
|---|--|
| At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grades), girls...   | <i>This means...</i>   |
| Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.   | <i>They'll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.</i>  |
| Are great builders and budding artists, though they are still developing their fine motor skills.                 | <i>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.</i> |
| Love to move and dance.   | <i>They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin, or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle.</i>   |
| Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.  | <i>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.</i>    |
| Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time, and money.   | <i>You'll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and, perhaps, the legs on a caterpillar!</i>   |
| Are just beginning to write and spell, and they don't always have the words for what they're thinking or feeling. | <i>That having girls draw a picture of something they are trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them.</i>  |
| Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so.                                | <i>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.</i>           |

| Girl Scout Brownies   |   |
|---|---|
| At the Girl Scout Brownie level (second and third grades), girls...   | <i>This means...</i>  |
| Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.   | <i>Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.</i>  |
| Are social and enjoy working in groups.   | <i>Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.</i>  |
| Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.                            | <i>Letting girls lead, direct, and help out in activities whenever possible. Allow girls as a group to make decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.</i>                                  |
| Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.  | <i>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 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 those 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, and the like. | <i>Encouraging girls to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need some assistance, however, holding scissors, threading needs, 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 to tell a story through dance or creative movement.</i>  |
| Know how to follow rules, listen well, and appreciate recognition of a job well done.                             | <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...   | <i>This means...</i>   |
| 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 working 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 critically and are capable of flexible thought. Juniors can consider more than one perspective as well as the feelings and attitudes of another. | <i>Asking girls to explain why they made a decision, to share their visions of their roles in the future, and to 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 the 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.

*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.*

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.

*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.*

Can be very self-conscious, wanting to be like everyone else but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.

*Encouraging girls to share, but only when they are ready. 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.*

Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults at school and at home.

*Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions and allowing them to experience "fun failure," which is learning from trying something new and making mistakes.*

## Girl Scout Seniors

| At the Girl Scout Senior level (ninth and tenth grades), girls...  | <i>This means...</i>  |
|--|---|
| 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 other sources.   | <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 "fun failure," which is learning from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>   |

## Girl Scout Ambassadors

| At the Girl Scout Ambassador level (eleventh and twelfth grades), girls...   | <i>This means...</i>  |
|--|---|
| 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.              | <i>Inviting girls to develop stories as a group and then individually create endings that they later discuss and share.</i>   |
| 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. | <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 with peers than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.  | <i>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.</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 other sources.   | <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—and are looking to their futures.  | <i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience "fun failure," which is learning from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>   |

## Creating a Safe Space for Girls

A safe space is where girls feel that they can be themselves, without explanation or judgment. As a volunteer, the environment you create is just as important as the activities girls do—it's the key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of! Cultivate a space where confidentiality is respected, and girls can express their true selves.

### **Recognize and Support Each Girl**

You're a role model and a mentor to your girls. Since you play an important role in their lives, they need to know that you consider each of them an important person too. They can weather a poor meeting place or an activity that flops, but they cannot endure being ignored or rejected.

- Give a shout-out when you see girls trying their best, not just when they've had a clear success.
- Emphasize the positive qualities that make each girl worthy and unique.
- Be generous with praise and stingy with rebuke.
- Help your girls find ways to show acceptance of and support for one another.

### **Promote Fairness**

Girls are sensitive to injustice. They forgive mistakes if they are sure you are trying to be fair. They look for fairness in how responsibilities are shared, in handling disagreements, and in your responses to performance and accomplishment.

- When possible, ask the girls 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 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.

### **Build Trust**

Girls need your belief in them and your support when they try new things. You'll also need to show them that you won't betray their confidence.

- Show girls you trust them to think for themselves and use their own judgment.
- Encourage them to make important decisions in the group.
- Give them assistance in correcting their own mistakes.
- Support girls in trusting one another—let them see firsthand how trust can be built, lost, regained, and strengthened.

## **Inspire 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 the important things happening in their lives.

- 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 the same.
- 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.

## **Managing Conflict**

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, but if handled constructively, they show girls that they can overcome their differences, exercise diplomacy, and improve their communication and relationships. Respecting others and being a sister to every Girl Scout means that 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 in a nonjudgmental manner](#), keeping in mind that each party may need some time—a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this. Talking in this way might feel uncomfortable and difficult now, but it lays 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.

You'll also find conflict resolution activities in some of the Journeys, such as the Amaze Journey for Cadettes or the Mission Sisterhood Journey for Seniors.

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, to GSC if you need extra help.

## **Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age**

Make sure your words and intentions create a connection with the girls. Keep in mind how important the following attitudes are.

**Listen.** Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do (no “you should”) is the first step in building a trusting relationship and helping them take ownership of their Girl Scout experience.

**Be Honest.** If you're not comfortable with a topic or activity, it's OK to 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.** Outside of Girl Scouts, girls may be dealing with issues like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs, and other serious topics. When you don't know, listen. Also seek help from GSC 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 young adults reinforces that their opinions matter and that they deserve respect.

**Offer Options.** Girls' needs and interests change and being flexible shows them that you respect them and their busy lives. Be ready with age-appropriate guidance and parameters no matter what the girls choose to do.

**Stay Current.** Show your girls that you're interested in their world by asking them about the TV shows and movies they like; the books, magazines, or blogs they read; the social media influencers they follow; and the music they listen to.

**Remember LUTE: Listen, Understand, Tolerate, and Empathize.** Try using the LUTE method to thoughtfully respond when a girl is upset, angry, or confused.

**Listen.** Hear her out, ask for details, and reflect back what you hear; try "What happened next?" or "What did she say?"

**Understand.** Show that you understand where she's coming from with comments such as, "So what I hear you saying is..." or "I understand why you're unhappy," or "Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too."

**Tolerate.** You can tolerate the feelings that she just can't handle right now on her own. Let her know that you're there to listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Say something like: "Try talking to me about it. I'll listen," or "I know you're mad—talking it out helps," or "I can handle it—say whatever you want to."

**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**

Let these simple tips guide you when working with teenage girls:

- Think of yourself as a "guide on the side"—a partner, a coach, or a mentor, not a "leader."
- Ask girls what rules they need for safety and what group agreements they need to be a good team. When girls take the lead in establishing group rules, they're more likely to stick to them.
- 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—understanding that "speaking up" may look different for each girl. For some girls, it might mean sharing their ideas in front of the entire group; for others it could mean submitting a written response or contributing as part of a 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). See "Report Concerns" below to understand the guard rails.

## **When Sensitive Topics Come Up**

It's an amazing feeling when your Girl Scouts put their trust in you—and when they do, they may come to you with some of the issues they are facing such as bullying, peer pressure, dating, athletic and academic performance, and more. Some of these issues may be considered sensitive by families who may have opinions or input about how, and whether, Girl Scouts should cover these topics with their girls.

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 the parents and received guidance from GSC.

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.

Girl Scouts of the USA 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 caregivers, along with schools and faith communities, are the primary sources of information on these topics.

Parents/caregivers 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 GSC'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 which places you 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/caregiver 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 GSC will guide you in addressing these concerns.

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.

If you have any concerns that you need to make us aware of, please reach out to Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) or 407-896-4475

## Girl Scout Product Programs

Learning to think like an entrepreneur? Developing business smarts? Getting to know customers and building lasting relationships? There's so much more to that box of Thin Mints®.

Whether girls participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program or the Girl Scout Fall Product Sweets 'N' Treats Program (or both!), everything your Girl Scouts learn prepares them to take on the world. Plus, Girl Scout Cookie proceeds stay in your local community to power amazing year-round experiences—experiences that broaden girls' worlds and spark their sense of wonder.

### Five Essential Skills

Through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, girls as young as five develop five essential skills that will help them be successful today and throughout their lives:

- **Goal Setting.** Girls learn to create a plan to reach their goals.
- **Decision Making.** Girls learn to make decisions on their own and as a team.
- **Money Management.** Girls learn to create a budget and handle money.
- **People Skills.** Girls find their voice and up their confidence through customer interactions that build relationships.
- **Business Ethics.** Girls learn to act responsibly and honestly, both in business and in life.

But building their business know-how isn't just tied to the cookies themselves! Girl Scouts at any level can continue honing their entrepreneurial skills by earning the [Cookie Business badges, Cookie Entrepreneur Family Pin, and the Financial Literacy badges](#) year over year.

Before your cookie bosses open shop, be sure to check out these [helpful troop leader resources](#) that will empower you to:

- Manage your troop's funds.
- Learn how girls participate in money earning.
- Discover how your troop can reach its financial goals.
- Plan activities to help her earn cookie pins and badges.
- Understand just how much your girls are capable of by grade level and [how their entrepreneurial skills progress](#).

### Girl Scout Cookie History

What started with Girl Scouts selling home-baked cookies to raise money grew into enlisting professional bakers in 1936 to handle the growing demand—and the rest is history. [Explore Girl Scout Cookie History](#) to find out how cookies have helped build generations of female entrepreneurs and leaders who make the world a better place.

## **Where Cookie Proceeds Go**

After paying for the cost of cookies and materials, [Girl Scout Cookie proceeds stay local](#) and help councils provide Girl Scout programs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), the outdoors, life skills, entrepreneurship, and more—in camps, through leadership training, and multiple other ways. A portion of the proceeds is directly managed by girls, and it's up to them to decide how to invest their troop's share of the earnings.

GSC will provide a breakdown of how cookie program proceeds support Girl Scout activities locally. Please share this information with girls and their families so everyone understands that product program sales make it possible for your Girl Scout council to serve girls.

Troop members share in the proceeds from a successful product program; proceeds are not distributed to individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for rewards and credits that they put toward council-sponsored camps, programs, and Girl Scout swag. The council plan for rewards applies equally to all girls participating in the product program activity. Visit the cookie section [Cookies](#) of GSC website for more information about individual rewards and troop proceeds locally.

The Girl Scout Blue Book of Basic Documents specifies that:

*“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.”*

*“Ownership of Assets,” page 20, [Blue Book of Basic Documents 2025](#)*

Making s'mores under the stars, creating a lasting impact in your community, or ordering supplies for an eye-opening STEM project—there are limitless ways to put troop proceeds toward dynamic Girl Scout experiences! There are a few things, however, that don't qualify for “purposes of Girl Scouting,” for instance, using troop proceeds to purchase memberships in or uniforms for another organization. We encourage all councils to remind their volunteers of this policy to protect the all-girl environment and to avoid diversion of Girl Scout funds.

## **Your Council's Role**

When you are set up for success, you are better able to set up your girls for success! That's why every year, GSC provides training, guidelines, and procedures for conducting the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Sweets 'N' Treats program and determines how the proceeds and product rewards system will be managed. Check the cookie section [Cookies+](#) of GSC's website to find the answers you need as well as local trainings and resources.

Each council also selects the vendors of its choice to provide the products for their product programs. Two commercial bakers that are licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies: [Little Brownie Bakers](#) and [ABC Bakers](#). Citrus Council uses ABC Bakers. You can also [Meet the Cookies](#) and find additional info on cookie varieties, including nutritional details.

Citrus Council also works with vendors to offer magazine subscriptions, nut, and candy products, for the fall product program. These companies are [Ashdon Farms](#), and [M2 Media Group](#). Each provides online tools and activities for girls to download. Magazine selection and sales may take place online—check with GSC for more details.

## **Your Role**

You play an exciting role in giving your Girl Scouts opportunities to practice the five skills as they learn how to think like entrepreneurs. Some of the things you'll do include:

- Get girls excited about the opportunities to support the troop (but allowing their participation to be voluntary).
- Support both [competitive and apprehensive cookie bosses](#), helping all your girls set meaningful goals for themselves.
- [Fostering partnerships with each Girl Scout's family](#) to ensure cookie season success, whatever that may look like for her, will help you build a positive partnership with girls and families, and the [Cookie Entrepreneur Family pin](#) is designed to help families support girls' growth at home.

Not only can girls sell individually, both in-person and using the online tools provided by each vendor, they can also participate in group booth sales during product programs. Your local council has additional guidance and processes to market and ensure every booth is in a safe and appropriate location.

As your Girl Scouts grow, your role will evolve from a hands-on one to providing oversight and support where needed. No matter their ages, remember that volunteers and parents/caregivers do not sell the product. Your role is to encourage your girls and let their entrepreneurial spirit soar. Learning by doing is exactly how your girls develop the business savvy and communication skills that will [empower them to reach any goals they set for themselves](#).

Another critical task for each troop is to establish a clear accounting system for all proceeds and products during the programs. It's up to you to make sure that money is spent wisely, that excellent records are kept (remember to keep copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and that all products are tracked. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work as they learn to keep impeccable records. Be sure to attend product program orientation or training so you are aware of the systems and helpful tools available.

Remember that if a Girl Scout chooses to participate in a club/specialty troop, such as: travel, Trailblazers, Mariners, etc. they must decide prior to the product program season where their proceeds will be allocated to. Proceeds cannot be divided.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Fall Product Sweets 'N' Treats Program can be exhilarating and busy times during the troop year, but you're never alone in your efforts! You can reach out to your Community Product Chairs when you're feeling stuck.

## **Product Program Safety**

Safety is the top priority while selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products. Volunteers, families, and girls should be familiar with and practice the safety guidelines outlined in local program resources as well as those available in the [troop leader resources](#) section of [girlscoutcookies.org](http://girlscoutcookies.org) and in *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

## **Selling Cookies Online**

As there are two bakers, there are also two online platforms troops use to manage their cookie business (Smart Cookie and DC24 Cloud®). Check the specific guidelines provided by each cookie vendor before participating. Before girls begin selling online, they should partner with their troop leader and families to learn how to safely run their business online.

A few more online safety practices to keep in mind:

- The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl-led program; a Girl Scout should always lead online marketing and sales efforts, with the supervision of her parent or caregiver.
- Girl Scouts engaging in online sales and marketing must review and apply the [Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Their Families](#).
- Girls, volunteers and parents must review and adhere to the [Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge](#), the [Digital Cookie Pledge](#), the [Supplemental Safety Tips for Online Marketing](#), and Girl Scouts' [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for Computer and Internet Use and Cookie and Product Sales (with the exception that they may share beyond friends and family).
- Girl sales links should never be posted to resale sites (Craigslist, eBay, Facebook Marketplace etc.).
- Girls must adhere to all terms and conditions on Digital Cookie and Smart Cookie platforms. For copies of terms and conditions, please contact GSUSA, ABC, or M2 as needed.
- Girl Scouts of the USA reserves the right to remove or disable the link for any reason including violation of guidance, inventory fulfillment issues, safety issues, or if sales and marketing activity goes viral and otherwise creates unanticipated disruption.

Additionally, families, girls, and volunteers should contact and collaborate with their councils and Girl Scouts of the USA in advance on any national news media opportunities tied to girls online marketing and sales efforts.

## **The Buddy System**

Using the buddy system, the troop is divided into teams of two. Each Girl Scout 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 if needed. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two so that in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

## **Preparing for Your Girl Scout Cookie Booth**

Cookie booths—that is, cookie pop-up sales in areas with lots of foot traffic—are a fun way for Girl Scouts to connect with their community and practice their sales pitch with new customers. Booth Sales can be defined as sales that are stationary, whether it is a store counter or a table at a specific location. Booth locations must be approved by councils, facilitated within council jurisdiction, and participants must follow all council guidelines with regard to setting up, running, and taking down a booth.

***Only GSC Staff and/or the Service Community Product Chairs are allowed to set up booths for the Service Community.***

Create a great cookie booth experience for your Girl Scouts by:

- Using your best judgment in setting up cookie booths in locations that will be open, accessible, and safe for all Girl Scouts and potential customers.
- Choosing a high traffic area—this could be your local supermarket, mall, or park—where you'll maximize the number of visitors to your booth.
- Checking out your booth site ahead 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.
- Respecting the surrounding businesses by making sure your booth isn't blocking a store entrance or exit.
- Encouraging your Girl Scouts to unleash their creativity—and work on their advertising skills—to make colorful signs and booth decorations that potential customers can't resist! Remind girls to be polite and to have their sales pitch ready for interested customers.

**Keep in mind:**

- There must always be a minimum of two unrelated volunteers, one which must be a female (that do not live in the same household) with current GSUSA memberships and favorable background checks. Additional volunteers are always beneficial to help cover breaks or to escort the girls to use the restroom.
- If an adult male is working the booth, there must always be one other non-related female adult present at the booth.
- There should be a minimum of two Girl Scouts and a maximum of four Girl Scouts always present at the booth.
- Tag-a longs are not permitted at any booth locations.
- If your Daisies are still learning how to make correct change, help them handle money as needed. However, please remember that girls make all sales at the booth!
- Changing your cookie booth hours or location? Keep your customers in the loop and update your baker's Digital Cookie or Smart Cookie system with the new details. All scheduled booths are available on the Cookie Finder Link
- Certain locations may be inappropriate for younger Girl Scouts based on the standards of your local community, may negatively impact the cookie program experience for girls, and/or may negatively impact our brand in your community. *For additional clarity, girls should not sell in or in front of establishments that they themselves cannot legally patronize.*
- Additionally, with respect to marijuana dispensaries, we have been steadfastly combating the unauthorized uses of the Girl Scout trademark by the cannabis community, which has been marketing—without our authorization—certain cannabis products under our youth-appealing brand. We are continuing to aggressively fight these unauthorized uses of the Girl Scout brand and hope that our councils and volunteers will join Girl Scouts of the USA's efforts by discouraging cookie booth locations at such locations.


For more tips to make your booth a success, check out our [Cookie Booth Essentials](#). For additional information about setting up a booth and safety and security suggestions, consult GSC guidelines.

## **Booth Violations**

Any troops found violating booth policies will be subject to booth restrictions, which could include forfeiture of upcoming booths for the remainder of the sale.

The following violations will be subject to the above restrictions:

- Conducting booths prior to the Council wide start date of Booth Sales.
- Conducting booths at a location outside of the Community Boundaries without the consent of the impacted Community during the lottery. Once booth picks are open to the Council, booths will be permitted in any Community without getting consent from the Community that the booth is in.
- Troops who acquire their own booths
- Setting up a booth that is not in Smart Cookies. All booths MUST be in Smart Cookies.
- Securing a booth for an individual troop or girl only. All booths must be available for all girls/troops except for the first round held within the Community.
- Conducting a booth with adults who do not have a current registration and approved background check.
- Overcharging for Products



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MEMORANDUM

TO: All

DATE: June 15, 2023

FROM: Maryann Barry, CEO

SUBJECT: Cookie Program Guidelines and consequences for failure to comply with the guidelines and the spirit of the Girl Scout culture.

This cookie season has brought forth a number of difficulties regarding compliance with the guidelines and expected behavioral standards for cookie programs individual and booth sale activities. This memo will outline Council's response to resolve issues surrounding non-compliance and/or behavioral concerns.

It is very important that we not punish girls for adult actions, however, it is essential that we make an effort to address violations of the behavioral standards and guidelines presented during cookie training and inherent to our Girl Scout culture.

If we are made aware of a situation in which a troop or individual is violating said standards and guidelines, the team will activate the following procedures and consequences:

- The parent or volunteer will receive a verbal warning and must complete a re-training of the guidelines, including signing for receipt of said training and agreement to comply. (This is paramount to a written warning to cease an unauthorized activity)
  - If the parent or volunteer refuses the training, a formal written warning to cease the unauthorized behavior at risk of volunteer status removal will be sent via certified mail.
- If the original behavior does not cease, or a differing violation begins that is not in keeping with Girl Scout and the cookie program standards, the adults involved will be removed from their volunteer leadership or parent-helper position.
- If behaviors worsen, the adult will be sent a certified letter, including a refund of their membership fee, notifying them that they are removed from the organization due to behaviors not in keeping with the expectations of the Council and the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- These matters are to always be handled privately between the adults involved, in order to protect the girls and maintain the integrity of their Girl Scout experience.

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.



## **Incident Reports**

In the event that the funds are stolen by a third party (home robbery, auto theft, booth robbery), a completed police report must be provided to the Council Business Office. Do not attempt to physically recover the stolen items.

- Receipts will be necessary to prove possession and value of property.
- Council staff will work directly with the victim regarding the resolution of missing funds.
- Do not speak to the media, contact Theresa Rivera, Risk Management and Compliance Officer at [trivera@citrus-gs.org](mailto:trivera@citrus-gs.org) or call 407-228-1630.

## **Cookie Donation Programs**

Cookies also help girls make a big impact in their community! GSC may have an established cookie donation program where customers can purchase cookies that will be donated to an organization by GSC. Cookie donations are not only a great talking point for girls to share with their customers—they're also a thoughtful way to show girls how cookies can help them give back.

With cookie donations, remember that:

- Citrus Council provides a Care to Share Program in which all donated products benefit Council organizations.
- All donations collected during the programs should be applied toward the Care to Share program. Of which, the troop will receive a portion of the proceeds.
- All donated products for the Care to Share program are not physical troop or girl inventory.
- Donation Jars are not allowed at booths for troops personal donations nor are troops/girls allowed to ask for personal troop donations. Asking for Care to Share donations are allowed.
- Donated cookies must stay within the council jurisdiction unless GSC 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 jeopardize the integrity of the Girl Scout brand.

## **Handling Product Complaints**

**Girl Scout Cookies** are well loved and for good reason—it has always been the practice of Girl Scout councils and the bakers to guarantee customer satisfaction with their delicious cookies. If a customer is not satisfied with the quality of their cookies for some reason, they can contact the baker via the phone number printed on the side of the cookie package: 1-800-221-1002 Troops should also notify their Community Cookie Chair with any issues they have reported to ABC Bakery.

- For technical issues with Smart Cookie, contact: [abcsmartcookietech@hearthsidefoods.com](mailto:abcsmartcookietech@hearthsidefoods.com)
- For Smart Cookie Direct Ship inquiries, contact: [abcsmartcookiedirect@hearthsidefoods.com](mailto:abcsmartcookiedirect@hearthsidefoods.com)



**Girl Scouts of Citrus Council's Fall Product Program Sweets 'N' Treats** is a wonderful way for Girl Scouts to begin their year learning about Financial Literacy and to start planning for their Girl Scout year.

- For any M2 System issues or product concerns, contact M2 at: 1- 800-372-8520 or [support.gsnutsandmags.com](http://support.gsnutsandmags.com)

For issues with registering any adults, girls or selecting product chair roles in salesforce, please contact Customer Care at [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org)

**For all other product concerns or issues:**

- Troop contacts the Community Chair with any issues, the Community Chair will contact the Council Product Team.
- Issues registering any adults or girls or selecting product chair roles in your MyGS please contact your community chair.
- Your community chair will contact Customer Care.

**Recognizing Cookie Sellers in the Media**

Focusing on entrepreneurial outcomes has always been the focus of the Girl Scout Cookie Program. The cookie program has never been about and does not focus on individual girls' sales results.

- There are many impressive cookie bosses throughout the United States, and the Girl Scout organization will continue to recognize dynamic cookie entrepreneurs for various achievements tied to the Girl Scout Cookie Program and through their participation in Girl Scouts.
- Girl Scouts of the USA does not currently track the top seller(s) of Girl Scout Cookies on a national level and does not identify a specific Girl Scout as the number one or "record-breaking" national cookie seller.
- Girl Scout councils should not reference such girls as "top sellers" in the media. Doing so detracts from the essence of the Girl Scout Cookie Program, which is based on offering girls important experiences in entrepreneurship, business, and finance from a young age as well as providing girls and local Girl Scout councils with the funds necessary to power amazing experiences and opportunities for Girl Scouts year-round.

**Understanding the Fall Product program**

The Fall Product Sweets 'N' Treats Program in Citrus Council is made up of two parts:

1. **Magazines provided by M2** - Troops/groups who participate in this portion are asking friends and family to purchase magazine renewals or subscriptions. These purchases will help Troops earn a percentage of each magazine subscription they sell.
  2. **Nuts and Chocolates provided by Ashdon Farms** - Troops who participate in this portion of the fall product program can take pre-orders for the nuts and chocolates. They may sell door-to-door, to family and friends or to the general public at established nut and chocolate booths.
- Troops/Groups may participate in one or both parts of the Fall Product Program. The girl and her parents must be given the option to decide. Participation in at least one part of the Fall Product Program is required as a prerequisite for obtaining approval of future money-earning projects.

- The Fall Product Program is held in the fall for troops to earn “start-up” funds. Girl Scouts of Citrus determines specific dates and establishes procedures for the program. Training is provided for the Community Fall Product Chairs and the Troop Fall Product Chairs.

### **Juliettes and Product Sales**

**Juliette Program Credits** - Our program gives Juliette Girl Scouts a chance to earn program credits needed to participate in girl scout programming. Credits earned give individually registered girls the opportunity to purchase supplies needed to support their programming, take Girl Scouts on field trips, attend camps etc.

**\*NOTE:** It could be a couple of weeks before the balance is updated to reflect their program credits.

- All Juliette’s are required to pay in full Juliette’s do not keep their proceeds, instead they earn credits.
- Juliette’s may request their credits after their balance is paid in full.
- Credits are non-transferable to any troop and cannot be gifted to other Girl Scouts. If Juliette moves to a traditional troop, she will forfeit her credits.
- Juliette’s must have a current, active membership to access credits.
- Juliettes must have a minimum of two registered, and background checked adults, and a minimum of two registered Girl Scouts present at the booth at all times. If two non-related Juliettes are working a booth together, there must be two non-related registered and background checked adults present at the booth.

### **How to use Juliette Credits**

- Membership Renewal - Credits can be redeemed toward the renewal of Juliette’s. membership and the membership of 1 adult per Juliette. Log onto MyGS to process renewals. Please select Program Credits as payment type.
- Girl Scouts of Citrus Programs - Credits can be used towards GSC program events. Log onto MyGS to register for the event. Please select Program Credits as payment type.
- Council Shop/Camp/Community Events - Credits can also be used towards the above listed items by going to the forms section of the website and filling out the Program Credit Request Form.
- Travel/Events - Travel/ Event credits must adhere to Girl Scout related programming. All expenses will be paid directly by the Council to the vendor. Covered expenses would include all pre-approved accommodations, experiences, rental or cost of transportation and prepaid meals for the Juliette/s and 1 chaperone. You must complete the Program Credit Request Form a minimum of 6 weeks prior to your planned activity.

## **ACH Debit for Products**

### **Fall Products**

- All troops must complete the ACH section in M2 by the due date printed on the Fall Product paperwork. This authorizes the council to debit all monies due to the council from their troop accounts and validates current banking information.
- M2 will be updated by the Council after the debit has taken place. If an ACH is returned to us there will be a separate entry indicating that as well as a fee for all returns due to NSF or closed account.

### **Cookies**

- All troops must complete the ACH section in DC24 by the due date printed on the Cookie paperwork. This authorizes the council to debit all monies due to the council from their troop accounts and validates current banking information.
- DC24 will be updated by council after the debit has taken place. If an ACH is returned to us there will be a separate entry indicating that as well as a fee for all returns due to NSF or closed account.
- All monies due to the council need to be in the troop's bank account on the day the final paperwork is due. It will be the troop's responsibility to have the entire balance in their account on the date the paperwork is due to council. GSC staff will not review troop accounts for funds availability. If funds are not in the account when council debits the troop's account that troop will be responsible for all charges incurred to that account.

## **Parent/Guardian Debt to Troop**

Since Recognitions cannot be guaranteed after about 6 weeks for Troops with an outstanding amount due to Council, we recommend contacting Customer Care at [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) as soon as you realize there may be Product Money due or you have not been able to collect from a Troop Parent. We are here to help! When Product money is due to the Council Business Office and you have not been able to collect from a troop parent, do not hold up your troops paperwork. Make sure all monies collected have been deposited into your Troops Bank Account by the deadline.

### **As soon as you realize there is a problem, act immediately!**

- Collect as much money as possible and set up definite deadlines for additional payments. Promptly Notify Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org) with information listed in "information needed for further review" section if deadline is not met.
- Make at least three attempts to collect money. The attempts to collect money must be documented in writing. Be aware that an answering machine or phone message might not be received by the person involved. It is not a reliable form of contact.
- Attempts to collect monies need to be pleasant and tactful, but firm. Do not harass.

- Emphasize that missing money denies girls program opportunities.
- All outstanding parent debt must be reported within 2 weeks of the end of the sale. It becomes increasingly difficult to help with collections after time has passed.
- If you need additional help or need to talk it over, contact Customer Care at: [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org)

**Document all information: Written/Verbal Documentation needed as follows:**

- Date
- Who made contact?
- Method of Contact (phone, letter, in person)
- Summary of what was said and the response.
- Your follow-up actions and plans
- Information Needed for further review (see next section)

**Information Needed for further review:**

- Names (girls and parents)
- Phone numbers
- Physical Address
- Total Products checked out and returned from all signed M3 receipts.
- Amount owed troop and Council Business Office
- Signed Parent Permission Agreement
- All signed M3 receipts from parent
- If you have all the signed documentation, the Council Business Office will be able to help with future payments from the parent/ guardian.

**How can this be avoided?**

- By training and informing the parents/guardians during a meeting about the consequences of outstanding balances.
- Meeting the deadlines for payments during the sale.
- Be firm with the guidelines about payment before an additional product is given out.
- Keeping in touch with parents and girls to verify all payments are received for delivered product with corresponding signed M3 receipts.

**Misappropriation of Funds by Troop Chair or Leader**

If misappropriation of troop funds is suspected, Leaders access to troop funds could be suspended during research and review of the allegations. If evidence of misuse of funds or personal use of troop funds is substantiated, this will result in Girl Scouts of Citrus action including, but not limited to, staff oversight, termination from the volunteer position, and/or restrictions of further fundraising activities until the matter is resolved. The leader/chair could be reported to Law Enforcement for further investigation.

- Report the concern immediately to Customer Care at [customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:customercare@citrus-gs.org). If review of the concern yields substantial evidence of theft or fraud, the Council Office is the legal party to file Police Reports and will do so.

### **Third Party Theft**

In the event that funds are stolen by a third party (home robbery, auto theft, booth robbery), a completed police report must be provided to the Council Business Office.

- Receipts will be helpful to prove possession and value of property.
- Council Staff will work directly with the victim with regard to the resolution of missing funds.
- Do not speak to media - contact Theresa Rivera, Risk Management and Compliance Officer, at [trivera@citrus-gs.org](mailto:trivera@citrus-gs.org) or call 407-228-1662

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

Girls are only to use the Internet to market the Girl Scout Cookie Program.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl-led program and online marketing and sales efforts *should always be led by a girl while also being supervised by her parents or caretakers.*

- For safety purposes and other reasons, online marketing activities, especially those conducted through social media platforms, should always be done through accounts set to "private."
- Should any online marketing activities be identified as in violation of guidance, GSUSA or the council reserves the right to intervene and request removal or remove the post.
- Parents, girls, and volunteers should contact and collaborate with their councils and GSUSA in advance on any national news media opportunities.

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 cookies and other product programs. Girls under 13 cannot independently set up online marketing sites. Girls under 13 can use their parent or guardian's 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 [Girl Scout Cookies](#). 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.

### **Selling Product on-line:**

If a girl/parent creates an online store/post on a public online marketplace (EBAY, Amazon, FB Marketplace, Craig's List, any other similar sites or garage sale type sites), for the purpose of selling Girl Scout Product, the parent/volunteer will be contacted and instructed to remove the online store/post from the site within 48 hours.

If the online store/post is not removed within 48 hours:

- The girls sale will be restricted -The girl will be permitted to participate in troop booth sales and in online sales through our GS approved vendors (Smart Cookies and Unify) but will not be permitted to order any additional cookies for walk-about for the remainder of the sale.
- If the parent of the girl holds a volunteer position within the troop, they will be subject to removal from their volunteer position.

### **Setting up a Troop/Group Website**

Be sure not to violate copyright law by using designs, text from magazine 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, badges, or 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 GSC for complete guidelines and approvals.

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

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 programs are to help girls grow and develop and generate the revenue necessary to provide Girl Scouting to as many girls as possible. For this reason, girls should be directly involved in any decisions that are made, whether in person or over the internet.

## Additional Resources and Support

So how are you feeling? Excited? Anxious? Not quite sure yet? That's ok, it's normal. We know that volunteering isn't always easy, especially when you're new, so we can't thank you enough for jumping in to be the mentor and role model she needs! Guiding your Girl Scouts—even if you're still figuring things out—is nothing short of amazing!

The important thing to remember is, you're not alone. We are in this with you, ready to help and support you at all times! Thanks again! It's going to be a great Girl Scout year!

## Additional Tools and Resources

**Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Safety is paramount in Girl Scouting, and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) contains everything you need to know to help keep your girls safe during a variety of exciting activities outside of their regular Girl Scout troop meetings.

**Tips for Troop Leaders.** When you're looking for real-world advice from fellow troop leaders who've been there, [this volunteer-to-volunteer resource](#) on the Girl Scouts of the USA website has what you need for a successful troop year.

**Girl Scout Volunteers in Your Community.** Remember that Girl Scout support team we mentioned? You'll find them in your service unit! Troops are organized geographically into service units or communities. You'll find a local network of fellow leaders and administrative volunteers [ready to offer tips and advice](#) to help you succeed in your volunteer role.

**Customer Care Contacts.** Questions? Need help resolving an issue? We've got you! Reach out anytime by either clicking on the "Contact Us" form at <https://www.citrus-gs.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-council/web-to-case.html> or email [Customercare@citrus-gs.org](mailto:Customercare@citrus-gs.org).

During business Mon, Tues, and Thu 9am – 6pm, Wed 9am -7pm you can reach a customer service specialist by calling 407-896-4475

**Newsletters/Communication.** : <https://www.citrus-gs.org/en/about-girl-scouts/our-council/email-preferences.html>

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/girlscoutsofcitrus/>
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/girlscoutsc/?hl=en>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/c/GirlScoutsofCitrus/about>