

**girl scouts**   
of the missouri  
heartland

# Troop Start-Up Guide

A Reference Guide  
for New Troop Leaders



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### How to Use This Guide

You will see trefoils throughout this guide. This indicates that there is a gsLearn Training to learn more about the subject on the page.



If you see a QR code, scan it with your smart phone camera to explore additional content on the subject.

### We are here for you!

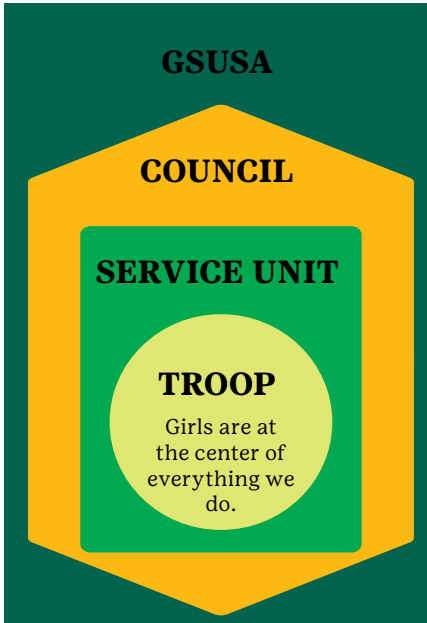
Contact our Customer Service Team by phone at 877.312.4764 or email at [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org). Our Customer Service business hours are 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m., Monday–Friday.

# Welcome

We're excited you've decided to become a Girl Scout Volunteer! Girls and volunteers are the heart of Girl Scouting, and we thank you for your commitment as a volunteer. You are making a lasting difference in many girls' lives—one meeting, one event, one day at a time! We're glad you're here. This guide will help you get started with your new Girl Scout troop and is intended to be used in conjunction with your GSUSA New Leader Onboarding in gsLearn and your New Leader Orientation with your Volunteer Support Specialist.

## Your Support Teams

Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland includes both volunteer and professional staff who provide support to service units and volunteers. Our council is divided into geographic areas called service units. Your service unit consists of girls and adults from your neighborhood and surrounding schools. Service Units are led by volunteers who support local leaders, organize local meetings, and coordinate events to support volunteers and troops.

	<b>Council Code: 538</b>
	Troop #:
	Service Unit #:
	<b>Facebook Groups to Join:</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Girl Scouts MO Heartland Volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Girl Scout MO Merch <input type="checkbox"/> Service Unit Facebook group/page
	<b>Service Unit Meetings</b>
	Day:
	Time:
	Location:

## Service Unit Team

A service unit team is a group of administrative volunteers appointed by council staff to support Girl Scouting in the service unit.

Key Support Contacts	Name	Email	Phone
Volunteer Support Coordinator (VSC)			
Service Unit Fall Product Chair			
Service Unit Cookie Chair			
GSMH Volunteer Support Specialist			
Other:			

# New Leader Checklist

Ready to start? Here are the key to-dos for you to check off in your first few weeks getting your troop started and where to find more information within this guide.

- Register yourself (and every adult helping with the troop) as a volunteer.
- Complete Volunteer Screening:
  - Complete a Criminal Background Check with Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland.
  - Complete the Missouri Child Abuse and Neglect Mandated Reporter Training and upload the certificate to gsLearn.
  - Agree to the Volunteer Appointment and Standards of Conduct by completing the [Volunteer Policies Agreement Wufoo Form](#).
  - Complete New Leader Learning Path on gsLearn. Learn more about how to log in to gsLearn and the New Leader Training Paths on pages 11-13.
- Complete New Leader Orientation for new troop leaders with your Volunteer Support Specialist.
- Attend a Service Unit Meeting with your Volunteer Support Specialist and Service Unit VSC.
- Check your Troop Roster on MyGS (or) the Volunteer Toolkit to see who is in your troop, including girls and other volunteers. Don't forget to reach out to families and introduce yourself!
- Keep girls safe by ensuring you have enough registered, background checked volunteers to attend meetings and activities. For guidance on filling volunteer positions for your troop, refer to page 19-20.
- Talk to your troop co-leader(s) and volunteer team to complete the Getting Started section of this guide, pages 17-21.
- Open your troop bank account with your troop's co-leaders and/or troop treasurer after completing Finance Training for Troop Leaders on gsLearn and reviewing the Troop Finance section on pages 38-47 of this guide.
- Funding the Fun: Decide if your troop will collect dues, and learn about how to participate in the Fall Product and Cookie Programs.
- Host a parents and caregivers meeting.
- Plan your first troop meeting using the Volunteer Toolkit.
- Participate in monthly check-ins with your Volunteer Support Specialist.

## Tips for a Successful First Year in Girl Scouts

- Continue to welcome new members to your troop, making sure they register.
- Take the Essentials training course for your program level (Daisies, Brownies, etc.) found in the content library on gsLearn.
- Review Volunteer Essentials on our website to learn more about The Girl Scout Experience, Engaging Girls and Families, Troop Management, Product Program, Troop Finances, and Safety.
- Complete Safety Activity Checkpoint training to learn more about planning safe activities with a Girl Scout troop.
- Participate in GSMH program experiences, found on the Event Calendar of our website.
- Utilize the free badge guides on the Volunteer Toolkit to help girls earn badges or the Daisy petals.
- Flex your entrepreneurial skills and participate in the Girl Scout Fall Product and Cookie Program.
- Go beyond your troop meeting with a field trip. Check Safety Activity Checkpoints first.
- Complete a community service project.

# Our Council

We're the Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland—over 5,000 girls and 2,500 adults across 67 counties in central and southern Missouri, southeast Kansas, and northeast Oklahoma. We're here to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

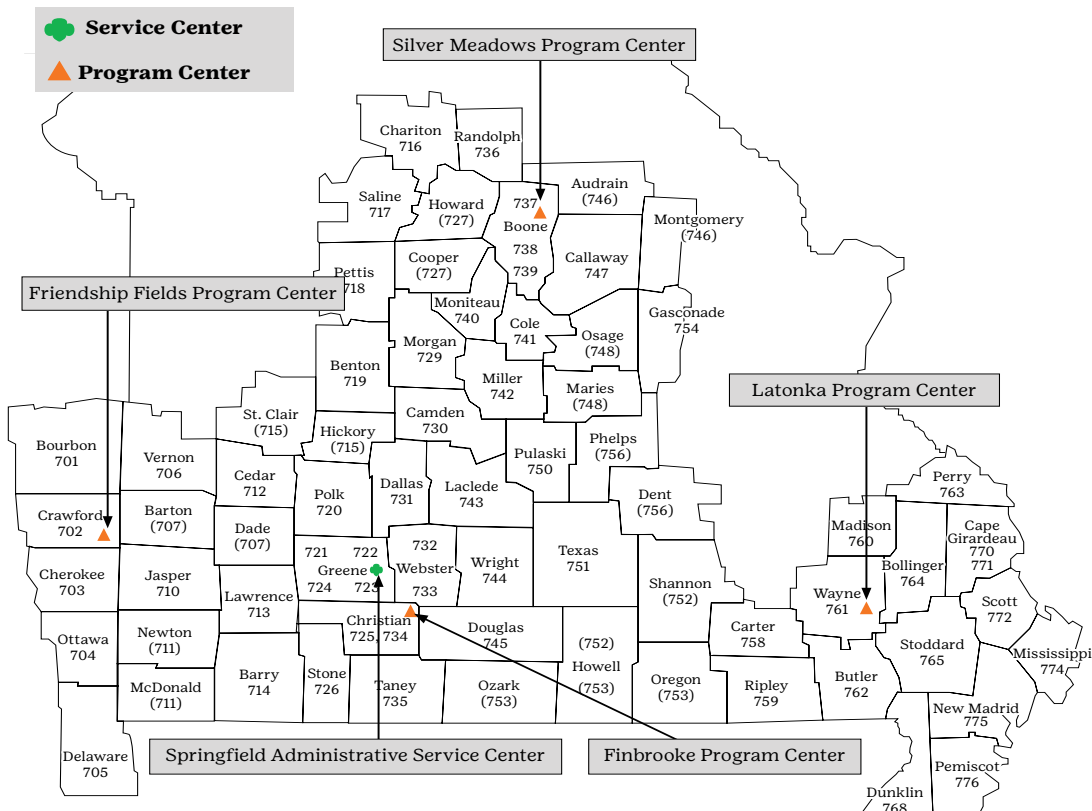
## Our Service Center

Our Springfield Administrative Service Center is located at 210 S. Ingram Mill Road, Springfield, MO 65802. Shopping by appointment is available Monday - Thursday from 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. Call 877-312-4764 or email [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org) to make shop appointment or to place an order. GSMH members are eligible for free shipping on all orders placed over the phone or by email with a Retail Specialist.



## Council Jurisdiction and Properties Map

*Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland, Inc. Building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.*



**Missouri (62):** Audrain, Barry, Barton, Benton, Bollinger, Boone, Butler, Callaway, Camden, Cape Girardeau, Carter, Cedar, Chariton, Christian, Cole, Cooper, Dade, Dallas, Dent, Douglas, Dunklin, Gasconade, Greene, Hickory, Howard, Howell, Jasper, Laclede, Lawrence, Madison, Maries, McDonald, Miller, Mississippi, Moniteau, Montgomery, Morgan, New Madrid, Newton, Oregon, Osage, Ozark, Pemiscot, Perry, Phelps, Pettis, Polk, Pulaski, Randolph, Ripley, Saline, Scott, Shannon, Stoddard, Stone, St. Clair, Taney, Texas, Vernon, Wayne, Webster, and Wright

**Kansas (3):** Bourbon, Cherokee, and Crawford    **Oklahoma (2):** Delaware and Ottawa

[www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org](http://www.girlscoutsmoheartland.org) • 877-312-4764



# Girl Scout Foundations

- Learn the history of Girl Scouts
- Understand the Girl Scout Program, program processes, and core outcomes
- Familiarize yourself with Girl Scout resources and where to find them
- Embrace your role as a Girl Scout Leader to be inclusive
- Get to know Girl Scout Traditions and Lingo



## Girl Scout Promise

*On my honor, I will try:*

To serve God and my country,  
To help people at all times,  
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

---

## Girl 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.





# What sets the Girl Scout Program apart?

Have you ever wondered how Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character? The answer is as simple as 1-2-3!

## 1. Become familiar with the five outcomes we want girls to achieve through Girl Scouts:

- **Strong Sense of Self:** Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities and form positive identities.
- **Positive Values:** Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly, and show concern for others.
- **Challenge Seeking:** Girls learn to take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from their mistakes.
- **Healthy Relationships:** Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflict constructively.
- **Community Problem Solving:** Girls contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create action plans to solve them.

## 2. Offer activities from the four Program Pillars:

- **Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM):** Activities help girls develop problem-solving skills and confidence to pursue these topics in school.
- **Outdoor:** Develop outdoor skills over time. This can be as simple as meeting outdoors and working toward more adventurous outdoor exploration.
- **Life Skills:** Develop key skills girls can use forever, like financial literacy, first-aid, and more. Badges are great for this!
- **Entrepreneurship:** Participating in the Girl Scout Cookie and Fall Product Programs build key entrepreneurial skills girls will use for a lifetime!

## 3. Incorporate these processes into your activities:

- **Learning by Doing:** Girls learn through hands-on activities, talking about what they did, and reflecting on how they would do it differently next time.
- **Girl-Led:** Girls shape their experience by asking questions, offering ideas, and using their imaginations.
- **Cooperative Learning:** Girls work together to brainstorm ideas and problem solve their way toward a common goal.

## Overwhelmed by all the options? Here is a handy troop check list to help you make a successful year happen!

- Host an investiture ceremony/parent meeting at the beginning of the year. Let the girls do the planning, and invite the whole family to attend!
- Start each meeting with the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Ask girls to share examples of how they used the Promise and Law in their lives since the last meeting.
- Help the girls decide what they want to do this year in Girl Scouts. What badges do they want to earn? What events would they like to attend?
- Participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program to earn funds to achieve the girls' goals. Don't forget about the Fall Product Program too!
- Attend a council-sponsored event to try new things and meet other Girl Scouts.
- Attend a community-sponsored event to explore your community and connect with experts.
- Complete a Girl Scout Journey, including the Take Action Project at the end.
- Get girls outdoors! Do an age-appropriate outdoor experience or just simply go for a hike in a local park or meet outside.
- Recognize girls' accomplishments. Host a bridging event or a court of awards ceremony at the end of the year. Invite the whole family, and let the girls take the lead.

# Girl Scout Program Introduction

## Three Keys to Leadership

Through community exploration and the Girl Scout Journeys, girls:

### Discover:

their interests and values

### Connect:

with others in their community and identify needs

### Take Action:

to improve their communities and beyond

## How the Girl Scout Program Works

It's not just what girls do, but how you engage them that creates a high quality experience. In Girl Scouting, girls enjoy activities based on the three keys to leadership and build on three processes that make Girl Scouting unique from other activities.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is designed in progression, with girls learning, growing, and taking on more responsibility and leadership. They can do this in their troop and in individual experiences as they develop skills using the three program processes listed below. The Girl Scout Leadership Experience should be used at every grade level.

## Three Program Processes

**1. Girl-led:** Girls play an active role in decision-making, goal-setting, and leading their Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Here are some examples:

- Start with Daisies by repeating activities you hear girls say they enjoy.
- Move through the progression by providing choices for Brownies to vote upon and allow Brownies to express what activities they would like to include in their troop meetings.
- Allow Juniors to lead an activity or session or plan an element of an event.

**2. Cooperative Learning:** Girls work together toward shared goals and learn from one another in an atmosphere of respect and collaboration that encourages the sharing of skills, knowledge, and learning.

- Provide opportunities for girls to complete tasks or projects that require girls to work together.
- Expose girls to others with views and opinions different than their own.
- Encourage girls to utilize individual talents to contribute to group tasks.

**3. Learning by Doing:** Also known as experiential learning, this is a hands-on learning process that engages girls in a cycle of action and reflection that results in deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of practical skills.

- Get girls out of their seats and involved in the task at hand.
- Allow girls to present and lead hands-on activities to the troop.
- Ask debriefing questions that encourage girls to think about what they like, don't like, what they have learned, and what they will do with that information during and after an activity.



*Learn more about the Girl Scout Leadership Experience on [gsLearn](#)*





# Foundational Girl Scout Program

What makes Girl Scouts truly unique? Everything is designed especially for, and is tested by, girls! Our Girl Scout Program centers around our research-backed Girl Scout Leadership Experience—that is, what girls do and how they do it. There are so many ways to make sure your girls get the full Girl Scout experience in a way that excites and inspires them! The grade level-specific resources will help you break it down for your girls and allow you to customize for your troop, which gives girls opportunities to explore what interests them.

## Girl Scout Core Experiences



Badges & Awards



Outdoor



Product Program



Traditions



Community Service



Special Events

## Girl Scout Handbook

Girl Scouting has never been more exciting than with the Girl Scout Handbook. Learn about Girl Scout history, special ceremonies, badges, National Leadership Journeys and awards. Girl Scout Daisies focus on the Girl Scout Promise and Law and Girl Scout Brownies through Ambassadors focus on skill building. The Girl Scout Handbook complements the Girl Scout Journeys by helping girls build skills to become successful and gain the confidence to do amazing things! Girl Scouts also has badge pamphlets for purchase. These pamphlets provide the steps needed for the girls to earn a badge of their choice.

## Journeys

Girls Scouts is girl-led, and Girl Scout Journeys are no exception. At each grade level troops will pick a topic that interests them the most, whether it's caring for animals; taking a stand for girls, exploring STEM (science, technology, engineering, or math), helping others, spreading kindness, protecting the environment; or anything else important to them. While Girl Scouts are earning awards for their uniform, they'll explore, discover and create a Take Action project that will power a lifetime of leadership and success!

## Your Resources, Your Way

For printed resources, visit our council shop or order online. For GSMH members to receive free shipping, we welcome you to connect with support staff by emailing [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org) or calling 877-312-4764. Our Retail staff will help you find all the essentials needed for a great troop year and are willing to order product if necessary. With uniforms, insignia, program materials and other fun options to choose from, we can help set the foundation for a fantastic year in Girl Scouting.

### Badges vs. Patches

**Badges** and awards are earned by completing the requirements in the Foundational Girl Scout Program. These are placed on the FRONT of the uniform.

**Patches, or fun patches**, are given to girls for attending activities, completing the requirements of patch programs, or to signify something just for fun. These are placed on the BACK of the uniform

# Must-Have Resources

To find the additional resources below, visit our website at [girlscoutsmoheartland.org](http://girlscoutsmoheartland.org) and navigate to the "For Volunteers" section by clicking on the Members category in the top menu bar. Once in the Members category, click on Find Resources under Volunteers.

## Volunteer Essentials

Volunteer Essentials is just that—an essential guide to all things volunteering. Think of it as your Girl Scouts encyclopedia. All the legal, procedure, and policy guidelines are outlined here for you in one handy location.

## Troop Year Plans

Ready to plan your troop year? Our age-appropriate troop year plans are the best tool for first year troop leaders to get started with Girl Scouts without getting overwhelmed. The entire year is mapped out—just follow along to help your Girl Scouts complete badge activities, improve their communities, and explore the world around them.

### Forms and Documents

Search for important forms and documents for managing your troop, traveling, and more.

### Safety Activity Checkpoints

Safety guidelines for GSUSA and Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland approved activities.

### Training

Training courses to help you learn and develop the skills you need in your role.



*Scan this QR Code  
to visit the Volunteer  
Training page on our  
website!*

### Travel

Plan a trip with Girl Scouts! Learning how to plan a trip is the foundation of many memorable adventures. Girl Scouts at all levels may participate in day trips, backyard camping and non-camping overnights at places such as the YMCA, church, or school. Other types of trips are dependent upon age and level and may require council approval.

### Program Experiences

Want to go camping? Learn yoga? Explore caves? Want to learn super cool skills like knot tying, sewing, and woodworking? Check out our events page and get ready for a year full of adventure and fun with Girl Scouts!

## Must-Have Tools on MyGS

Many of your must-have tools are accessible when you log in to MyGS —renew your membership, view your troop roster, or update contact information. From MyGS you'll be able to access the **Volunteer Toolkit** for program curriculum, get the training and resources you need through **gsLearn**, and register for events or programs, camp, and adult education trainings through **gsEvents**.

### To login, use your MyGS login credentials.

Your username is the email address you used when you registered for Girl Scouts. If you are not sure which email you used, please call Customer Service at 877-312-4764. Once you have logged in, select “My Account” in the upper right corner to access the menu bar.

### From your MyGS account you have access to the following:

- **My Household:** See your membership and all family members affiliated with your household. You can renew family memberships from here.
- **My Troops:** Review your troop's roster, update contact information, and renew your troop's memberships.
- **My Profile:** Edit your personal information and preferences and change your password.
- **My Events:** As a Troop Leader you can search and register for events and trainings, see events you have registered for, and see all Troop Member event registrations.
- **Volunteer Toolkit:** 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. It's the digital planning assistant that will help you power a fun-filled—and organized—Girl Scout year.
- **gsLearn:** gsLearn is full of essential volunteer trainings and courses, like how to lead activities the Girl Scout way, safety procedures, and advice for guiding Girl Scouts at every grade level.

**You'll find the Volunteer Toolkit and gsLearn via the left menu bar of MyGS in My Account. It's accessible on any desktop, tablet, or mobile device.**



# Learning Lasts a Lifetime

We provide a wide variety of training courses to help you learn and develop the skills you need in your role. Training is available through online courses in gsLearn or as live virtual or in-person courses registered through gsEvents on our webpage. Some trainings are free while others require a fee at a significantly reduced cost to Girl Scout volunteers.

## New Leader Learning Path

- **GSUSA New Leader Onboarding: (gsLearn)**
  - What Girl Scouts Do\*
  - Your First Troop Meeting\*
  - Family Engagement\*
  - The Girl Scout Cookie Program
  - The Girl Scout Leadership Experience
- **GSMH New Leader Orientation with Volunteer Support Specialist\***
- **538 Finance Training for Troop Leaders (gsLearn)\***

## Girl Scout Safety

- **Volunteer Policies Agreement\*\***
- **Mandated Reporter Training\*\***
- **First Aid/ CPR Certification\*\*\***
- **538 Understanding the Safety Activity Checkpoints \***

## Leader Tips & Tools on gsLearn

- **GSUSA Volunteer Toolkit - Troop Leader View**
- **538- Money-Earning Activities Training**
- **GSUSA Grade Level Essentials**

## Girl Scout Program & Outdoor

- **Indoor Overnights and Day Trips (gsLearn)\*\*\***
  - Required before any field trip or sleepover.
  - Prerequisite for Outdoor Level 1 (gsLearn)
- **Outdoor Level 1 (gsLearn)\*\*\***
  - Required before going on outdoor activities or backyard camping with your troop.
  - Prerequisite for Outdoor Level 2 (in person)
- **Outdoor Level 2 (In Person)\*\*\***
  - Required before cabin camping with your troop and staying overnight at council properties.
  - Prerequisite for Outdoor Level 3 (in person)
- **Outdoor Level 3 (In Person)\*\*\***
  - Required before tent/wilderness camping and before troop camping occurs at locations other than GSMH properties.

*\* Required within 30 days of becoming a Girl Scout Volunteer.*

*\*\* Required to be completed once a year before each new Girl Scout Membership Year.*

*\*\*\* Required for one troop leader or assistant leader before leaving the regular meeting space.*

Confident leaders are prepared leaders! When you volunteer with Girl Scouts, you'll uncover new strengths and build on them and we're here to help you shine. Check out our Volunteer Training page on our website to find trainings that will help you make the most of your volunteer experience.

Click [here](#) to access the Trainings page, or visit [girlscoutsmoheartland.org](http://girlscoutsmoheartland.org)

- Click on Members in the top menu bar.
- Then click on Find Resources under Volunteer and navigate to the Training section.



## **How do I register for courses and trainings?**

There are multiple ways to register for courses based on course type. The first step is always to log into MyGS.

### **To access online courses in gsLearn, accessible anytime:**

After logging into MyGS, you access gsLearn from your My Account dashboard. Once in gsLearn, use the green navigation pane (or select the menu icon for mobile users) to find courses that have been assigned to you, or discover others in the Content Library and keep track of your learning in the Achievements section.

### **To Register for in-person or virtual courses:**

After logging into MyGS, navigate to [girlscoutsmoheartland.org](http://girlscoutsmoheartland.org), and click Discover at the top of the page. From here you can either click Event Search or Event Calendar and you can then find the desired course or training, and follow the instructions to register. Once registered, you will immediately have access to details about your training or event within your My Events dashboard in MyGS.





# Getting Started on the Volunteer Toolkit

My Troop	Explore	Year Plan	Meeting Plan	Resources
You will see your girls' contact information in this tab.	Wondering where to get started? You can see all the exciting options in the Explore tab. You'll be able to:	From this tab you can:	Make every meeting a success! Here you'll find:	Where do badges belong on her uniform? Which awards can she earn at the next grade level? If you've got questions, you'll find the answers you need on the Resources tab
From here you can send emails to the entire troop  Download an Excel spreadsheet with girls' information and lists of all marked achievements	Browse prebuilt tracks of badge and Journey activities  Create your own activity track with your girls  Preview tracks and badge requirements before you add them to your year plan  See an overview of all preselected tracks at the bottom of the page. It's even printable, so you can easily review your options!  Don't worry! You can always add, remove, or change your plan as you go, one meeting at a time	Set meeting dates and locations  Add badges, Journeys, and activities to your plan  Preview badge and Journey requirements	Suggested badge outlines  Material lists—supplies you will need  Printable meeting aids  A customizable agenda  Send email reminders to your troop about upcoming meetings  Track attendance and badge achievements	Access GSUSA and GSMH specific resources.  Find our GSMH Finance and Tax Exempt Documents  Use the Badge Explorer to find all the available badges for your girls grade level and the steps she needs to do to complete them  View uniform placement guides

## Finance

This is where you will submit your required yearly troop financial information. This must be submitted by June 30 using the financial form in the VTK. You can also add receipts or other attachments to your form and send them directly to council. You'll be sent a confirmation email with a copy of the report as well.

## Reminder

You must be a currently registered member of Girl Scouts and hold a leader role in your troop to set up your troop's VTK. Remember, each co-leader logs in with their credentials but sees the same information for your troop. Make sure all leaders know when you have made changes to the account!

# Girl Scout Traditions

## The Girl Scout Sign

The Girl Scout Sign is made when reciting the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The sign is formed with the right hand, by using the thumb to hold down the pinky, leaving the three middle fingers extended to represent the three parts of the Promise.

## The Girl Scout Handshake

Another form of greeting between Girl Scouts is the Girl Scout handshake. Girls raise their right hand in the Girl Scout sign and shake using their left hand, denoting friendliness and loyalty.

## The Girl Scout Motto

The Girl Scout motto is "Be prepared." Girl Scouts of yesteryear learned skills for fun, but also to cope with emergencies of their times. Today, the motto reminds girls to be prepared to help others in need in their community and around the world.

## The Girl Scout Slogan

The Girl Scout slogan is "Do a good turn daily." In the early days of Girl Scouting, girls tied a knot in their neckerchiefs. They could not untie the knot until a good deed was accomplished. Today, the slogan is a reminder of the many ways girls can contribute to the lives of others.

## Kaper Charts

This is a Girl Scout tradition for dividing up troop responsibilities among the girls. Each job or chore is called a Kaper and a Kaper Chart is the list of assignments. Examples of Kapers are cleaning up or taking out trash. Kapers can also be fun tasks like the Girl Scout Promise leader, activity helper, snack helper, and Friendship Squeeze leader. Using a Kaper system right from the start helps build leadership and ownership in troop activities to assist with group behavior management.

## SWAPS

SWAPS (Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere), the tradition of Girl Scouts exchanging keepsakes, started long ago when Girl Scouts and Girl Guides first gathered for fun, song, and making new friends. SWAPS are the perfect way for Girl Scouts to meet each other and promote friendship. Each one is a memory of a special event or Girl Scout Sister.

## Girl Scout Uniforms

Girl Scouts at each level have one recommended element (tunic, sash, or vest) for the display of official pins and awards which should be worn when girls participate in ceremonies or officially represent Girl Scouts. For adult members, the uniform is a Girl Scout official scarf or tie, worn with the official membership pins, combined with their own navy blue business attire. An adult vest is also available in the Girl Scout Shop.

## Quiet Sign

The Quiet Sign is a way to silence a crowd without shouting. The sign is made by holding up the right hand with all five fingers extended. It refers to the original Fifth Law of Girl Scouting: A Girl Scout is courteous.

## The Friendship Circle

This involves Girl Scouts standing in a circle, crossing their right arms over their left, and clasping hands with their friends on both sides.

## The Friendship Squeeze

To end meetings and activities with the Friendship Squeeze, everyone gathers in the Friendship Circle. Each girl crosses her right arm over her left and holds hands with the person on each side. The leader starts the Friendship Squeeze by squeezing the hand of the person next to her. One by one, each girl passes on the squeeze until it travels around the full circle.

## Make New Friends

At the end of each Girl Scout Meeting, you can sing "Make New Friends" with the Friendship Circle and the Friendship Squeeze.

*"Make new friends, but keep the old.  
One is silver, the other is gold.  
A circle is round, it has no end.  
That's how long, I will be your friend.*

*A circle's round  
It has no end.  
That's how long  
I want to be your friend."*

*A Girl Scout always leaves a place  
better than she found it.*

# Inclusion in Girl Scouts

## **On Our Honor, Every Person. Every Voice.**

Juliette Gordon Low founded Girl Scouts over 100 years ago as an innovative movement where all would be welcomed. We continuously strive to build a diverse, equitable, and inclusive organization that supports the many faces, cultures, and walks of life that proudly make up our vibrant community. It is essential to our mission that every individual's ideas and perspectives are sought out, heard, respected, and valued. Together, we empower girls to make the world a better place.

## **I want to be inclusive; how do I make sure that happens in my troop?**

1. Create an environment that values and respects diversity. Foster a belief in your troop that everyone benefits from having a diverse group of girls, by helping the girls be aware of and appreciate the commonalities and differences that they can and can't see.
2. Make sure all girls have the opportunity to fully engage in activities and have access to opportunities and information. This may mean helping girls overcome barriers to participation, adjusting activities, or even changing how you communicate.
3. Model respectful ways to interact with all people. Girls learn by watching how adults interact with girls and other adults.
4. Be mindful of your own biases and assumptions about others by leading with empathy and encourage girls to do the same.
5. Be conscious of and avoid using generalized statements about groups or types of people and don't refer to a person based on a particular characteristic like race, gender, ability, sexual orientation, education, socioeconomic status and religion.
6. Get to know the girls and their families. Remember that all families are different and keep that in mind when planning family events. Girls may have really engaged grandparents, caregivers, or other family members who should be included in important ceremonies and occasions. Also, pay attention to special holidays and cultural traditions that may conflict with troop plans or limit a girl's participation.



# Getting Started

- Identify areas you might be able to host your troop meeting
- Engage adults in troop volunteer positions
- Discover ways to connect with troop volunteers and communicate between parents/caregivers

## Troop Meetings

As a troop leadership team, work together to determine meeting day, time, and location. Consider the girls in your troop:

- Do they all attend the same school?
- What is the most central or convenient location for all?
- What is the best time of day for the meeting for girls, co-leaders, and parent/caregiver support?



*Prepare for your first meeting by completing the gsLearn Training- GSUSA New Leader Onboarding: Your First Troop Meeting*

The meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls. Consider meeting rooms at schools, houses of worship, libraries, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. For teens, rotating meetings at coffee houses, bookstores, and other places girls enjoy spending time is an option. Below are a few things to keep in mind when choosing a location.

- Safety: Safe, secure, clean, properly heated and cooled, free from hazards with all exits clearly marked
- Cost: Free to use
- Availability: Average troop meetings range between 1-2 hours, twice a month; some troops choose to meet weekly
- Facilities: Sanitary and accessible restrooms
- Accessible: Accommodate girls with disabilities and their caregivers

Make a list of possible locations. Then call to check on availability and confirm the meetings. Staff and local volunteers in your service unit can help provide suggestions if needed.

Meeting Location: \_\_\_\_\_ Meeting Day/Time: \_\_\_\_\_

## Certificate of Insurance

When reserving troop meeting space, volunteers may be asked to provide a certificate of insurance to verify Girl Scout liability insurance coverage. Most schools already have these on file; check with the council to confirm. You may submit the Request for Certificate of Insurance on our website or by scanning this QR code. Certificates will be sent directly to the location within two weeks.



Don't forget to update your troop meeting information in MyGS once you confirm your meeting details! Log in and select My Account > My Troops, select your troop, and edit the meeting details. You can also contact Customer Service at 877-312-4764 or [info@girlscoutmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutmoheartland.org) to submit changes.



# Getting Started With Your Co-Leader

Here are some key things to keep in mind when planning the year with your co-leader.

- Meet up to chat and get to know each other. Share individual strengths, hobbies, education, skills, interests, and work schedules.
- Make sure both troop leaders have completed their New Leader Learning Path on gsLearn.
- Review the Volunteer Toolkit together. Make sure you both have access and decide who will edit or update which parts.
- Divide tasks evenly between both troop leaders. Make sure tasks are specific—working together is better!
  - *How will you initially communicate with families? Email, text, social media group, etc.*
  - *Who will handle the troop finances/troop bank account?*
  - *How will you work with your own Girl Scout?*
  - *Who will handle paperwork? (Registrations, medical forms, permission slips, etc.)*
  - *Who will lead meetings?*
  - *Determine if your troop will collect dues. Have a discussion with families about dues at the Parent/Caregiver Meeting.*
- Figure out logistics of what support you need from parents/caregiver. Delegating these tasks up front will help keep troop leaders from getting overwhelmed.
  - *Can someone share a special skill?*
  - *Other support to think about: managing Product Program, supplies, snack, setting up outings, etc.*

## Communication

### Setting Troop Expectations with Volunteers:

- Decide on the day, time, frequency and meeting location for troop meetings. Create a tentative year calendar of meetings and scheduled activities, taking into consideration events the service unit has already planned.
- Schedule your parent/caregiver meeting.
- Discuss expectations for group and individual behavior management so it is consistent and positive behavior reinforcement is utilized.
- Establish troop rules with the girls at their first troop meeting.
- Discuss and agree on how to handle conflict appropriately and consistently while modeling the Girl Scout Promise and Law. All families face some time-constraints, keep communication open and work together to problem solve.

### Communication with Troop Leaders:

- Communication between all involved Girl Scout volunteers is vital to the success of the girls' experience. Having open lines of communication, working together, and making sure specific roles are assigned will help the troop operate smoothly throughout the year.

### Communication with Families:

- Introduce yourselves by email or phone and invite each family to the parent/caregiver meeting (**We suggest to do this within the first two weeks of becoming an approved volunteer**).
- Find troop member contact details on the My Troop Tab of the Volunteer Toolkit.

**Ensure that no girl/family is treated differently:** Girl Scouts welcomes all members. 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.



# Troop Volunteer Positions

## Troop Leaders

Help girls have fun with a purpose. Using the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), the troop leader encourages girls to Discover themselves, Connect with others, and Take Action to make the world a better place. Guided by supportive adults and peers, Girl Scouts engage in age-appropriate activities that are girl-led, cooperative, and hands-on. All troops must have two appointed troop leaders to begin meeting.

## Troop Assistants/Helpers

Support troop leaders in guiding girls to engage in age-appropriate activities that are girl-led, cooperative, and hands-on. Provide support to the troop through planning and implementing badges and other program activities, managing finances/Product Program participation, and/or driving or chaperoning field trips. Consider the following specific troop helper roles.

**Treasurer:** Manage the troop's finances and be a signer on the troop bank account.

**First-Aider:** Maintain adult and pediatric CPR and basic first aid certification through a qualifying agency and be available to attend troop trips. Provide first aid or CPR as needed.

**Driver:** Help plan, prepare, and travel for troop trips. Support ranges from guiding girls at planning meetings to simply being a driver and chaperone.

**Camping:** Complete outdoor training to learn skills to help girls plan and experience day or overnight camp, including fire building, cooking, and outdoor activities.

## Troop Cookie Chair

Support the troop by managing participation in the Cookie Program. Learn the ins and outs of managing the Cookie Program, including important dates, parent/caregiver communication, inventory management, safety, and more. Ensure the troop follows proper policies and procedures related to the program.

## Troop Fall Product Chair

Support the troop by managing participation in the Fall Product Program. Learn the ins and outs of managing the Fall Product Program, including important dates, parent/caregiver communication, inventory management, safety, and more. Ensure the troop follows proper policies and procedures.

## Ways the Family Can Get Involved

- Attend one or more meetings
- Support troop money earning
- Lead a hike
- Provide space for storing equipment
- Donate supplies
- Help with the Fall Product Program
- Manage the troop budget
- Drive on trips and outings
- Provide a place for outdoor activities
- Be a first aider (or be willing to take training)
- Help with the Cookie Program
- Send communications/reminders
- Provide a meeting place
- Provide occasional snacks for meetings
- Be a camping adult (or be willing to take training)
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

All adults assisting with a Girl Scout troop must have a current Girl Scout Membership, agree to follow the Volunteer Policies, complete Mandated Reporter Training, and have an active, eligible Criminal Background Check completed through Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland.

# Engaging Family Support to Fill Volunteer Positions

Parents/caregivers want what is best for their girl, but can be particular with what they do with their time and money. Keep in mind that time and funds are limited for many. Ask all families for help when creating your troop committee by delegating your troop tasks. Families don't all look the same, so consider the entire family—any caregivers or guardians, adult siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, etc.

## Things to consider before you ask for help:

- What is the time commitment?
- Do you expect all parents/caregivers to be registered members?
- Be upfront about expectations—for you, the troop, and the families.
- Identify individual talents and skills and utilize them.
- Include everyone, regardless of gender or family role.

## Making the Ask

Adult support is vital to the experience girls have in the troop setting. The leadership structure and distribution of duties will depend on troop size and can be customized based on the skills, interests, and availability of adults to best meet their needs and the needs of their girls.

## Best Practices for Engaging Family Support

- Just ask for help! Try asking one-on-one for adult support. Tell them why you think they would be good at a particular task.
- Set up the expectations for communications and communicate clearly. Identify communication preferences—FB group, text thread, emails, etc.
- Make a schedule or sign-up sheet and bring it to your parent/caregiver meeting.
- Set boundaries: sometimes it may be best for the girl and their parent/caregiver to not work together. It might be best for the parent/caregiver to help in a different way to provide the girl with the most enriching experience possible.
- Show the value of Girl Scouts.
- Be inclusive. Look beyond the parent/caregiver to other important adults in girls' lives.
- Set expectations and review the outcomes.
- Remember to celebrate success often. Girl Scouting should be fun for adults, too!
- Check in with your troop committee often on progress and re-evaluate as needed.
- At the end of the year, plan an evaluation meeting to assess progress, successes, and challenges.

## Helpful Hint! Access these resources to prepare for the parent/caregiver meeting:

- gsLearn Training: GSUSA New Leader Onboarding: Family Engagement - Keys to Success
- Volunteer Toolkit (VTK): "Intro Meeting" Plan
- VTK Resource Tab: Family Hub
- VTK Parent View: Caregivers can see the year plan, what girls are working on, and access the Resource tab.

# Troop Communication

There are many ways to communicate with your troop to provide the best experience possible for Girl Scouts and their families. Below are a few ideas for successful communication. Determine the best communication methods with your troop's families.

## Key items to include in communications:

- Troop meeting information, updates, and/or changes
- Volunteer opportunities / support needed
- Upcoming events and activities
- Reminders
- Sharing troop experiences



## Communication options:

We suggest choosing at least two forms of communication with families.

- **Email:** You can send out short or detailed messages. Some troops even put together a troop newsletter to share. Remember, the Volunteer Toolkit can be used to send out emails to all families.
- **Facebook:** Many parent/caregivers are on Facebook. Using groups on Facebook is a great way to share updates on your troop happenings! Make sure the group is set up as a private/closed group.
- **Texting or Texting Apps:** Texting or texting apps can be used for short messages, reminders, text alerts, and more!
- **Parent/Caregiver Meetings:** Parent/caregiver meetings can be scheduled any time throughout the year. Consider planning parent/caregiver meetings at the end of the girls' meetings. These meetings can happen as frequently as you would like and are typically 10-15 minutes.
- **Family Events:** Family events are a great way to connect! Have the girls plan at least one event a year, such as a presentation, play, ceremony, family picnic, or other activity.
- **Phone Calls:** Phone calls help make personal connections while sharing troop information, fostering conversation and needed clarification. This is also a good time to make a specific ask for support, if needed.

Keep in mind not everyone is technologically savvy and some may not regularly check technology methods. Face-to-face meetings and phone calls are also beneficial.

Communication is an integral part of building a strong troop committee to ensure the girls are supported by caring adults working together. Make sure to regularly share the needs of the troop and be specific when asking adults to help. Troop volunteers must complete member registration, background checks, and any required trainings.



# Guiding Your Troop

- Review and plan your first troop meeting
- Know safety precautions to take with your troop
- Know how to take your troop on their first Girl Scout trip
- Learn the basics of troop management
- Incorporate plans for special Girl Scout occasions, like Juliette Gordon Low's Birthday, World Thinking Day, and Girl Scout Week

## Planning Your First Troop Meeting

Each Girl Scout meeting provides an opportunity to explore new worlds and learn new skills. Keeping activities girl-led also means that at some point, the girls will want to earn a badge or complete a project in a subject unfamiliar to you. But don't let that hold you back! Be open with the girls when you don't know something and become their partner in learning more. You'll show them that learning is a lifelong process and that with an open mind, they can overcome any challenges that come their way. It doesn't need to be perfect. Did an activity run over time? Or maybe a field trip didn't go according to plan? Take a deep breath, roll with the changes, and have fun!

### Start-Up Activity (5-10 minutes)

This is a time to greet all of the girls and their family members before the meeting officially begins. Have an easy, self-directed activity ready to engage girls. This could be as simple as coloring pages, journaling, or talking with one another. Before the opening ceremony, be sure to take attendance.

### Opening Ceremony (10-15 minutes)

Each troop decides how to open its meetings. Most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other activity decided on by the girls (5-10 minutes). Tip: Making an agenda on a piece of poster board can help the girls know what to expect. As the girls progress, they can be in charge of preparing the agenda.

### Business Meeting (10-15 minutes)

This is a time for announcements, collecting dues, planning future meeting activities, Kaper assignments, voting, and other troop business. This section of the meeting is very important for the girls to learn how to lead, influence others, and communicate feelings and opinions. Little by little, allow the girls to take more responsibility for the business of the troop.

### Activities (30-45 minutes)

During this section of the Girl Scout meeting, girls get a chance to build skills, try new things, explore their interests, and work cooperatively with others. As the girls progress, you will begin to get insight into their interests. Make sure that you always ask for their ideas and input. You will also pick up good ideas from other leaders when you attend the regular service unit meetings.

### Snack & Clean Up (10-15 minutes)

Snacks are an optional part of Girl Scout meetings. If you decide to have one, after girls finish their snack, have them clean up: pick up trash, push in chairs, sweep the floor, put away supplies, etc. Then ask them to come back to the group or their chairs for the next activity.

### Closing Ceremony (5-10 minutes)

This is a time to emphasize the accomplishments of the meeting, remind the girls what is coming up, focus on personal goals, help girls feel part of a tradition, and end on a calm and positive note. Many troops like to close the meeting with a traditional Friendship Circle, on page 15.

# Meeting Planning

## Suggested materials for all meetings:

- Meeting Plan from VTK
- Supplies Listed in Meeting Plan
  - Promise and Law Poster
  - Snacks (if needed)
  - Songs and Game Ideas
  - Emergency Action Plan
  - First Aid Kit (required)
- Health History Forms (required)

The Volunteer Toolkit provides an editable year plan to customize your year and the activities for each meeting with your girls. Some leaders will solely use the VTK for their planning needs, while others prefer printed resources. Either is fine. That being said, many troop leaders use the basic structure outlined on the previous page. This model is meant to create a natural flow for the meetings and provide a balance of fun, learning, responsibility, and accomplishment.

Use the Volunteer Toolkit and/ or the template on this page to plan your first meeting.

<b>Badge:</b>		<b>Date:</b>	
<b>Location:</b>		<b>Time:</b>	

<b>Don't forget the three Program Processes</b> 1. Girl-Led 2. Cooperative Learning 3. Learning By Doing <b>See page 8 for more information!</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Supplies</b>	<b>Length of Time</b>
<b>Start-Up Activity</b>			
<b>Opening Ceremony</b>			
<b>Business Meeting</b>			
<b>Activity</b>			
<b>Activity</b>			
<b>Activity</b>			
<b>Snack and Clean Up</b>			
<b>Closing Ceremony</b>			



# Girl Scout Safety

The safety and well-being of girl and adult members is our highest priority. As a volunteer, it is imperative to know and understand the safety policies and procedures in place, where to look, or who to ask for more information when necessary. We suggest before planning an outing with your girls, such as camping, horse back riding, parades, swimming etc., you reference Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) for policies on how to prepare. SAC can be found on our website or with this QR code.



*All volunteers are required to complete 538 Understanding the Safety Activity Checkpoints training on gsLearn!*

## Safety Considerations

- **What to do in an emergency.** Remember, at the scene of incident, safety is your first priority. Provide care for the injured person and/or obtain medical assistance, then immediately report the emergency to Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland. Call our office at 877-312-4764 during business hours or 417-447-1265 after business hours.
- **First Aid/CPR Certification.** GSMH recommends at least one First Aid/ CPR certified adult is on site for every meeting. GSMH requires at least one First Aid/CPR certified adult to be present for travel, field trips, events, and overnights.
- **Be prepared.** Have a first aid kit, non-emergency number of local law enforcement, and charged cell phone on hand.
- **Create and maintain an emergency action plan for troop meetings and outings.** Your plans should be shared with girls and parents. Include the following:
  - Where will you meet in case of a fire?
  - Where will you go in the event of inclement weather?
  - Emergency phone numbers for each family in the troop. Share the number where you can be reach during the meeting.
- **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Men may not sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or caregiver-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When caregivers are staffing events, daughters should remain in areas with other girls rather than in staff areas.
- **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
- **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls or on Girl Scout property unless participating in a council-approved marksmanship program.
- **Get Permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and meeting place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain a parent permission slip for each girl.
- **Girls are never alone and adults are never alone with girls.** Girls should use a buddy system and be accompanied by two council approved adults at all times.
- **Report abuse.** Physical, verbal, emotional, and sexual abuse of girls is forbidden. Follow Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland's guidelines in Volunteer Essentials for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting. [Girl Scout Volunteers are Mandated Reporters. You are required to complete Mandated Reporter Training yearly to ensure preparedness if a situation arises.](#)

## Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need (Ratio)

The following girl/adult ratios show the minimum number of council approved adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. Adults must be registered and approved volunteers.

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

*Multi-level troops must follow safety ratios for the lowest grade level represented at the time of the meeting or event. For example, a troop meeting with Daisy, Brownie, Junior, and Cadette Girl Scouts must follow the Daisy ratios.*

### Volunteer Requirements

Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland is committed to offering a safe and quality program to girls in the community. To help keep girls safe, we require all adults interacting with girls in all capacities to:

1. Successfully complete a criminal background check.
2. Commit to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
3. Agree to follow all volunteer policies and procedures.
4. Complete Mandated Reporter Training.
5. Complete the appropriate New Leader Onboarding Path on gsLearn.
6. Complete the appropriate volunteer role learning path on gsLearn.

# Transporting Girls

Girl Scouts are naturally curious about the world around them. As girls begin to experience adventures in Girl Scouts and see the possibilities, they want to explore their world, which requires transporting them in personal vehicles. Girl and adult safety is our highest priority. When transporting girls, there are specific guidelines that must be followed to ensure a safe and fun trip. Please consider the following:

## Girl Scout Driver Requirements

- You are currently a registered and background checked GSMH Troop Leader or Troop Assistant, Assistant Leader, or approved Troop Helper.
- You are 21 years or older
- You have a current and valid driver's license, with good driving record
- You have auto insurance that is compliant with state law
- Girls do not transport other girls
- Group traveling consists of at least two unrelated approved adults (one female), whether you're driving one or more vehicles
- You do not transport girls in the bed of a truck
- You have working seat belts and they are worn by every person in the vehicle
- Girls under 12 years old sit in the back seat
- Avoid driving when tired or taking medications that make you drowsy
- Follow all state laws when driving, including but not limited to: following the speed limit, not using electronic devices, and having headlights on while using windshield wipers

## Driver Tips and Expectations

- Make sure to have destination address, road map/GPS, first-aid kit, and a flashlight in the car.
- Ensure your vehicle is in good working condition. Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horn, and fluid levels before each trip and periodically through long trips.
- Make sure necessary documents are up to date, including but not limited to: driver's license, vehicle registration, any state/local inspections, and insurance coverage. In each vehicle girls and adults are traveling in, ensure you have each girl's Health History Form and Permission Slip.
- Plan rest stops every few hours. When driving with multiple cars, pre-arrange stop locations. On long trips, arrange for relief drivers and avoid driving for extended periods at night.

If traveling over 50 miles from the troop's meeting place a Troop Travel Application with driver information (including license and auto insurance) must be completed and approved before traveling. For more information, please reference Safety Activity Checkpoints and the Volunteer Essentials.

# Plan a Trip with Girl Scouts

Expand her horizons and give her imagination room to roam. Travel invites challenges that cultivate many life skills, including route-finding, cooperation and leadership. The excitement and adventure of traveling with her Girl Scouts sisters is an experience she'll never forget!

Girl Scouts at all levels may participate in day trips, backyard camping and non-camping overnights at places such as the YMCA, church, or school. Other types of trips are dependent upon age and level:

- Brownies and older may participate in local trips of up to two nights and three days.
- Juniors and older may participate in regional trips of up to four nights and five days.
- Cadettes and older may participate in longer trips and travel internationally.

## Overnights

All overnight trips require that an application be completed and submitted and may also require additional documentation. Domestic trip applications are due three months prior to departure, and international trip applications are due 6-12 months prior to departure.

## Troop Travel Resources

For a full list of Travel Resources, visit the Travel page on our website.

- Application Packet
  - The Troop Travel Application Packet contains all the information you need to plan a Girl Scout trip, such as what is required for a trip, guidelines for transportation and accommodations and insurance information.
- Health & Permission Forms
  - Health History Forms are required to be completed by all participants of the trip and kept with the troop leader responsible for the activity.
  - Parent Permission Slips are required to be completed for each girl prior to each activity and kept with the troop leader responsible for the activity. International trips require permission slips be notarized.
- Safety & Compliance
  - Additional Activity Insurance Enrollment Form- Although accidents while Girl Scouting are extremely rare, insurance protects people, property, and peace of mind in case of the unexpected. That's why every person who participates in any Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland program or activity must be covered by appropriate Girl Scout insurance. All registered members and nonmembers are covered under basic Girl Scout insurance, but in some cases, additional activity insurance may be required for Girl Scouts trips.
  - Safety Activity Checkpoints is a resource that provides the standard safety guidelines and additional council requirements for Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) approved activities.



# Travel Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent travelers, including how to plan and organize trips. Travel fun can be endless when girls lead.



## Local Field Trips

Get your travel feet wet! Walk to a nearby garden, or take a short ride to a firehouse or other local spot.

Keep it girl-led : girls choose the location.

## Day Trips

Take an all-day trip!

Keep it girl-led: girls choose the location and activity (perhaps working toward a badge) and make plans for lunch.

## Overnights

Start with one night, maybe at a camp or museum. Progress to a weekend trip in a nearby city or state park.

Keep it girl-led: girls plan the activity and meals, create travel games, and pack their own overnight bags.

## Regional Trips

Spend three to four nights away somewhere a few hours from home.

Keep it girl-led: girls plan key details of the trip, such as the activities, the budget, the route, and lodging.

(Extended trip insurance required.)





## National Trips

Travel the country! Trips often last a week or more. Girls should think beyond a typical vacation location and consider historical sites, museums, or national parks!

Keep it girl-led: girls lead the entire planning process and might add a community service or Take Action project.

(Extended trip insurance required.)

## International Trips

Travel the world! These life-changing trips usually take one to three years to prepare. Consider visiting a WAGGGS World Centre!

Keep it girl-led: girls download the Global Travel Toolkit and plan their entire trip (including learning about the language, culture, passports and visas, exchange rates, etc.).

(Extended trip insurance required.)

## Independent Travel

Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador girls with travel experience can travel nationally or internationally independently through council-offered travel opportunities or GSUSA's Destinations program. Check with your council, or visit the Girl Scout Destinations website!

Girls should have experience at every level of the progression before moving on to the next level. For regional travel, girls must be Juniors or older. For national and international trips, girls must be Cadettes or older.

*When moving up to each level of progression, consider girls' independence, flexibility, decision making, group skills, and cross cultural skills.*

# Property Reservations

Looking for an escape to the great outdoors? You've come to the right place! Just like our girls, every one of our outdoor program centers is different, each with its own unique personality and special qualities. Every girl will find a GSMH camp that's as awesome as she is—whatever her interests, age, or level of outdoor experience.

Plan a weekend camping trip with your troop, participate in an exciting outdoor program or event on your own, or venture to our program centers with your family this summer. Sing songs by the campfire, eat endless s'mores, have lots of laughs, and make memories they'll never forget.

Check out our program centers to see which one is perfect for your next outdoor adventure!

## Helpful tips before completing your Property Use Reservation Form:

- Give yourself time to plan! The Property Use Reservation form must be submitted for day or overnight use of any program center at least 4 weeks prior to your desired reservation date.
- Make sure all attendees have the proper insurance coverage. All registered members and nonmembers are covered under basic Girl Scout insurance, but in some cases, additional activity insurance may be required for Girl Scouts trips.
- Play it Safe! Find the Safety Activity Checkpoints covered for all activities and arrangements planned for your stay. You must follow all appropriate Safety Activity Checkpoints including those for activities, events, overnights, and sleeping arrangements.
- Planning to stay overnight? A Troop Travel Application must be completed for any overnight reservation at a program property. Be prepared to submit a Troop Travel Application along with your Property Reservation Form.
- Meet all Volunteer Training Requirements. Troops reserving a program property for overnight use must have at least one volunteer who has completed Outdoor Level 2 training.

### Finbrooke Program Center

250 acres in Christian County, MO

Available Early Spring through Late Fall

Suggested Activities:

- camping
- fishing
- hiking
- nature activities
- service projects

### Friendship Fields Program Center

53 acres in Crawford County, KS

Available Year-Round

Suggested Activities:

- camping
- fishing
- hiking
- nature activities
- service projects

### Latonka Program Center

800 acres in Wayne County, MO

Available Early Spring through Late Fall

Suggested Activities:

- camping
- fishing
- hiking
- nature activities
- service projects

### Silver Meadows Program Center

130 acres in Boone County, MO

Available Year-Round

Suggested Activities:

- camping
- fishing
- hiking
- nature activities
- service projects

*Volunteers, Troops, and Service Units must follow all Safety Activity Checkpoints for all activities planned. Fishing licenses are required following state laws.*

**Finbrooke Program Center – Christian County, MO.**

Facility Name	Capacity & Type	Features
Hickory Knoll	9 cabins (each sleep 4)	2 fire circles
Oak Ridge	9 perma-tents (each sleep 4), 5 huts (each sleep 4)	Covered unit shelter with picnic tables, a shower house, and 2 fire circles
Cedar Crest	9 perma-tents (each sleep 4)	Covered pavilion with picnic tables, 2 fire circles, and access to shower house
Sassafras Point	10 platforms for tent setup (bring your own tents)	Large covered pavilion with picnic tables, 2 fire circles, and access to shower house
Waterfront	5 platform tents with metal roofs (each sleep 4)	Large covered pavilion with picnic tables, 2 fire circles, and access to shower house
Troop House	Two bedrooms (sleeps 10 total)	Full kitchen, full bathroom, office, and facility room with washer and dryer
Lodge	Lodge, Max capacity is 149 (sleeps 60)	Mattresses upon request; men's and women's bathroom
The Apartment	Two bedrooms (sleeps 4 total)	First aid closet, full bathroom, and a nurse's station (sleeps 3)
Gloria's Pavilion	Covered Pavilion	Picnic tables and fireplace
The Barn	Indoor Recreation Area	Storage
Shower House/Pool	Olympic Size Pool, bathrooms, and showers	

**Silver Meadows Program Center – Boone County, MO.**

Facility Name	Capacity & Type	Features
Lodge	Lodge, Max capacity is 50 (Sleeps 50)	Commercial kitchen (only operated by trained personnel), fireplace, showers, bathrooms, and a basement with washer and dryer
South Shelter Area	Covered Pavillion	Picnic tables, shower house, storage areas, and fire circle
Tent Camping: South Shelter Meadow	Tent Camping (30-50 tents)	Fire circle
Tent Camping: Lodge Meadow	Tent Camping (20 tents)	Fire circle

### Latonka Program Center – Wayne County, MO.

Facility Name	Capacity & Type	Features
Hickory Hollow	4 cabins (each sleep 6)	Covered unit shelter with tables/benches, fire circle, and access to shower house
Shady Oak	5 cabins (each sleep 6)	Covered unit shelter with tables/benches, fire circle, and access to shower house
Gypsy Dell	5 cabins (each sleep 6)	Covered unit shelter, fire circle, and access to a shower house
Old House	House (sleeps 15)	Full kitchen, living room with fireplace, latrine, and outside fire circle
Tree House	1 elevated unit with two cabins (each sleep 6)	Picnic tables underneath tree house, fire circle, enclosed unit shelter for adults to sleep, and access to a shower house
Troop House	House (sleeps 20)	Full kitchen, shower house, open living area with benches, tables, and chairs
Dining Hall	Dining Hall, Max capacity is 100	Commercial Kitchen (only operated by trained personnel), fireplace
Cook's Shack	Two bedrooms (sleeps 4 total)	Personal bathroom in each room
Infirmary	Two bedrooms (sleeps 3), nurse's station (sleeps 3)	Full kitchen and bathroom, and a nurse's station
Recreation Hall	Indoor Recreation Area	Tables, benches, and storage
Shower House	Bathrooms and showers	

### Friendship Fields Program Center – Crawford County, KS

Facility Name	Capacity & Type	Features
Red Bud Lodge	Lodge, Max capacity is 65	Full kitchen, large community room, office, storage, fireplace, showers, and bathrooms
Log Cabin	Log Cabin (sleeps 25)	Kitchen, bathroom and shower
Pavilion	9 perma-tents (each sleep 4)	Covered pavilion with picnic tables, 2 fire circles, and access to shower house
Tent Camping: In meadow	Tent Camping (unlimited space)	

Contact Customer Service at [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org) for more information about program center reservations or with questions regarding a facility's overnight usage or amenities.

# Girl Scout Year at a Glance

Below are key dates and Girl Scout traditions to note as you plan your Girl Scout year. Keep in mind each troop is different because troop activities are planned by the girls! The role of the troop leadership team is to make sure girls have the chance to safely become go-getters, risk-takers, innovators, and leaders along side their sister Girl Scouts.

## Fall

- October 1: First day of Membership Year.
- Fall Product Program is a great way to earn startup funds for your troop and build valuable skills.
- October 31: Celebrate the birthday of Juliette Gordon Low.
- Prepare for your Girl Scout Year by completing Volunteer FA/CPR Training and/or Outdoor Trainings.

## Winter

- Participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program to earn money and develop financial skills.
- Register for summer opportunities! Visit our [Event Calendar](#) on our website in December.
- February 22: Participate in World Thinking Day. Honor our international Girl Scout and Girl Guide sisters by remembering that GSUSA is a part of a global community.

## Spring

- **Girl Scout Week:** This week, celebrated Sunday through Saturday, always includes the Girl Scout birthday (when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the first troop) on **March 12**.
- **Girl Scout Sunday and Girl Scout Sabbath:** Provides an opportunity to attend a place of worship and be recognized as Girl Scouts. Celebrated the Sunday and Saturday of Girl Scout Week.
- **Court of Awards Ceremony:** Celebrate awards with a girl-designed ceremony. Ending the troop year with a gathering is a great way to re-engage parents/caregivers and share the girls' successes. If your troop is moving to a new grade level in the fall, this ceremony may include bridging.
- **Membership Renewal:** Spring is a great time to register for the coming year. There are often incentives associated with early registration. Membership renewal opens April 1.
- Prepare for overnights and camping with your troop by completing outdoor trainings at one of our program centers.

## Summer

- **June 30:** Troop Finance Report due.
- Enjoy the summer. Many troops take the summer off, but that doesn't mean you have to. It's a great time to take a trip or enjoy the outdoors.
- Attend summer opportunities at our program centers. Girls can attend these summer opportunities as a troop, on their own, with a friend, or with their family.
- Start planning for next year. How will you engage your girls? Are their schedules getting busier? How will the troop team make sure girls still have room for Girl Scouting?

Want to grow your troop? Girl Scouts is all about doing things with other girls. You can invite a friend to Girl Scouts anytime of the year. Have a party where the girls can invite their friends or talk to us for more ideas.



# Troop Governance

## Daisy

The Daisy Circle is the planning portion of troop meetings, where decisions for the troop are made. In the circle, girls learn communication and decision-making skills by participating in a large group discussion. The Daisy Circle can begin or end a meeting and is recommended to only last 5–15 minutes.

## Brownie

The Brownie Ring is similar to the Daisy Circle, but girls are taking on more decision-making responsibilities. The Brownie Ring can begin or end a meeting and is recommended to only last 5–15 minutes. Brownies need to understand how decisions are made and will need a set of rules to follow. Establish a structure for your discussion time such as:

- Using a “talking stick”—pick an object and the person holding it is the only one who should talk.
- Teaching the quiet sign—when someone raises their right hand, everyone must do the same and become quiet.
- Establishing the troop rule that nobody criticizes any ideas that anyone offers to the group.
- Leaders can prepare a list of choices for girls to choose from or have the girls generate ideas themselves.
- Pictures, charts, Girl Scout Journey books, and other materials are great decision-making aids for Brownies.

## Junior through Ambassador

The Patrol System is a commonly used form of government used for older Girl Scout troops. In the Patrol System, girls learn communication and decision-making skills by participating in smaller group discussions and then selecting a lead to represent their group. Girls are divided into small groups of four to six, called patrols. Each patrol can choose a patrol name, a symbol, a patrol lead, and assistant patrol leaders. Members of the patrol rotate as leaders so that everyone has an opportunity throughout the year.

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## Conflict Management

Things to consider when mediating a conflict within your troop:

- Maintain respectful, open communication with all parties throughout problem-solving.
- Circle back around to how the girls are representing the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Put it in writing! All parties should agree to the solution and the time frame as well as what next steps will be taken if the solution proves ineffective.
- GSMH encourages the problem-solving of concerns to occur with the parties most directly involved in the situation, but there are times when council staff assistance is necessary. This may include:
  - The safety and well-being of the girls and their assets are at risk
  - The safety and well-being of adult volunteers, parents/caregivers, or community members are at risk
  - Problem-solving attempts with parties directly involved were unsuccessful
  - The initial issue or concern has escalated in seriousness or urgency

### Troop Agreement / Code of Conduct

It is important to establish rules for the troop at the beginning of the Girl Scout year. This is a great opportunity to utilize the Girl-Led process. With guidance from the troop leaders, let the girls establish their own list of rules for the troop. Remember to include how the troop will handle disciplinary actions when the need arises. Once the rules have been established, have the girls complete their Girl Code of Conduct agreeing to follow the Girl Scout Promise and Law and the Troop Agreement.



# Product Program

- Understand what the Product Programs are and the five skills girls will learn
- Discover the entrepreneurial progression
- Get an overview of the Fall Product and Cookie Programs
- Learn the importance of Troop Product Program Chairs and what they do

Learn the value of a dollar, how to budget, the difference between needs and wants, how to make tough decisions, and how to set big goals, all while remembering to be honest and fair. During the Fall Product and Cookie Programs, girls are given the resources and chance to decide on the big goal, plan with confidence, and budget for tomorrow. Seize the opportunity to practice a financially independent future.

We know that starting a new troop comes with new expenses, and the product programs are here to help! The Fall Product Program and the Cookie Program also give your troop an opportunity to earn money to enjoy new and exciting opportunities and provide sustainable troop finances for each Girl Scout year. Troops who participate in both the Fall Product Program and the Cookie Program earn troop proceeds! Average troop proceeds for Fall Product is \$385, and the average troop proceeds for the Cookie Program is \$1,500. Visit our website for complete resources, timelines and training options.

## Girls Gain Entrepreneurship Skills

Girls learn the 5 skills by participating in our Fall Product Program and our Cookie Program, but we also know that as a girl progresses through her entrepreneurship experience, those skills are developed in various ways. We certainly recognize not every girl aspires to be an entrepreneur, but the Fall Product Program and the Cookie Program can help girls develop valuable skills which will benefit her in the future, no matter what career path she chooses!



**Goal Setting.** Girls set Fall Program and Cookie Program goals, and with their troop, create a plan to reach them. This matters because girls need to know how to set and reach goals to succeed in school, on the job, and in life.



**Decision Making.** Girls decide how to participate, how to market their sale, and what to do with their earnings. As they make many choices (big and small) throughout the program, they will learn important decision-making skills that will help them throughout their lives.



**Money Management.** Girls develop a budget, take orders, and handle customers' money. This will help them learn money management—from their lunch money to their allowance and future paycheck.



**People Skills.** Girls learn how to talk (and listen) to their customers. These people skills help them do better with group projects, sports teams, on the playground, and later at work.



**Business Ethics.** Girls act honestly and responsibly during every step of the Fall Product and Cookie Programs. This matters because employers want to hire ethical employees—and the world needs ethical leaders.



*Prepare for your first Cookie Program by completing *The Girl Scout Cookie Program training on gsLearn**

## Fall Product Program

Everyone knows we sell cookies in the winter, but did you know we also sell goodies in the fall? Our Fall Product Program gives troops a chance to earn startup money without having to wait until the Cookie Program begins in the winter. Your troop can use the funds they earn to enjoy new and exciting opportunities right away! Troops made an average of \$385 in troop funds from the Fall Product Program last year.

The Fall Product Program gives girls the opportunity to sell candy, nuts, and magazines to people they know personally to raise proceeds that help fund their next adventure. Girls can sell in-person to their friends or family and through their own secure online storefront.

The Fall Product Program begins in October, and products are delivered in December.

## Girl Scout Cookie Program

When your girls sell Girl Scout Cookies, they're doing more than helping their customers stock up on delicious treats (and having lots of fun). They're doing it with a goal in mind—a goal to power new, unique, and amazing experiences for themselves and their troop all year long.

Your troop has three ways that you can participate in this iconic, girl-led program. The girls can sell to people they know through their Cookie Order Card, online with Digital Cookie (a safe way to invite family near and far to purchase cookies), and/or in-person direct sales (door to door and booths at retail locations.)

The Cookie Program begins in January and runs through March, with opportunities for additional sales in April.

### Identifying a Troop Fall Product Chair and Troop Cookie Chair

Your first step to getting started in the Fall Product Program and Cookie Program is to identify a Troop Product Program chair to handle one or both of the programs. Troop Fall Product Chairs and Troop Cookie Chairs are a volunteer role. They must be registered members and pass a background check. Additionally, they should be reliable, organized, able to communicate effectively with caregivers, have basic math and computer skills, and be able to hold themselves accountable to deadlines. Identifying this piece of your troop committee is important to your troop success.

#### Troop Product Chairs:

- Help the troop have a great Fall Product and Cookie Program
- Follow the Cookie Scoop to ensure Cookie Program deadlines and guidelines are met.
- Follow the Crunch to ensure Fall Product Program deadlines and guidelines are met.
- Complete Fall Product Training and Cookie Training from their local Service Unit Product Chair
- Gather permission forms from caregivers
- Help girls set and achieve their goals
- Submit product and rewards orders for their troop
- Manage funds and track troop sales and finances online



# Entrepreneurship Progression

Progression allows girls to gain new skills, build their confidence, and develop an entrepreneurial mindset over time. As they engage in the Girl Scout Cookie Program and beyond, girls learn five valuable skills that will serve them for the rest of their lives. As you work with girls, acknowledge their skill development and encourage them to challenge themselves further. Eventually, they'll be ready to translate their skills into true entrepreneurship or bring an entrepreneurial mindset to whatever path they choose.

Five skills learned from the cookie program:

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

## Money Manager

Learn money basics.

Talk with your fellow troop members about different forms of money—coins, paper bills, checks, and credit—and practice counting it.

Learn how much Girl Scout Cookies cost in your area.

## Decision Maker

Make plans for the coming Girl Scout year and set a budget.

Talk about wants versus needs.

Talk about how the troop can earn money through cookie program participation.

Look into your troop's proceeds from previous years to help you budget.

## Goal Setter

Set sales goals as a troop and individually.

Talk with troop members about how you can work together to reach your troop's goal.

Discuss different ways to sell cookies and set a goal for which ones you'll try.

Brainstorm how you could use your cookie earnings to help others in your community.

## Consumer Expert

Think "cookie customers."

Talk with troop members about why people may or may not choose to buy Girl Scout Cookies, and brainstorm ways to engage them.

Come up with ideas for the perfect customer pitch.

Practice explaining how your cookie earnings will be spent.

Brainstorm ways to thank your customers.





## Entrepreneur

Take your business idea to the next level.

Create and document a mission statement and business plan for your product/service idea.

Identify your customer base, competition, and potential obstacles.

Practice sharing your business idea with your troop.

Research how businesses are financed and think about how you could finance yours.

Feel confident about your business idea's potential? Take action!

## Innovator

Take it beyond Girl Scout Cookies.

On your own or with your troop, think about a product or service you'd like to improve and brainstorm ways to make it happen.

Come up with several ideas, then narrow to the best!

Be prepared to go back to the drawing board—maybe more than once!

Get feedback from potential consumers and improve your idea based on what they say.

Research social entrepreneurs in your community and beyond.

## Networker

Build your social support system.

Connect with local business leaders for ideas about how to grow your Girl Scout Cookie business.

Talk to friends and family about how they can help you expand your network.

Ask your customers to safely refer you to new customers.

Follow up with past customers and tell them how you plan to use this year's cookie earnings, to inspire them to increase their purchase.

## Cookie Techie

Use technology to grow the business.

Set a specific goal for your digital sales.

Make a video for your friends and family network promoting online cookie sales using your sales pitch; encourage the gifting of cookies to boost sales.

Use your support network of friends and family to safely promote your digital storefront.

### How to adopt an entrepreneurial mindset:

- Be curious.
- Embrace challenge.
- Take initiative.
- Collaborate with others.
- Take creative risks.
- See failing as learning.
- Adapt to change.

# Financing the Fun

- Learn who should manage the troop bank account and troop funds
- Learn the steps to opening a troop bank account
- Learn when to complete the GSMH Troop Bank Account Information Form
- Learn when and how to complete the End-Of-Year Finance Report in the VTK
- Learn what financial records to keep as a Troop Leader
- Learn opportunities for troop funding

Only registered and approved volunteers in a troop volunteer role can handle or manage troop funds, and at least one of the volunteers needs to be a troop leader. Involve the girls as much as their grade level and skills/abilities allow. After all, it's the troop's money!

## Managing troop funds includes:

- Being a signer on the troop bank account.
- Facilitating discussion with the girls on how they want to spend the money.
- Teaching girls about money management and making good financial decisions.
- Managing money during the fall product program and/or cookie program.
- Handling troop money in any way.

Troop leaders and troop assistants are responsible for the proper accounting and management of troop funds. Should mismanagement be reported, a troop financial audit may occur and the adults responsible for troop leadership may be held accountable for any lost or stolen funds and overdraft fees. Following the policies in this chapter will prevent mismanagement and ensure a successful troop experience! All Girl Scout troops are required to have a troop checking account.



*All Troop Leaders and Treasures are required to complete 538 Finance Training for Troop Leaders on gsLearn before opening a bank account.*

## Opening Your Troop Checking Account

New troops are required to establish the troop checking account within 30 days of the first troop meeting with girls. This will allow troops to be prepared when there is money to deposit from troop dues, product programs, or troop money-earning activities. Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland's standard requires all troops to open a bank account.

### When Accounts Should be Open

- Within 30 days of the first troop meeting
- As long as your troop is viable with 2 Girl Scout approved leaders and a minimum of 3 girls registered before any troop money is received, earned, or spent
- Prior to receiving Girl Scout Cookie or Fall Product Program materials

### Who should open the account?

- Girl Scout troop checking accounts are required to have at least two approved volunteer signers, one troop leader and another approved volunteer (who are unrelated and not in the same household) on the account.
- Approved volunteer signers must have an active Girl Scout membership and an approved background check with no financial restrictions.
- GSMH may set restrictions on a signer at any time and the signer will be removed from the bank account.

## What to Bring to the Bank

Signers should coordinate their schedules and go to the bank together. We suggest scheduling an appointment with the bank. Before going to the bank, ensure you have all paperwork and documentation needed to open a Girl Scout Troop Bank Account. All signers must bring:

- Two forms of identification—such as a Driver’s License (or current government-issued ID that includes a photo, signature, document number, and expiration date) a credit or debit card, passport, or state non-driver’s license.
- Social security number
- Corporate Resolution Letter (found on the Volunteer Toolkit under the Resources Tab)
- IRS Tax Letter (found on the Volunteer Toolkit under the Resources Tab)

# Troop Checking Account Information

## Choosing a Bank

Troops should try to open a non-profit account and/or try to find a bank that will offer a no service charge account to Girl Scout groups.

## Account Requirements

- Bank accounts should be opened with the Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland Federal Tax ID number, found in the VTK, not a personal social security number.
- The troop leader’s home address should be used when opening the account, not the council address.
- All account signature cards shall have the signatures of two unrelated registered volunteers.
- Only one signature is required for withdrawal.
- The statement must be sent to a signer's home residence or email.
- One signer must receive bank statements or have access to online banking while another holds the checkbook/debit card.
- Checks and debit cards on accounts are permitted, however, credit cards are not permitted.
- Girl Scout troop bank accounts may not have overdraft protection on the account.
- Online and/or mobile app access to view bank statements and account transactions for the specific troop/group/service unit account is permissible.

### **The bank account information and check imprint must be:**

Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland, Inc.  
Girl Scout Troop/Group #  
Volunteer’s Address (*optional on check imprint*)

## Next Steps after Opening

- Complete GSMH Girl Scout Bank Account and ACH form and email the completed PDF copy to info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org.
  - Information needed on the form includes the names of the two signers, service unit number, troop number, bank name, bank routing number, bank account number, and a voided check.
- Save all receipts and documentation of transactions coming in and out of the troop bank account.
- Keep copies of all Girl Scout Bank Account monthly statements.
- Complete a Troop Finance Report on the Volunteer Toolkit each year by June 30.

# Earning and Managing Troop Funds

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

## Girl Scout Troop Funding Sources

1. Product Programs: Cookie Program and Fall Product Program
2. Troop/Group Money-Earning Activities
3. Troop Dues

Money earned by the girls is for the benefit of all girls in the troop and should be spent in the year the funds are earned, unless the troop has a long-term plan for spending the funds. It is important to note that the funds belong to the troop and not to individual girls or adults. Per IRS guidelines for charitable organizations, troops are prohibited from keeping individual girl accounts. All funds expended should benefit all girls in the troop.

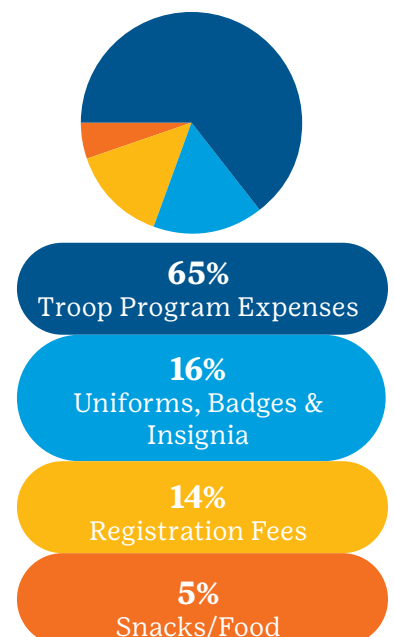
## Making Decisions with Girls

Teaching girls about money management and empowering them to make good financial decisions is part of troop financial management. Since girls are choosing their own Girl Scout journey, they can also make decisions on the resources that support their Girl Scout adventure. Consider the following as you guide them in the best management of their troop funds:

- What is the grade level of the troop and how much understanding do they have of money and bank accounts? (*Girl Scout Daisies will have adults handle their troop finances; Girl Scout Brownies understand that things cost money and will begin to have an understanding of what is needed to achieve their goals.*)
- What are the goals of the troop?
- What are the girls learning from the way the troop funds are managed? What do they need to learn?
- What if girls join the troop or leave the troop, how will the funds be managed? **If a girl leaves Girl Scouts, the funds remain property of the troop.**

Consider the questions above to help determine the best way to manage the troop funds. Be sure to consider troop income versus troop expenses.

 <p><b>Membership Fee</b> Annual fee paid to our national organization to cover cost of fundamental services and accidental insurance</p>	 <p><b>Meeting Supplies</b> Markers, paper, scissors, tape, glue sticks, snacks</p>
 <p><b>Uniforms</b> A sash or vest, insignia, and badges earned throughout the year</p>	 <p><b>Events</b> World Thinking Day, Cookie Rallies, Council Sponsored Events, and Girl Scouts Handcrafted</p>
 <p><b>Service Projects</b> Girls do service projects meaningful to them, like baking holiday treats for kids in homeless shelters</p>	 <p><b>Overnights</b> Troop Trips and Troop Camping</p>





## The Common Pot

This technique is when all earned money goes into the troop's "common pot," and the funds are drawn equally for all girls. This is often how a new troop begins in their money management before progressing to a more complicated management system. *This technique is used mostly with younger troops; however, it will work with all grade levels.*

### Tracked Money with a Common Pot

This is used by troops that are planning more complicated, expensive activities like a trip to Savannah, attending Troop Adventure Camp, or if girls have individual goals as well as troop goals. This technique allows for a percentage of the money earned to go into the troop "common pot" for troop activities, and an additional percentage to be tracked for each girl to individually save for a long-term troop activity or a council-sponsored activity. The troop as one body still makes decisions about how the money should be spent. The money, even when tracked for individual girls, is never the property of an individual girl.

## Money Earning Basics

Groups earn money for their troop in two distinct ways:

- 1. Product Program:** Girls can participate in two council-sponsored Product Programs each year: the Fall Product Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. All girl members, including Girl Scout Daisies and Juliettes (individually registered members), are eligible to participate in council-sponsored Product Programs with volunteer supervision. Please remember: volunteers and Girl Scout council staff don't sell cookies and other products—girls do. **A troop's primary money-earning activity should be the Girl Scout Cookie Program.**
- 2. Money-Earning Activity Application:** This is required for all activities organized by the group (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with adults) and earn money for the group.
  - Any troop/ group money-earning projects cannot take place during council-sponsored Product Programs (Fall Product Programs and Cookie Program).
  - Troop money-earning projects need written approval from the council before a group money-earning activity. Complete the Money-Earning Activity Application form found on our website.



The best way to earn money for your troop is to start with Fall Product Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. From there, your group may decide to earn additional funds on its own. 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 Basics

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

- Voluntary participation
- Parent/caregiver permission to participate
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed
- An understanding that money-earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its activities
- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities, as well as health and safety laws
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl (see safety section in Volunteer Essentials for guidance)
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

## Money Earning Guidelines

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

- All rewards earned by girls through 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.
- Girls cannot participate in games of chance (for example selling raffle tickets), pledge events (including walk-a-thons), or product demonstration parties.
- The Girl Scout Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash.
- Girl Scouts forbids the use of the Girl Scout trademark to increase revenue for another business (for example: in-home product parties). Any business using the Girl Scout trademark must seek authorization from GSUSA.
- Troop/group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age 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 recognitions and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout Product Program. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following council procedures.
- Decisions about how money will be earned and spent should be made by the girls in the troop and communicated to parents/caregivers.
- No account may be set up in a girl's name that is replenished through troop funding efforts or donations. No matter what accounting method is used, money earned by girls in Girl Scouting is the property of the troop.
- Money donated to the troop may not personally benefit one member of the troop.
- In order to ensure compliance with IRS and audit guidelines, Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland has specific policies regarding donations and grants from individuals and organizations to Girl Scouts groups or service units. Please refer to Volunteer Essentials for more information.

For ideas about additional money earning, review the Finances section in Volunteer Essentials or brainstorm ideas with your service team or Volunteer Support Specialist.

# Troop Dues

Troop dues are an option for troops to cover the costs of snacks, supplies, and other materials used by the girls at regular meetings and girl activities. Troop dues are meant to supplement Cookie and Fall Product Program activities. When setting the amount of troop dues, the fees should be decided on by all members, with consideration given to the income levels of all of the girls in the group. No girl shall be denied membership in a troop or have her participation restricted based on an inability to pay troop dues. Any collected troop dues should be documented and deposited into the troop account within 3 days of collection. Troop dues should not be more than the cost of Girl Scout Membership which is \$25.

One example to lower troop dues—host a troop "birthday party" for your first meeting to collect supplies. Girls bring supplies as "birthday presents" and everyone opens them up during the party.

## Average Troop Dues

between  
\$5 & \$25

Members decide the amount of troop dues, after considering troop plans, girls' ages, and income levels of all families. No girl should be denied membership in a troop or have her participation restricted by her inability to pay.

### High Dues

Council-sponsored Product Program profits and higher dues paid up-front by caregivers cover bulk of troop expenses

Caregivers pay for individual summer opportunities.

Every girl should have the opportunity to be a Girl Scout!

### Low Dues

Caregivers pay as they go for things like uniforms, trips, and Girl Scout books.

Troop dues should not be more than the cost of Girl Scout Membership which is \$25.

### What if a girl can't pay her membership

Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland offers Financial Assistance for membership that can be requested at the time of membership registration.

**What if a girl can't cover the cost of camp or an event?** She can apply for financial assistance for a GSMH Event. Instructions for financial assistance are given at the time of check out in gsEvents.

### How should troops manage finances when a girl can't pay dues?

Work with her caregivers to determine what the family can pay and plan with your troop how much needs to be earned in the product program to cover the costs.

**Note:** This may impact the dues you charge to the overall group and goals you set for Product Program. When more than half of the girls in your troop face financial challenges, your overall troop budget should lean heavily on Product Program proceeds and less on troop dues.

# Record Keeping

One critical task for each troop is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As a troop leader or troop assistant, you're in charge of making sure money is spent wisely, excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and all income and expenses are tracked. (Income examples: dues, troop proceeds from Product Program. Expense examples: earned recognitions, troop meeting activities, field trips, events, and troop trips.) For older girls, your job is to oversee their work as they learn to keep impeccable records.

## Things to Consider in Troop Finance Record Keeping

- All troop money earned and received needs to be appropriately secured, should be deposited into the troop account within three days of receipt, and should never be held in a personal checking account.
- Anytime the troop spends or receives money or money exchanges hands for any reason, a receipt should be provided and kept on record.
- It is critical that all authorized signers are in communication with each other before spending funds in the account to cover the amount of the transaction before writing a check or making a purchase with a debit card. This will safeguard against overdrawn accounts and bouncing checks.
- Take into consideration delays in posting transactions to the account in the banking system.
- All troop expenses should be paid for with a troop check or the troop debit card.
- Blank checks should never be pre-signed and debit cards should never be used by anyone other than the person they are issued to and only for troop expenses.
- Cash withdrawals should only be made if absolutely necessary—e.g. cookie booths. Anything paid or purchased with cash must be documented with a receipt.
- Volunteers who have paid out of pocket for troop expenses cannot reimburse themselves. Reimbursement may only come from the other signer on the account when a receipt is provided showing the expense.
- Funds acquired for money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the troop, while following all council policies and procedures.
- Troop finances should not be kept a secret from girls and families. Give a monthly or quarterly financial report at troop meetings so that girls know how much money they have to work with.

**It is required to keep records (receipts, bank statements, and finance reports) for a minimum of three years.** The council has the right to audit troop accounts at any time and/or request statements/proof of receipts should misuse/mismanagement of funds be suspected or occur. Please know that Girl Scouts of Missouri Heartland will make a decision based on the best outcome for the girls, and this process can take several weeks. This may result in the responsible volunteers being determined ineligible to serve as a volunteer.

## Troop Finance Tracking

When tracking troop finances, remember to keep all receipts for money spent. It is recommended that you should provide a receipt and keep a copy for your record any time you receive money. Mark your receipts with Expense or Income to help you prepare for the Troop Finance Report.

Troops should frequently share troop financial information with parents/caregivers. Girls and the council may request to see financial records at any time.

# Troop Financial Reporting

All Girl Scout troops are required to submit information regarding the troop's finances annually as part of the appointment and reappointment process. All troops, including new troops, must complete a Troop Finance Report and submit a copy of all bank statements by June 30 of each year. The Troop Finance Report can be accessed, completed, and submitted online at the council website using the VTK Finance Tab. If you need additional assistance contact Customer Service.

All financial transfers to troops or service units, including fall product and cookie proceeds, will be made electronically, using the bank account information provided on the GSMH Bank Account and ACH form.

## New Troops

- New troops are required to submit a GSMH Bank Account and ACH Form within 30 days of opening a checking account. Note that this is separate from the Troop Finance Report.
- The Troop Finance Report should begin on the date the troop started and include information up to the date of the troop's last bank statement. Copies of all troop bank account statements are required for submission on the Troop Finance Report.

## Returning Troops

- At the beginning of each Girl Scout year, troop leaders must make sure their account is up to date and the GSMH Troop Bank Account and ACH Form is completed. Note that this is separate from the Troop Finance Report.
- The Troop Finance Report should begin on the date your previous report ended and include information up to the date of your last bank statement. Copies of all troop bank account statements are required for submission with the Troop Finance Report.

**A Troop Finance Report that includes the names of two registered and approved signers is required for:**

- Reappointment of the troop leaders
- Approval of troop trip forms
- Participation in the Girl Scout Product Programs
- Participation in troop money earning activities

## Finance Reporting Reminders

GSMH Bank Account and ACH Form must be completed:

- Within 30 days of opening a new checking account.
- Annually when submitting the Troop Finance Report
- When there are changes to the account, e.g. new signers

End-of-Year Troop Finance Report is due:

- By June 30 of each year
- Within 30 days of disbanding a troop



The Volunteer Toolkit is the primary resource to submit the Troop Finance Report via the Finance Tab. The GSMH Bank Account information and ACH form is accessible at [girlscoutsmoheartland.org](http://girlscoutsmoheartland.org) in the forms section or under the Resources tab in the Volunteer Toolkit

## VTK Finance Tab FAQ's

### **Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) Finance Tab FAQs**

Troops are encouraged to submit their Finance Report using the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) Finance Tab. We've put together a list of frequently asked questions to help you get started. If you still have questions, contact our Customer Service team at [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org) or 877-312-4764. They are available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### **How do I access the VTK Finance Tab?**

Go to our website, [girlscoutsmoheartland.org](http://girlscoutsmoheartland.org) and click the MyGS link at the top of the webpage. Log in using your username and password. Select the Volunteer Toolkit option. Then select the Finance tab to the far right. The Finance Report is due on June 30 of each year.

### **Is my login the same as MyGS?**

Yes, it is the same login that you use to access MyGS and to renew your membership.

### **Who can complete the Finance Tab information?**

As with VTK, only troop leaders with a current background check and current Girl Scout membership who are assigned the troop leader or assistant leader role(s) will be able to complete the Finance Tab fields.

### **What is the troop treasurer's role in completing the troop finance report?**

The troop treasurer is responsible for managing the income and expenses for the troop and for reconciling the check register and all receipts. The troop treasurer will share all final income and expense totals with the troop leader so the troop leader can complete the VTK Finance Tab.

### **What if I need help accessing the VTK?**

If you are a troop leader who is having trouble accessing the VTK or seeing the VTK Finance Tab, contact our Customer Service team at [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org) or 877-312-4764. They are available from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

### **Why do I have to complete the VTK Finance Tab?**

Every troop must complete the annual Troop Finance Report. The VTK Finance Tab is the best and easiest way to submit your troop's Finance Report.

### **How is the Finance Tab used?**

This will be the ongoing way troop leaders will submit their annual Troop Finance Report to GSMH. The information submitted within the VTK Finance Tab will allow parents in the troop to view the troop's financial activity, allowing transparency to troop members.

### **What information will I need to submit?**

You will submit information about Troop Income and Expense categories on your Troop Finance Report. You will also submit copies of the past year's bank statements and information regarding your bank account including the bank you use and the signers on the account.



## VTK Finance Tab FAQ's

### **Who gets to see/view my troop's Finance Tab?**

The Finance Tab can be seen by any parent in the troop and they will see the latest update made by the troop leader. Troop leaders will be able to see and complete the Troop Finance Report Fields. Parents cannot see bank account information, notes you have included, or attachments.

### **When is the troop finance report due to GSMH?**

The Troop Finance Report is due by June 30 each year. A Troop Finance Report is also due when troop leadership changes or when a troop disbands.

### **What if my troop's year is not over by June 30?**

Please complete and submit the Finance Tab information for your troop finances from July 1 through June 30. Next year, your troop Finance Tab entry will begin July 1 and go through June 30 of the next year.

### **Can I see past reports?**

Yes. After your first Finance Report is filed through the VTK Finance Tab, subsequent years will be archived and you will be able to view them.

### **What if I am unable to submit my finance report on the VTK Finance Tab?**

We would like everyone to submit their finance report through the VTK. If you have questions or need assistance, email [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org)

### **How can I submit my bank statements?**

When you submit the Troop Finance Report Online through the VTK Finance Tab, you will be asked to upload your bank statement. You'll be able to browse your computer/device to upload your bank statement. You will be able to attach up to 10 documents totaling no more than 25mb. You have to hit submit before you will be allowed to attach items. If your bank statements are larger than 25mb, you can email copies of your bank statements to [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org).

### **What if I submitted my troop's financial information too early/by accident or forgot to attach my bank statement?**

Email [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org) so we can help you.

### **What if my ending balance is not balancing with my bank statement?**

Your troop's ending balance should match your bank statement unless you have outstanding checks or deposits that have not cleared your bank or petty cash on hand. If your bank statement doesn't match you'll have the opportunity to list/explain why it doesn't.

### **Can I come into the office to drop off my finance report or get help submitting it online?**

We are happy to help! Email [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org) for assistance.

### **What if I don't submit the troop finance report, what happens?**

Troop volunteers are entrusted to ensure the sound fiscal management of troop funds. We all agree the highest level of integrity must be maintained and we will work with you to overcome any barriers to completing this process. In the event there are extenuating circumstances preventing the Troop's Finance Report from being submitted, notify us by emailing [info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org](mailto:info@girlscoutsmoheartland.org).

Troops that do not make a reasonable attempt to submit the Troop Finance Report in a timely manner cannot participate in product program and leaders may not be reappointed.

# Girl Scout Resources & Terms

The following resources include primary forms and documents that new troops will use to get started and have a successful troop year. Most of these forms can be found in the Forms section of [girlscoutsmoheartland.org](http://girlscoutsmoheartland.org). Some financial forms are located on the Volunteer Toolkit under the Resources Tab. Several forms can be accessed by clicking the name of the document and you will be directed to the form.

## **Family Conduct Agreement**

*Required to be completed by parents/caregivers and submitted to troop leaders.*

This document allows the troop to have a formal agreement with parent/caregivers about troop expectations.

## **Certificate of Liability Request**

*Required to be completed by troop leaders.*

A form used to request a Certificate of Insurance be issued to a venue hosting Girl Scouts, noting the level of liability insurance Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland holds. This certificate is frequently requested by troop meeting places.

## **Adult and Girl Membership Registration**

*Required to be completed by parents/caregivers, troop leader(s), and assistant troop leader.*

Register for a Girl Scout Membership and/or renew a Girl Scout Membership and Volunteer Role by logging into MyGS.

## **Health History Form**

*Required to be completed by parents/caregivers and submitted to troop leaders.*

An updated record of health status (for example, allergies, chronic illnesses, and injuries) and authorization. Forms are completed and given to the troop leader for troop records.

## **Parent Permission Slip**

*Required to be completed by parents/caregivers and submitted to troop leaders prior to a trip or activity.*

When participating in activities beyond the troop meeting, caregiver permission is required. This form allows leaders to communicate to caregivers the key information about the activity and receive permission for participation.

## **Safety Activity Checkpoints**

*Required to be followed by troop leader(s), assistant leader(s), troop helper(s), and GSMH volunteers.*

Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) is a resource that provides the standard safety guidelines for Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) approved activities.

## **Safety Activity Checkpoint Matrix**

*Required to be followed by troop leader(s), assistant leader(s), troop helper(s), and GSMH volunteers.*

The Safety Activity Checkpoints are your primary source for guidelines on girl-adult supervision, transporting girls, first aiders, meeting space selection, and general safety. The Safety Activity Checkpoint Matrix is a quick reference guide to our Safety Activity Checkpoints guide.

## **Troop Finance Report**

*Required to be completed by troop leaders and assistant leaders who are bank account signers.*



**GSMH Bank Account and ACH Form**

*Required to be completed by troop leaders and assistant leaders who are bank account signers.*  
Complete the GSMH Troop Bank Account and ACH Form online to inform the council of the troop bank account information. This form must be completed each year.

**Tax Exempt/Tax ID Form**

*Required to be completed by retailer and volunteer making a purchase.*  
The Tax Exempt/Tax ID Form is a certificate that will exempt the troop from paying state sales tax when purchasing supplies. Must be presented at the time of purchase.

**Volunteer Essentials**

*Required to be followed by troop leader(s), assistant leader(s), troop helper(s), and GSMH volunteers.*  
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 and come back throughout the year to find answers to your questions as they arise.

**GSMH Volunteer Policies**

*Required to be followed by troop leader(s), assistant leader(s), troop helper(s), and GSMH volunteers.*  
Any person who volunteers for Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland (GSMH) must accept and adhere to these policies. Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland Volunteer Policies are adopted by and subject to modification by the Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland Board of Directors.

**Volunteer Policies Agreement**

*Required to be completed by troop leader(s), assistant leader(s), troop helper(s), and GSMH volunteers.*  
Complete this form before each Girl Scout year to agree to comply with GSMH Volunteer Policies and Standards of Conduct.



*Scan this QR Code to visit the Forms and Documents page on our website!*

# Girl Scout Terms

## A

**Alum** – A former Girl Scout girl member

**Ambassador** – A Girl Scout in grades 11-12

**A\*Team** – The A\*Team supports GSMH programming by assisting in event set-up; assisting younger Girl Scouts; sharing knowledge; and helping lead kapers. Additionally, the A\*Team will teach Girl Scout traditions and help organize activities. Girls will earn Girl Scout service hours as part of the A\*Team.

## B

**Badge** – Official embroidered insignia earned by completing a certain number of requirements in the Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting. These earned awards are sewn on the front of the uniform and are distinguished from "participation patches" which are obtained by participating in various events.

**Bridging** – When girls move from one program grade level to the next; may include an award for the girls completing the bridging award requirements, and likely will include a ceremony.

**Bronze Award** – The highest award Girl Scout Juniors (4th and 5th grade) can earn. It requires completion of a Journey, a minimum of 20 hours building a team, exploring the community, choosing Take Action, planning it, putting plan in motion, and spreading the word about the project.

**Brownie** – A Girl Scout in grades 2-3

**Buddy System** – Safety practice that groups two or three girls together to keep watch over each other in an activity (for example, swimming or hiking). The system places girls of equal ability in the same group.

## C

**Cadette** – A Girl Scout in grades 6-8

**Council** – A corporation, chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA, organized for the purpose of developing, managing, and maintaining Girl Scouting within a defined geographic region. Our council is Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland, which covers 67 counties throughout Missouri, Oklahoma, and Kansas.

**CSA** – Abbreviation of Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador.

## D

**Daisy** – A Girl Scout in grades K-1

**Day Camp** – A camp program lasting approximately 12 hours, but does not include an overnight stay. The program may last up to 3 days.

**Destinations** – A trip or event beyond girls' own troops and councils. Destinations fall into one of five different categories: international, outdoor, science, people, or getaways. All destinations events provide an opportunity for individual members to broaden their perspectives and give Girl Scouting enhanced visibility.

## E

**Early Bird/Spring Renewal** – Early renewal campaign that takes place between April and June (specific dates change each year) with added incentives for girls and troops who renew their membership before a certain date.

## F

**Flag Ceremony** – Honors the American flag as the symbol of our country and all the hopes, dreams, and people it represents.

**Founder's Day** – Celebrated each year on October 31 in honor of Juliette Gordon Low's birthday.

## G

**Girl Guide** – The original name for Girl Scouts, it is still used in many countries.

**Girl Scouts Handcrafted** – Girl Scouts Handcrafted! Let your voice be heard and tell us what adventures you want to see near you. Fill out our online form to share an idea you have for an activity, choose from one of our already developed events, or request guidance on completing specific badgework.



# Girl Scout Terms

## **Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)**

– The engine for everything girls do in Girl Scouting. The experience identifies all the elements that need to be in place for Girl Scouting to achieve its mission; Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. When Discover, Connect, and Take Action activities are combined with the Girl Scout Processes of Girl-Led, Learning by Doing, and Cooperative Learning, girls achieve the desired and expected short-term leadership outcomes, ultimately resulting in Girl Scouting achieving its mission.

**Gold Award** – The highest award in Girl Scouts. Open to Girl Scouts in high school, Gold Award projects find a sustainable way to solve community problems.

**GORP** – An acronym with two possible meanings, depending on who you ask! Good Old Raisins & Peanuts, or Granola, Oats, Raisins, & Peanuts. A camp snack favorite!

**GSMH** – Girl Scouts of the Missouri Heartland, the council that serves over 5,500 girls and 3,000 adults across 67 counties in central and southern Missouri, southeast Kansas, and northeast Oklahoma.

**GSUSA** – Girl Scouts of the USA, the corporation that promotes the Girl Scout movement in the U.S.A., which includes the United States, its territories, and possessions.

## **H**

**Highest Awards** – Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. They are the highest honors a Girl Scout can earn. All three awards give girls the chance to do big things while supporting an issue they care about.

## **I**

**Insignia** – Girl Scout items worn on the uniform (badges, awards, patches, stars, strips, etc.)

**Investiture** – A special ceremony in which a new member makes her Girl Scout Promise, receives their membership pin, and becomes a member of Girl Scouts.

## **J**

**Juliette** – First name of Girl Scout founder Juliette Gordon Low. Term also used to refer to registered Girl Scouts who are not part of the traditional troop program. These girls still work toward the same badges and activities; they simply do not belong to a troop. They can join other girls at council-wide events and can participate in all Girl Scouts has to offer. They are also known as individually registered members (IRMs).

**Junior** – A Girl Scout in grades 4-5

## **K**

**Kaper** – A temporary job or responsibility, similar to a chore.

## **L**

**Lifetime Membership** – A one-time fee that enables you to become a Girl Scout for life. This is available to any person 18 years of age or older or a high school graduate.

## **M**

**Membership Fee** – \$25 fee paid annually to Girl Scouts of the USA for registration. Required for becoming a member of Girl Scouts.

**Membership Pin** – Either of two pins; the trefoil with three faces (contemporary style) or trefoil with eagle (traditional style) pin. These pins signify the acceptance of the membership requirements.

**Membership Year** – October 1 through September 30.

## **N**

**National Gold Award Girl Scouts** – An honor given to 10 Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors each year whose Gold Award projects demonstrated extraordinary leadership, had a measurable and sustainable impact, and addressed a local challenge related to a national and/or global issue.

## **O**

**On Time Renewal** – The membership renewal period running from the end of Spring Renewal until the end of the membership year, September 30.



# Girl Scout Terms

## P

**Patch Program** – Patches earned by completing programs unique to individual councils or organizations. The required activities to complete the patch programs are generally found on our website.

**Petals** – Earned awards by Girl Scout Daisies. Girls earn the Promise Center by showing they understand the Girl Scout Promise. Girls earn Petals by showing they understand the 10 parts of the Girl Scout Law.

**Program Aide** – Girl who has completed 6th grade, who has taken a specialized training to help troop/group leaders with the activities for their girls.

## S

**Sash** – A type of uniform available to Brownies through Ambassadors. The sash sits on the right shoulder and crosses the body, resting on the left hip.

**Senior** – A Girl Scout in grades 9-10

**Service Project** – A project that helps the community with a specific and short-term need.

**Service Unit Volunteers** – Volunteers who support and mentor troop volunteers in their service unit

**Silver Award** – The highest award a Girl Scout Cadette can receive. Earned by completing a Girl Scout Journey and the suggested minimum of 50 hours building a team, exploring the community, picking a Take Action project, developing the project, and spreading the word.

**Sit-Upon** – Lightweight pad or mat the girls make to “sit-upon” when the ground is dirty or damp.

**S’mores** – A sandwich made with graham crackers, chocolate, and a roasted marshmallow, invented by Girl Scouts.

**Spring Renewal** – Early renewal campaign that takes place between April and June (specific dates change each year) with added incentives for girls and troops who renew their membership before a certain date.

## T

**Take Action** – A project that helps the community by identifying the root cause of the community need, has long-term benefits, and has sustainable community support.

**Tunic** – A type of uniform available to Daisies. It is worn over the shoulders and ties at the waist.

**Trefoil** – The official emblem of the Girl Scout movement in the United States of America, registered in the United States Patent Office by Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

**Troop** – This group of girls and adults who meet on a regular basis to engage in Girl Scout Program activities. Troops are organized according to grade level, which places girls together with others in the same social/developmental stage.

**Troop Crest** – A Girl Scout tradition that helps leaders easily identify Girl Scouts belonging to different troops while on a hike or other activity. There are currently 16 official troop crests available, and they are displayed on uniforms between the Girl Scout Council Identification Set and the troop numerals.

## V

**Vest** – A type of uniform available to all grade levels.

## W

**WAGGGS** – The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a global association supporting female-oriented and female-only Guiding and Scouting organizations in 150 countries.

**World Thinking Day** – Celebrated annually on February 22. Official Girl Scout holiday where girls traditionally learn about the cultures and traditions of WAGGGS member countries. This day also commemorates the birthdays of Lord and Lady Baden-Powell, the founders of the Scouting Movement worldwide.





Check out our website for more information:  
[girlscoutsmoheartland.org](https://girlscoutsmoheartland.org)



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