Volunteer Essentials
2016-2017
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Welcome to the great adventure of Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world.

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

Reading your Volunteer Essentials is your next step in building your knowledge – so get to it as soon as you can, particularly Chapters 1-4. It is also a reference for you to use as needed. When you have a question, simply look up the topic in the Table of Contents, and you’ll find your answer. Think of Volunteer Essentials as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering: it’s here when you need it.

Each Girl Scout organization in the United States is called a “Girl Scout Council”. There are a little over 100 Councils in the U.S. Our Council is called “Girl Scouts of Silver Sage” with headquarters in Boise, and Service Centers in Twin Falls, Pocatello, and Idaho Falls. We have a total staff of approximately 30 who serve the needs of nearly 8000 girl and adult members.

Service Unit

Our Council is organized into geographical units called Service Units. Each Service Unit is managed by a volunteer Service Unit team and works in partnership with Council staff to support the troop leaders and girl program activities within the Service Unit.

Most Service Units include these primary positions – although each Service Unit is organized and functions in the way that works best for them:

- Service Unit (SU) Manager – Oversees the operations of the Service Unit.
- SU Coach – Partners with the SU Manager to provide ongoing learning and awards support.
- Troop Mentor – Partners with the SU Manager to provide support to new volunteers.
- SU Product Sales – Oversees the implementation of the Fall Product and Cookie Program for the Service Unit.
- SU Troop Organizer – Oversees recruitment and placement for the Service Unit.
- SU Treasurer – Manages the finances of the Service Unit.
- SU Registrar – Manages the registration records for the Service Unit.
- SU Special Events – Oversees the event planning for the Service Unit.
- SU PR/Communications – Oversees public relations for the Service Unit.

The Service Unit Manager will be your primary point of contact – her/his name and contact information, including your Service Unit number, can be found at the bottom of your Appointment Letter. Your SU Manager will contact you shortly to introduce you to the Service Unit and give you the details of how her unit is organized and how it functions.

Your Service Unit will have regular meetings, with a portion of those meetings focused on supporting troop leaders with information and learning opportunities. Find out the schedule for these meetings and try to attend as often as possible, or assign a parent volunteer to attend in your place to represent your troop. You will find that one of your greatest resources will be the other volunteers in your Service Unit.
Girl Scouts’ Organizational Structure

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

National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood

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

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

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

Your Council – Girl Scouts of Silver Sage

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

Your Support Team

A team of volunteers and staff (Membership Support Team) provides you with local support, learning opportunities, and advice. As a volunteer, you will have the most contact with your Girl Scout volunteer support team, which is called a Service Unit. Never hesitate to contact them, because your Service Unit team will guide and assist you in all things Girl Scouting. If you have questions about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, resources in the National Program Portfolio (National Leadership Journeys and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting), or selling Girl Scout cookies and other products, contact your Service Unit team or Membership Support Team for answers and ongoing support.
The Membership Support Team - membershipsupport@girlscouts-ssc.org  208-377-2011

The Membership Support Team is made up of the Director of Membership, Membership Manager, Recruitment Manager, Recruitment Coordinator, Placement Coordinator, Membership Coordinators, and Membership Support Specialist. This team establishes effective and efficient volunteer structures and systems that support program delivery to girls and recruits new girls and adults. The Membership Support team provides support to Service Unit teams and Troop leaders throughout Silver Sage. This includes appointment of Service Unit Managers, team members and troop leaders, providing resources and support to Service Unit Managers, training of new volunteers, review of troop annual reports, conflict management, volunteer appreciation, and much more!

Director of Membership: The Director ensures membership support throughout the volunteer life cycle through volunteer recruitment, placement, service delivery, and renewal. In addition, ensures the implementation of the Council’s membership strategy and integrated mission delivery with special focus on the Council’s market driven membership plan.

Membership Manager: The Membership Manager provides leadership and management oversight of the Membership Support team as they work to support and retain adult volunteers and girl members of the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage. Also the manager ensures development of support services to ensure the effective delivery of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, and maintaining and developing partnerships to assist volunteers in their work with girls.

Membership Coordinators: The Membership Coordinators are responsible for the development and recruitment of Service Unit Teams within assigned geographic areas. They will empower and engage adult volunteers to help build strong Girl Scouts communities. Silver Sage has 5 Membership Coordinators assigned to specific Service Units.

- Membership Coordinator-Eastern Idaho
- Membership Coordinator-Central Idaho
- Membership Coordinator-Visions/Western Treasure Valley
- Membership Coordinator-Treasure Valley/Oregon
- Membership Coordinator-Northern Treasure Valley

Recruitment Manager: The Recruitment Manager is responsible for development, assessment, and implementation of comprehensive year-round recruitment plans. Membership growth and support is planned and executed in coordination with the Director of Membership to ensure all methods and tactics align to the Council’s strategic priorities and mission delivery goals.

The Recruitment Coordinator is responsible for developing and executing effective recruiting strategies to increase awareness of and participation in Girl Scouting.

Placement Coordinator: The Placement Coordinator develops and executes effective recruiting strategies via telephone and or internet to increase to increase girl and adult membership in the council. This includes recruiting girl members as well as recruiting volunteers to deliver and support programming.
We Are Girl Scouts

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

Our Mission and Vision

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

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

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

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.
More than 3 Million Strong
We are urban, rural, and suburban. We are in schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes, and detention centers. We are in virtually every zip code and in 90 countries around the world.

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

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

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

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

Girl Scout Leadership Experience Outcomes

1. SENSE OF SELF: Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and form positive identities.

2. POSITIVE VALUES: Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly, and show concern for others.

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

4. HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS: Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.

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

Connect Online

The Girl Scout Troop

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

What all members share, both girls and adults, are the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues. (Adults have the option to purchase a lifetime membership). For the most current annual membership dues and lifetime membership please visit our website at www.girlscouts-ssc.org.

Troop Basics

A troop is defined as a group of girls (minimum of 5) and adults (minimum of 2 non-related 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.

*A related adult is considered anyone of blood relation or with whom an intimate relationship is maintained. Examples include sister, mother, grandmother, uncle, in laws, cousins, significant others, etc. You may still have a related adult to volunteer in the troop but must have a 3rd person that is not related present at all times.

Girls at Every Grade Level

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

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

What is the Role of a Troop Leader?

In a nutshell, you facilitate girls’ experiences so that they learn and grow, build healthy relationships, develop core leadership skills, have fun, and feel safe. You will do this by planning program activities, engaging girls’ families, managing troop functions, and by being a healthy role model.

NOTE: All volunteers involved in Girl Scout activities or in the presence of girls more than two (2) times a year, those who travel or participate in overnight activities, handle money, or have access to girl data must be an approved volunteer. To be a fully approved volunteer;

- An interview will be completed with a member of the Service Unit team or the Membership Support Team.
- Volunteer must be registered with GSUSA.
- Volunteer must have completed a background check.
- If you are a leader or co-leader training is required.
What is my Troop Number?
Every troop is assigned a troop number. Depending on how and when your troop formed, you might know yours already, or you might not. If you do not have a troop number, please contact the Membership Support Team.

What Girls are in My Troop?
Your troop is forming in one of two ways: You are either becoming a leader for an existing group of girls, or a leader for a new group of girls. You might know the details already, you might not. This is another topic that will be addressed by the Membership Support Team, since Service Unit teams manage girl placement for their area.

Who is my Co-Leader?
Since it is a Girl Scout safety requirement for every troop to have at least 2 adult supervisors, and it helps divide up the work, you will have one or more co-leaders. You might already know who your co-leader is. If not, this is something your SU Manager will discuss with you when you meet. Also, see Chapter 3, Working with Parents and Guardians, for how to structure a Friends-and-Family Network meeting.

When, Where, and How Often Will My Troop Meet?
This is completely up to you and your co-leaders, along with input from girls/families, factoring in safety and other considerations. You might start in a temporary location until you can find your regular meeting place. The Girl Scout year officially starts on October 1 and ends the following September 30. Troop meetings are typically one to two hours in length.
If you are a first-time troop leader, consider meeting only once a month at first so that you can get your bearings while you continue your learning. There is a lot to learn in Girl Scouting! You might even find that a once-a-month schedule is ideal for the long run as well, especially since you might be adding trips and other events to your troop year plan.

It is important that you maintain a schedule that works for you and your co-leaders so that you don’t feel overwhelmed, get stressed out, and forget to have some fun! Girl Scouting is about girls growing and developing over time, and adults growing and developing over time too, so you don’t need to try to do everything in one year.

How is a Troop Meeting Structured?
There is a traditional troop meeting structure, described below, but it is a guideline only. Do whatever works best for you, your co-leaders, and your girls. Structure tends to work best for younger girls, whereas older girls want to have more control and more variety. As you build your foundations and start working with your girls, you will likely evolve your meeting structure.

Start-Up – a simple activity to keep girls occupied while waiting for everyone to arrive.
Opening – open with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and a short activity or ceremony to get everyone focused.
Business – time for taking attendance, collecting dues, making announcements, etc.
Activities – the core of the meeting where you facilitate Girl Scout Program activities.
Clean-Up – time to wrap up and clean up.
Closing – a short ceremony to end the meeting and honor the time spent together.
Other Flexible Ways to Participate

Across the country, the Girl Scout community is hard at work on a whole new approach to make sure that everyone can participate in Girl Scouting in the ways they want to. As a volunteer, you can choose from flexible ways to participate that can be tailored to fit your schedule and lifestyle. You can also volunteer behind the scenes, in your Council office, instead of volunteering directly with girls.

Girls can choose any one, all, or some of the options—camp, events, series, troop, travel, virtual*—within a single membership year. (*Note virtual is still in development.) As a volunteer, you, too, have the option of partnering with girls throughout a membership year committing to an opportunity for only a few weeks or months. Based on independent research and extensive surveys with thousands of Council staff members from around the country, we have a good sense of which options will interest girls, based on grade levels. These are reflected in the chart on the right.
Getting Started with the National Leadership Program through Journeys and The Girl’s Guide

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

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

1. **Check out the Journey maps** at [www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys/maps](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys/maps). These maps show you how all the fun and meaningful traditions of Girl Scouting fit right into any National Leadership Journey. There, you can also find information about the topics that each Journey covers, which you can share with girls. And you'll find even more fun traditions to complement your Journey in *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, a resource for each grade level of Girl Scouting.

2. **Choose a Journey.** Because Girl Scouting is girl-led, it’s important to give girls the chance to pick the Journey they want to do. Talk to them about what each Journey for their grade level is about and let them choose one.

3. **Get to know the Journey.** Pick up a girl’s book and an adult guide. Read the girl's book for the pleasure of it, just to get an overview of the Journey’s theme and content.

4. **Review the sample session plans in the adult guide.** These sample session plans give you ideas about bringing the Journey to life with girls while leaving plenty of room for creativity and customization.

5. **Invite girls (and their parents/guardians) to use their imaginations** to make the Journey come to life in ways that excite them. Remember that you and the girls don’t have to do everything exactly as laid out in the sample sessions.

6. **Step back and watch** how the girls, with your knowledge, support, and guidance, have enormous fun and a rewarding experience. Celebrate with them as they earn their National Leadership Journey awards—and perhaps some Girl Scout badges, too!

In addition to the resources created for leadership journeys (the girl's book and the adult guide), girls at every grade level have the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. Through fun activities, girls can earn a variety of badges to build the skills and gain the confidence they'll use to change the world.

They can even develop and complete activities to make their own badge—a great way to explore a topic of personal interest. (In addition, girls who make their own badge will learn how to learn, which is an important skill to have in school, on the job, and in life!)
Planning in a Girl-Led Environment

To start planning your time with girls, visit www.girlscouts.org/MyCalendar. There, you’ll consider the following questions and begin to map out your Girl Scout year:

- How many times each month will you meet? When do you plan break for holidays?
- How many weeks do you need to allocate for the Girl Scout Cookie Program?
- Will you have time in your schedule for guest speakers and other visitors?
- If you’ve worked with this group before, what are their preferences: badge work? field trips? other activities? For specific ideas on how to incorporate badges, trips, and other Girl Scout traditions into a Journey, check out the online Journey maps for the grade level of the girls you’re partnering with.

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

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

Getting Started Tip: If you are a first-time troop leader, don’t expect to have a complete troop year calendar from the get-go. Since there is so much going on as you are starting a troop, consider picking a badge activity from The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting for your troop to work on as you get to know each other. It won’t take long before your girls are ready to be involved in choosing a journey and planning the rest of the troop year.
Meeting with Girls for the First Time

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

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

1. **Find out what interests the group (and be sure to include the other adult volunteers), so that you and the girls can begin to customize the Journey.** Without promising anything (yet!), ask the girls to talk about what they’re passionate about, what they’ve always wanted to do, and how they would spend their time if money and other barriers were no object. Build off the ideas shared, but be sure to include opinions from all the girls. Ask direct questions of those who seem to be holding back or are unsure about answering, so everyone is included.

2. **Get the girls talking about how they want to schedule their time together.** Use the planning pages from their Journey (referring to your draft calendar only as needed, so that the girls lead). Consider questions like these:
   - Can girls organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular Journey topic or theme?
   - Is there an event that meshes with this topic or area of interest?
   - Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via email or social media?
   - Can they invite a guest speaker to answer questions or demonstrate particular skills?
   - Which badges can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?
   - If they are Juniors or older, are they interested in pursuing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards?
   - Do they have ideas for activities that will involve younger or older girls?

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

3. **Introduce the Journey, its theme, and its ties to leadership.** Each Journey’s adult guide gives you ideas for talking with girls and their parents/guardians about the Journey’s theme and the Three Keys to Leadership.
Using Safety Activity Checkpoints

When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. You can find these on our Council’s website, www.girlscouts-ssc.org.

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

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

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

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

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

- **Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from your Council for girls ages 12 and older who will operate motorized vehicles and personal watercraft; take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable; or fly in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot air balloons, and blimps.

- **Warning:** The following activities are never allowed for any girl: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing, and outdoor trampolining); creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skis, and wakeboards); hunting; shooting a projectile at another person; riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes; and taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher.

**An additional note:** Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from our Council. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position. You are required to obtain permission slips signed by the girls’ parents/guardians; see our website to print the **Permission to Participate in Sensitive Issues** form.
Following the Girl Scouts Safety Guidelines

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

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints on our website, [www.girlscouts-ssc.org](http://www.girlscouts-ssc.org).** Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.

2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional approved adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and must be screened by our Council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female. Note: An approved adult volunteer must have completed the Volunteer application and interview, be registered and have completed a background check.

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

4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow our Council’s guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting. Find reporting instructions in Chapter 4: Safety-wise. See also, Appendix: Personnel Policies for Volunteers.

5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls’ families.

6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer, 20 years of age or older, and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats. See also, Chapter 4, Transporting Girls.

7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.

8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don’t consume alcohol, smoke, vape or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls, unless given special permission by your Council for group marksmanship activities.

9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.

10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult. On group websites, publish girls’ first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge and have them commit to it. (available at [http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp))
12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other Council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes, and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout–approved product sales and efforts.
The famous **Girl Scout Cookie Program** is a core component of the troop year and achieves several important goals for our local Girl Scout organization:

- Girls earn “cookie dough”, which are money credits that can be used for Girl Scouts of Silver Sage resident camp, girl membership, store, and other travel opportunities.
- Troops earn funds to use for troop projects and trips and supplies.
- The Council earns funds to keep the whole operation going!

Throughout Girl Scout Cookie Program, girls learn the 5 Skills:

- Goal Setting
- Decision Making
- Money Management
- People Skills
- Business Ethics

The Cookie Timeline is from Mid-January through Mid-March annually.

- Pre-sales: 2 weeks
- Goal Getter: 4 weeks
- Booth Sales: 2 weeks

The girls can continue to sell cookies in-between the pre-sale dates and the booth sale dates with their Goal Getter Card. The Cookie Program all happens within a 2 months’ time period.

**Fall Product**

Another way for troops to earn money earlier in the Girl Scout year is by selling nuts, candy and magazines in October.

**Training & Materials**

Your Service Unit team will provide the dates of the Fall Product and Cookie Program, sale materials, and the training you need to plan and implement the program with your troop.

**Troop Fall Product and Cookie Manager**

Implementing the Fall Product and Cookie Program involves some very important logistical and management aspects that require a “Troop Cookie Manager” (aka Cookie Mom/Dad) who has the skills and desire to help with the money, inventory, and record keeping aspects of the Cookie Program. This position will be an important one to recruit for once you get your troop up and running.
Money Management

It will take money to run your troop, to pay for program supplies (handbooks, activity supplies, etc.) as well as money for troop plans, such as trips. You and your co-leaders are responsible for overseeing troop funds, managing a budget and checking account, and adhering to all Council requirements regarding money-earning and money spending (see Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances for more information).

Opening a Troop Checking Account

One of the first steps for you and your co-leader and/or Troop treasurer is to open a checking account. If you are not comfortable handling money, you may want to choose someone with money management experience for this position. Once you have chosen a bank, you will need to fill out the Troop Checking Account Request form that is located on our website, www.girlscouts-ssc.org, and send to your Membership Coordinator. (Note: both authorized signers must be fully appointed volunteers.)

Making Changes to a Troop Checking Account

To make changes to an existing Troop Checking Account, follow the instructions for Opening an Account, and contact your Membership Coordinator.

Signing Checks

Although checks require only one signature, your bank account must have (at least) two signers on the account, and we strongly recommend that you have 3 signers. It makes sense for both you and your co-leader to be signers.

Debit Card

Authorized signers may be issued a debit card for your Troop Checking Account.

Troop Dues

You and your co-leader and girls will establish your troop dues based on your plans and anticipated expenses.

Troop Money Earning

The Cookie Program is the primary money-earning opportunity for troops. Other money-earning projects are permissible (with restrictions), but troops must participate in the Cookie Program before they can plan any additional money-earning activities. The Application for a Troop Money Earning Project, available on our Council website, must be submitted to your Membership Coordinator prior to any activity.

Healthy Money Management

As keepers of the hard-earned troop funds, it is expected that you will manage your troop money accurately and respectfully. This includes things like:

- Spending only on permissible items.
- Maintaining up-to-date records.
- Completing a Troop Annual Report.
- Communicating with families.
Paperwork

The paperwork we require relates to minimizing the risk to girls and being prepared in the event of an incident. We continually review our paperwork to make sure that it is as purposeful and as streamlined as possible. Here is a review of your essential paperwork requirements as a new troop leader.

Membership Registration

Everyone participating in Girl Scouting, both girls and adults, must be registered members of Girl Scouts of the USA. This is accomplished by completing a Membership Registration, either on-line or with a paper form, and paying the fee. Although processed locally, a portion of the fee is forwarded to Girl Scouts of the USA to cover basic membership insurance and national operations.

**Online Registration:** Life can be super busy and paper can be hard to keep track of, so we’re offering an easy way to get online and take care of registration whenever it’s convenient for you. As troop leaders, service unit volunteers and parents who support in countless ways, we know your time is valuable and we are excited to offer you this new flexible tool to register. We now have a family based online registration system that will make it easier to register your family all at once. Please visit our website, [www.girlscouts-ssc.org](http://www.girlscouts-ssc.org), and press “Join” to begin your online registration. The Membership Support Team is available to assist with any online registration questions that may arise.

As a troop leader, you will ensure that your girls’ families register them each year, and that you carry a copy of your troop roster (you have access to your troop roster from your online registration page).

Also available is the **Cookie Dough Reimbursement to Troop for Online Girl Membership form.** As a leader you will be able to register girls that want to use cookie dough online using the troop debit card and be reimbursed.

If you are the primary leader, you will receive blank copies of **Registration Forms** and a copy of the **Registration Tips** (including online registration) resource with your new leader materials. Your Service Unit Manager will assist you in getting started with registration.

Health History Form

Everyone participating in Girl Scouting, both girls and adults, must have a **Health History** form on file with the troop. As a troop leader, you are responsible to ensure that everyone has given you one and that you have these with you at all times.

Other Paperwork as Needed

Other paperwork is required when you will be traveling, taking an overnight trip, discussing sensitive topics, planning a money-earning project, etc. The most commonly used forms are described in the Forms appendix of your Volunteer Essentials Handbook.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>More</th>
<th>When you are ready to use a form, please print from the Forms page of the website at: <a href="http://www.girlscouts-ssc.org">www.girlscouts-ssc.org</a>.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Printing from the website ensures that we are all using the most current form.</td>
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</table>
Resources

Volunteer Essentials
When you have a question, simply look up the topic in the Table of Contents, and you'll find your answer. Think of Volunteer Essentials as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering: it's here when you need it.

Membership Support Team
The Membership Support Team stands ready to help volunteers with any questions they may have. The Membership Support Team fosters and sustains quality customer service to empower effective and efficient volunteers to deliver the Girl Scout Mission to our customer, our girls. Their operating hours are Monday – Friday from 9am to 5pm. You may contact them by phone at 377-2011 or by email at membershipsupport@girlscouts-ssc.org.

Service Unit Team and Service Unit Meetings
Your Service Unit Manager is your primary point of contact. Your Service Unit will have regular meetings, with a portion of those meetings focused on supporting troop leaders with information and learning opportunities.

Silver Sage Website
(See our “new look” beginning October 24, 2016!
Our Council website at www.girlscouts-ssc.org contains many resources to support your work as a volunteer. You will find these resources under the Volunteers menu.
- The Training page is where you can stay up-to-date on training courses and schedules.
- The Forms page is where you can download the most current forms.
- The Safety Checkpoints page is where you can find safety information specific to your planned activities.
- The Resource Central page contains a long list of resources related to program planning, traditions, and more!

GSUSA Website
Our National Organization, Girl Scouts of the USA, has a website packed with great information at www.girlscout.org.

Girl Scout Store
Our Girl Scout store is located in our Boise office. Don't worry if you are not in Boise, we have a fantastic online store as well – accessible from our Council website at www.girlscouts-ssc.org. Shopping at our local Council store (either online or in-person) benefits us by providing revenue source for local operations – we do not receive any proceeds from the GSUSA online store.
Training

Below is a list of the basic and required training courses. Followed by more learning opportunities and training-related resources.

**Girl Scouting 101**  
This 60-minute Girl Scouts of the USA online session provides an overview of Girl Scouting today. It includes the fundamentals of Girl Scouting – the Promise and Law, Girl Scout Mission and history, an introduction to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, the *Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting* and the Journeys program.

Required by all volunteers, available online at [http://training.girlscouts.org](http://training.girlscouts.org).

**Girl Scouting 102**  
This required 2-hour session will acquaint you with our Council and the resources available to support you. Topics include forming Your Troop/Group, Parent/Guardian meeting, Troop Finance, where to find answers to your questions, and who will help you along the way.

**30 60 90 Day Training Checklist**  
This checklist is to provide a roadmap to guide you through your next 30, 60, and 90 days. The trainings you see under each checkpoint are the courses we suggest you take within that timeframe. You will also see a list of suggested trainings you should take at anytime throughout your Girl Scout Year.

**Planning Overnight Trips with Girls** - Home-study required before taking an overnight trip

**Outdoor Education Basics** - Home-study required before taking a Troop Camping trip

**Troop Camp Skills** - Workshop/Opt-Out required before taking a Troop Camping trip (limited availability throughout the year, so please plan ahead to take the course)

More...

**CPR/FA** – Required for overnight trips (check with your Service Unit team for recommendations for training)

**SUPER SATURDAY**
Semi-Annually, Treasure Valley, Pocatello and Idaho Falls

**Training Resources** – see our website for more information, [www.girlscouts-ssc.org](http://www.girlscouts-ssc.org)

Leadership Development Pin
Volunteer Essentials

2016-2017
Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts

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

Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

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

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

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

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

Your Responsibilities

Your other responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Abide by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Understand the Three Keys to Leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Discover, Connect, and Take Action.
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach.
- Work in a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you’ll also partner with other volunteers and Council staff for support and guidance.
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls’ interests and needs.
- Provide guidance and information regarding Girl Scout group meetings with girls’ parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media, and any other method you choose.
- Process and completing registration forms and other paperwork, such as permission slips.
• Communicate effectively and deliver clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group.
• Oversee with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise.
• Maintain a close connection to your Membership Support Team.
• Facilitate a safe experience for every girl.

**Girl Scout Promise**

On my honor, I will try:

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

*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.”*  

**Note:** This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls’ books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it’s your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your group and to make sure that everyone in the group feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls’ families.

**Girl Scout Law**

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong,
and responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

**Your Support Team**

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

The other fully approved volunteers on your support team may help by:

• Filling in for you.
• Arranging meeting places.
• Being responsible for communicating with girls and parents/guardians.
• Locating adults with special skills to facilitate a specialized meeting.
• Assisting with trips and chaperoning.
• Managing group records.

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

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

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

Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

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

Our Council training sessions and Volunteer Essentials are designed to give you all of the information you need to start working with girls. They’re always available; think of them as references you can use whenever you need them.

Knowing How Much You’re Appreciated

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

Just as you’ll receive support throughout your volunteering experience, when you reach the end of your Girl Scout year, you’ll want to talk with your support team about the positive parts of your experience, as well as the challenges you faced. The end of your troop year, camp season, overseas trip, or series/event session is just the beginning of your next adventure with Girl Scouting!

If you’re ready for more opportunities to volunteer, or know someone who is, be sure to let our Council Membership Support Team know how you’d like to be a part of girls’ lives in the future—whether in the same position or in other, flexible ways. Are you ready to organize a series or event? Take a trip? Work with girls at a camp? Work with a troop of girls as a year-long volunteer? Share your skills at a Council office, working behind the scenes? The possibilities are endless, and can be tailored to fit your skills and interests.
**Volunteer Appreciation Week**

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

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**Annual Conference**

The Annual Conference is held every year in April. Annual Conference is an opportunity for all Council members (volunteers, staff and Board members) to come together socially to celebrate and award member success and dedication, receive valuable professional development on timely topics, share best practices, and update members on Council efforts and business strategies. In addition, elected delegates participate in the Annual Business Meeting which elects members to the Board of Directors and reviews changes to by-laws and governance.

This year’s Annual Conference will be held on April 7-8, 2017 in Boise, ID.

EVERYONE IS INVITED!

We encourage you to participate by:

- **Nominating** outstanding adult Girl Scouts for recognition at the Annual Awards Luncheon. *See Appendix: 2016-17 Adult Recognitions Manual* for list of awards, qualifications, and how to nominate an outstanding adult member. Contact recognitions@girlscouts-ssc.org for questions and assistance.

- **Volunteering** as a delegate for the Annual Business Meeting. Delegates are elected in the fall by each Service Unit so that every service area is represented;

- **Registering and attending** the Annual Conference, which includes:
  - Friday night reception and party, featuring Silver Sage’s World Famous Raffle Baskets and other fun;
  - Saturday morning round table discussions and workshops;
  - Saturday afternoon Awards Luncheon, honoring outstanding service by volunteers and staff;
  - Annual Business Meeting, which includes election and installation of Board of Directors, Financial Reports, CEO State of the Council Address, and other business matters.

- **Volunteering** to help on an Annual Conference Committee, such as decorations, awards or luncheon program. Contact the Director of Membership at jburke@girlscouts-ssc.org.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO SEEING YOU IN APRIL. YOU WON’T WANT TO MISS IT!
Chapter 2: Girl Scouting as a National Experience

Now that you’re a Girl Scout volunteer, you belong to a network of more than 1 million adults who share an important commitment: preparing girls to lead successful lives. During your time as a volunteer, you’ll have fun, meet new people, and learn by doing alongside girls at every step.

The Girl Scout program—what girls do in Girl Scouting—is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), a national model that helps girls become leaders in their own lives and as they grow. No matter where girls live or what their age or background, as Girl Scouts they are part of a powerful, national experience. As they build leadership skills, they also develop lifelong friendships and earn meaningful awards, two of many treasured traditions in the sisterhood of Girl Scouting.

What Girl Scouting Does for Girls

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

- When girls lead in their own lives, they Discover their values and the confidence to do what’s right. This helps girls act in ways that make us proud, no matter where they are.
- When girls lead in their communities, they Connect as they learn how to work with other people. This helps them get along better with others, resolve conflicts, and do better on group projects at school.
- When girls lead in the world, they Take Action to change the world for the better. Starting as young Girl Scouts, girls learn how to see problems—such as a food pantry in need of donations or an elderly neighbor who could use a hand—and come up with a solution.

In other words: Discover + Connect + Take Action = leadership. And everything you do with girls in Girl Scouting is aimed at giving them the benefits of these Three Keys to Leadership.

More details about the benefits (or outcomes) Girl Scouts offers girls can be found in Transforming Leadership Continued, available online at www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gsoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp.
Top Reasons Why Girls Should Get Outdoors
Findings from the 2014 More than S’mores Report*

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

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

10-year-old Girl Scout, Missouri

Because of Girl Scouts…

71% of girls tried an outdoor activity for the first time.
48% of girls helped other girls do an outdoor activity.
71% of girls improved an outdoor skill.
29% of girls overcame a fear of an outdoor activity.

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

Start the fun now! girlscouts.org/join
10 Essential Elements for Creating the Girl Scout Experience

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<tr>
<th>ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>WELCOME FAMILIES TO GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scouting helps girls become leaders in their daily lives and in the world. Let girls know about all the fun they’ll have—and tell families what Girl Scouts does and why it matters.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SHOW GIRLS THEY BELONG TO A BIG SISTERHOOD</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Help girls make the connection between their troop and the millions of girls around the country and the world who share a mission to make the world a better place.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>GUIDE GIRLS TO DEVELOP AS LEADERS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use the national leadership curriculum to help girls experience the three keys to leadership—Discovering Self, Connecting with Others, and Taking Action—in the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>EMPOWER GIRLS TO TAKE ACTION IN THEIR COMMUNITIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls want to know they can make a difference in the world. Help girls identify a problem they want to solve, reach out to others who can help, and put together their Take Action project.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SUPPORT GIRLS TO BUILD SKILLS THROUGH PROFICIENCY BADGES</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls feel proud and confident when they’ve learned a new skill through earning a badge. Show girls the badges available at their grade level and guide them as they earn the ones that interest them most.</td>
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<td><strong>EXPAND GIRLS’ VIEW OF THE WORLD</strong></td>
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<td>Give girls the opportunity to go to new places, meet new friends, and talk to experts in various fields. This expands their horizons and helps them imagine all kinds of new possibilities for their futures.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>CELEBRATE WITH CEREMONIES AND TRADITIONS</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Hold award ceremonies to celebrate what girls have learned; enjoy beloved Girl Scout traditions, such as Flag ceremonies, sing-alongs, and campfires; or come together at bridging ceremonies to mark the moment when girls move to the next level in Girl Scouting.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>USE A GIRL-FRIENDLY APPROACH</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls have fun when they can shape their own experiences, do hands-on activities, and work together as teams. Help make this happen by using Girl Scouts’ three processes: Girl Led, Learning by Doing, and Cooperative Learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENCOURAGE GIRLS TO EARN AND LEARN THROUGH THE GIRL SCOUT COOKIE PROGRAM</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Coach girls to develop five key skills—Goal Setting, Decision Making, Money Management, People Skills, and Business Ethics—by taking part in the largest girl-led business in the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>INSPIRE GIRLS TO CONTINUE GROWING THROUGH GIRL SCOUTS</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Share with girls the exciting opportunities they’ll have—to learn new things, meet new friends, and make the world a better place—by staying involved in Girl Scouts.</td>
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Fun with Purpose – the Three Processes

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

- **Girl-led:** Girls of every grade level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why, and how they’ll structure activities. Of course, you’ll provide guidance appropriate to the age of the girls. Plus, you’ll encourage them to bring their ideas and imaginations into the experiences, make choices, and lead the way as much as they can.

- **Learning by doing:** This means that girls have active, hands-on experiences. It also means they have a chance to think and talk about what they are learning as a result of the activities. This kind of
reflection is what helps girls gain self-awareness and confidence to dive into new challenges. So make sure girls always have a chance to talk with each other—and you—after an activity. It doesn't have to be formal, just get them talking and see what happens.

- **Cooperative learning:** Girls learn so much about themselves and each other when they team up on common goals. Plus, great teamwork helps girls in school now and on the job later. Look for ways to help each girl contribute her unique talents and ideas to the team, help all girls see how their differences are valuable to the team, and coach girls to resolve their conflicts productively.

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

1. After you help girls choose a National Leadership Journey (there’s more information about those [later in this chapter](#)), make sure you get the adult guide that accompanies the Journey. As you read through that guide, look at how the activities, conversations, and choice-making options are set up using the three processes. Once you start practicing the processes, you’ll probably find that they become second nature when you’re with girls.
2. If you haven’t already, take [Girl Scouting 101](#), our online training required by all volunteers. (Our Council password is aboutGS101.) Also take [Getting Started 102](#) introduction to volunteering with Girl Scouts.
3. Want more detail about the processes? Take a look at the examples in [Transforming Leadership Continued](#), available online at [www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gsoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/research/publications/gsoutcomes/transforming_leadership_continued.asp).

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

**The National Program Portfolio**

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

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

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

We are proud to be the premier leadership organization for girls. While girls and their families may have questions or interest in programming relevant to other aspects of girls’ lives, we are not always the organization best suited to offer such information. Our Council can recommend local organizations or resources that are best suited to do so.
Also note that GSUSA continuously reviews national program content to guarantee that all our resources are relevant and age appropriate, and that their content doesn’t include violence, sex, inappropriate language, or risky behavior. We value your input and hope that you will bring to our Council’s attention any content that concerns you.

National Leadership Journeys

National Leadership Journeys help Girl Scouts learn and practice the Three Keys, aid their communities, and earn leadership awards, progressing up Girl Scouting’s Ladder of Leadership as they do so. There are three series of Leadership Journeys, each about a different theme; the girls in your group can choose the theme that interests them most.

After the girls choose a Journey, spend an hour or two reading the companion adult guide. It’ll give you a feel for how to bring the Journey to life, and you’ll get ideas for the steps girls will take (with your support) to earn their leadership awards. Don’t worry; you don’t have to be any kind of expert to do a Leadership Journey with girls. You just need to be willing to dive in and enjoy the learning-by-doing experience with them.

Each Journey adult guide contains sample plans that you can customize to fit the needs of your group. Each Journey also offers opportunities to enjoy the longstanding traditions of Girl Scouting, from ceremonies and songs to earning awards and skill badges.

The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting and National Proficiency Badges

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

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

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

If you’re working with Girl Scout Daisies, please note that they earn Petals and Leaves (which form a flower) instead of badges.

There are several ways to supplement the National Program Portfolio and enhance girls’ time as Girl Scouts—and have fun while you’re doing it! A few of them are outlined below.

Digital programming

The For Girls section of girlscouts.org features a variety of videos, games, blogs, and other fun ways to enrich the GSLE. Girls will find opportunities to post their ideas for public service announcements on topics that matter to them and get inspired by watching short videos that tell the stories of women from all walks of life. If you work with Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies, you might like the site’s print-and-play coloring and game pages—great for having on hand when energetic girls get together! Both girls and volunteers will have fun with Badge Explorer, an overview of all of the badges girls can earn. For Girls is updated frequently, so check back often—and invite girls to do the same!
**Make Your Own Badge**

Girls are welcome to develop and complete activities to make their own badge—a great way to explore a topic of personal interest. (In addition, girls who make their own badge will learn how to learn, which is an important skill to have in school, on the job, and in life!) Once girls check the Awards Log in *The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting* to make sure there’s not already a badge on the topic they want to explore, they’ll follow steps outlined in that handbook to complete the requirements for their very own badge. Even better, they can go online to design and purchase a badge that later arrives in the mail! For more information, check out the Make Your Own Badge website [http://www.gsmakeyourown.com/](http://www.gsmakeyourown.com/).

**My Promise, My Faith Pin**

The Girl Scout Law includes many of the principles and values common to most faiths. And even though Girl Scouts is a secular organization, we’ve always encouraged girls to explore spirituality via their own faiths. Girls of all grade levels can now earn the My Promise, My Faith pin. By carefully examining the Girl Scout Law and directly tying it to tenets of her faith, a girl can earn the pin once each year she participates in Girl Scouting. You can find more about the requirements for this pin in *The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting*.

**The Girl Scout Cookie Program**

In addition to giving girls an opportunity to earn money to fund their Girl Scouting goals, taking part in the Girl Scout Cookie Program teaches girls five important skills that serve them throughout their lives: goal setting, money management, people skills, decision making, and business ethics. For more on everything involved in the Girl Scout Cookie Program, flip to the “Managing Group Finances” chapter of this handbook and contact your SU Cookie Manager.

**Outdoor Adventures**

Being outside is a great way for girls to explore leadership, build skills, and develop a deep appreciation for nature. Whether they spend an afternoon exploring a local hiking trail or a week at camp, being outside gives girls an opportunity to grow, explore, and have fun in a whole new environment. For more information, visit [www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/camping](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/basics/camping).

**GSUSA Destinations**

Destination travel opportunities are GSUSA-approved trips. Each destination has a unique theme offering girls a wide variety of experiences to choose from. Girls apply to participate and travel individually to meet sister Girl Scouts at the host location.

**Other details:**

- Girls as young as 11 can travel on a destination trip.
- Age restrictions are determined by the hosting Council.
- All Destinations are listed on GSUSAs website; [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org). There, you will find the proper application posted. All girls interested in traveling through the GSUSA destination program must fill out one application per location of interest. Girls can apply for up to four destinations.
GSUSA Getaways

GSUSA getaways are prepackaged travel opportunities located in different cities around the country. They are great for first time troops looking to travel. All getaways are quick weekend or short trips that don’t require an application, just a registration. Often programming options are included in the price along with a few meals and sleeping arrangements.

Other details:

- Girl Scouts Troops ages 11-17.
- All Getaways are listed on GSUSA’s website; www.girlscouts.org.

Spanish-language resources

Two of the Journey series—It’s Your World—Change It! and It’s Your Planet—Love It!—are available in Spanish, as are two new supporting books for Spanish-speaking volunteers to use with Spanish-speaking and bilingual Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors: ¡Las Girl Scouts Brownies Cambian El Mundo! (Girl Scout Brownies Change the World!) and ¡Las Girl Scouts Juniors Apuntan a las Estrellas! (Girl Scout Juniors Reach for the Stars!). The books, which introduce the Girl Scout movement to these girls and their families, provide everything you need for a fun-filled year in Girl Scouting. For more information on these resources, contact our Council.

Putting It All Together

All of this may seem overwhelming, but don’t worry. To give you an idea of what’s involved when you use the National Program Portfolio refer to the printout included in your Troop Leader packet for a quick reference.

Emblems and Patches

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

- **Emblems** show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular Council, a particular troop, or in some other Girl Scout group. These can be worn on the front of a sash or vest (see the diagram in the handbook section of *The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting* to see where these are placed).

- **Participation patches** represent activities girls have tried and are fun ways for girls to remember special events they’ve attended. Since these patches and pins aren’t tied to skill-building activities, they are worn on the back of a girl’s sash or vest.

You can purchase emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at our Council’s Girl Scout shop or by visiting www.girlscouts-ssc.org. There, you’ll find a cool list of the earned awards for each grade level and a link that shows you exactly where girls can place their emblems, awards, badges, pins, and patches on their vests and sashes.

Note: see the Appendix for Insignia placement and pricing charts.
Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards are Girl Scouting's highest awards. These awards offer girls relevant, grade-level-appropriate challenges related to teamwork, goal setting, and community networking and leadership. They also engage girls in building networks that not only support them in their award projects, but in new educational and career opportunities.

Like everything girls do in Girl Scouting, the steps to earning these awards are rooted in the GSLE. This is why, to earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level Journey (two Journeys for the Gold Award or a Silver Award and one Journey). With Journeys, girls experience the keys to leadership and learn to identify community needs, work in partnership with their communities, and carry out Take Action projects that make a lasting difference. They can then use the skills they developed during a Journey to develop and execute projects for their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. Girl Scouts has just introduced a web app that takes girls step-by-step through the Gold Award requirements. Visit www.girlscouts.org/MyGoldAward to take a peek.

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

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

All this, of course, starts with you—a Girl Scout volunteer! Encourage girls to go after Girl Scouting’s highest awards—information on the awards and guidelines for you to use when helping girls earn their awards are also available online and you can also find help from your SU Team members.

A Tradition of Honoring Girls

From the beginning of Girl Scouts, one prestigious award has recognized the girls who make a difference in their communities and in their own lives. The first of these awards, in 1916, was the Golden Eagle of Merit. In 1919, the name changed to The Golden Eaglet, and in 1920, the requirements for The Golden Eaglet were updated. The First Class Award existed for only two years, from 1938–1940, and was replaced in 1940 with The Curved Bar Award, the requirements for which were updated in 1947. In 1963, GSUSA re-introduced the First Class Award, for a girl who was an “all-around” person, with skills in many fields and a proficiency in one. Today’s highest award, the Girl Scout Gold Award, was introduced in 1980.
Other Initiatives and Opportunities

Other exciting initiatives and opportunities exist to support the GSLE. In the past, these have covered topics like the environment, robotics, and space exploration. You can find out how to engage your group in opportunities like these by contacting our Council or by visiting www.girlscouts.org/program/basics and clicking on “Program Basics” on the left side of the screen.

Girl Scout Traditions and Celebrations

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

Girl Scout Calendar

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

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

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World Thinking Day: February 22

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

Today, girls honor World Thinking Day by earning the World Thinking Day award, which focuses on an annual theme selected by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts. They also show their appreciation and friendship on World Thinking Day not only by extending warm wishes but also by contributing to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, which helps offer Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting to more girls and young women worldwide.
Time-Honored Ceremonies

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

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

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

Rededication ceremonies are opportunities for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Hosting a Girl-Led Event

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

- What sort of event do we have in mind?
- Who is our intended audience?
- Will it be outdoors?
- Does the audience have to be invited, or can anyone come?
- What’s our main topic or focus?
- What’s our objective—what do we hope to accomplish at the end of the day?
- Will one or more speakers need to be invited? If so, who? How do we find speakers?
- Where will the event take place?
• Is there a charge for this venue?
• Is the venue large enough to accommodate the audience?
• Do we have to obtain permission to use this venue? If so, from whom?
• Are there adequate facilities for the audience?
• Is there adequate parking or a drop-off point for girls?
• Do we need tables? chairs? podiums? microphones? speakers?
• What sort of entertainment will we provide?
• Will we provide or sell refreshments? If so, what kinds?
• How many chaperones will we need? Who will we ask?
• What emergency care do we need to plan for? Is the event large enough that local police and fire departments need to be notified?
• Do we need to purchase additional insurance for non-Girl Scouts?
• How will we advertise the event?
• What decorations will we use?
• Will we give away any keepsakes?
• Will we charge for the event?
• Who will set up the event?
• Who will clean up after the event?
• How will we determine whether the event was a success?

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

Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

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

Girl Scout Sign

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

Girls give the sign when they:

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

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

Quiet Sign

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

Girl Scout Slogan and Motto

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

Songs

Whether singing around a campfire or joining a chorus of voices on the Mall in Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship of music.

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp. A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out your Council shop www.girlscouts-ssc.org
Chapter 3: Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels

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

Arranging a Time and Place for Girl-Led Meetings

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Girl Scout Daisies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grade), girls . . .</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.</td>
<td>They’ll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are great builders and budding artists, though they are still developing their fine motor skills.</td>
<td>Encouraging them to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need assistance holding scissors, cutting in a straight line, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to move and dance.</td>
<td>They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin, or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.</td>
<td>Showing instead of telling, for example, about how animals are cared for. Plan visits to animal shelters, farms, or zoos; meet care providers; or make a creative bird feeder.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time, and money.</td>
<td>You’ll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and, perhaps, the legs on a caterpillar!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are just beginning to write and spell, and they don’t always have the words for what they’re thinking or feeling.</td>
<td>That having girls draw a picture of something they are trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so.</td>
<td>Being specific and offering only one direction at a time. Acknowledge when girls have followed directions well to increase their motivation to listen and follow again.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Girl Scout Brownies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Girl Scout Brownie level (second and third grade), girls . . .</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have lots of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.</td>
<td>Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are social and enjoy working in groups.</td>
<td>Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.</td>
<td>Letting girls lead, direct, and help out in activities whenever possible. Allow girls as a group to make decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.</td>
<td>Doing more than just reading to girls about the Brownie Elf’s adventures. Ask girls questions to gauge their understanding and allow them to role play their own pretend visit to a new country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need clear directions and structure, and like knowing what to expect.</td>
<td>Offering only one direction at a time. Also, have girls create the schedule and flow of your get-togethers and share it at the start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money, and distance.</td>
<td>Offering support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings or performances, count out money for a trip, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and can tie shoes, use basic tools, begin to sew, etc.</td>
<td>Encouraging girls to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need some assistance, however, holding scissors, threading needles, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.</td>
<td>Girls might like to create a play about welcoming a new girl to their school, or tell a story through dance or creative movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to follow rules, listen well, and appreciate recognition of a job done well.</td>
<td>Acknowledging when the girls have listened or followed the directions well, which will increase their motivation to listen and follow again!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Girl Scout Juniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Girl Scout Junior level (fourth and fifth grades), girls . . .</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Want to make decisions and express their opinions.</td>
<td>Whenever possible, allowing girls to make decisions and express their opinions through guided discussion and active reflection activities. Also, have girls set rules for listening to others’ opinions and offering assistance in decision making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are social and enjoy doing things in groups.</td>
<td>Allowing girls to team-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are aware of expectations and sensitive to the judgments of others.</td>
<td>Although it’s okay to have expectations, the expectation is not perfection! Share your own mistakes and what you learned from them, and be sure to create an environment where girls can be comfortable sharing theirs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are concerned about equity and fairness.</td>
<td>Not shying away from discussing why rules are in place, and having girls develop their own rules for their group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are beginning to think abstractly and critically, and are capable of flexible thought. Juniors can consider more than one perspective, as well as the feelings and attitudes of another.</td>
<td>Asking girls to explain why they made a decision, share their visions of their roles in the future, and challenge their own and others’ perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have strong fine and gross motor skills and coordination.</td>
<td>Engaging girls in moving their minds and their bodies. Allow girls to express themselves through written word, choreography, outdoor exploration, and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.</td>
<td>Girls might like to tell a story through playwriting, playing an instrument, or choreographing a dance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May be starting puberty, which means beginning breast development, skin changes, and weight changes. Some may be getting their periods.</td>
<td>Being sensitive to girls’ changing bodies, possible discomfort over these changes, and their desire for more information. Create an environment that acknowledges and celebrates this transition as healthy and normal for girls.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to experience challenge in a safe, non-threatening environment.</td>
<td>Providing girls the opportunity to go outside to challenge themselves physically and mentally will allow them this opportunity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Girl Scout Cadettes**

**At the Girl Scout Cadette level (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades), girls . . .**

This means . . .

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

### Girl Scout Seniors

**At the Girl Scout Senior level (ninth and tenth grades), girls . . .**

**This means . . .**

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

### Girl Scout Ambassadors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>At the Girl Scout Ambassador level (eleventh and twelfth grades), girls . . .</strong></th>
<th><strong>This means . . .</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can see the complexity of situations and controversial issues—they understand that problems often have no clear solution and that varying points of view may each have merit.</td>
<td>Inviting girls to develop stories as a group, and then individually create endings that they later discuss and share.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have strong problem-solving and critical-thinking skills, and can adapt logical thinking to real-life situations. Ambassadors recognize and incorporate practical limitations to solutions.</td>
<td>Girls are more than able to go beyond community service to develop projects that will create sustainable solutions in their communities. Be sure to have girls plan and follow up on these experiences through written and discussion-based reflective activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spend more time with peers than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.</td>
<td>Girls will enjoy teaming up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities. They’ll also want to tackle relationship issues through artistic endeavors and Take Action projects. Alter the makeup of groups with each activity so that girls interact with those they might not usually pair up with.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.</td>
<td>Encouraging girls to express their individuality in their dress, creative expression, and thinking. Remind girls frequently that there isn’t just one way to look, feel, think, or act. Assist girls in coming up with new ways of expressing their individuality and sharing their skills and talents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, etc.</td>
<td>Acknowledging girls’ pressures and sharing how stress can limit health, creativity, and productivity. Help girls release stress through creative expression, movement, and more traditional stress-reduction techniques.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home—and are looking to their futures. Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what’s known as “fun failure.” Girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.

Creating a Safe Space for Girls

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

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

**Girl-Adult Partnership**

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

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

**Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl**

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

**Promoting Fairness**

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

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

Managing Conflict

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

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

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your Membership Coordinator. If the issues cannot be resolved satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the troop leader/s), the issue can be taken to the next level of supervision, the Membership Support Team, who will help resolve the conflict.

Inspiring Open Communication

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

Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:

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

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

• **L = Listen:** Hear her out, ask for details, and reflect back what you hear, such as, “What happened next?” or “What did she say?”

• **U = Understand:** Try to be understanding of her feelings, with comments such as, “So what I hear you saying is . . .” “I’m sure that upset you,” “I understand why you’re unhappy,” and “Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too.”

• **T = Tolerate:** You can tolerate the feelings that she just can’t handle right now on her own. It signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Say something like: “Try talking to me about it. I’ll listen,” “I know you’re mad—talking it out helps,” and “I can handle it—say whatever you want to.”

• **E = Empathize:** Let her know you can imagine feeling what she’s feeling, with comments such as, “I’m sure that really hurts” or “I can imagine how painful this is for you.”

### Addressing the Needs of Older Girls

Consider the following tips when working with teenage girls:

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

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**Girl Scout Research Institute**

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

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

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

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

Advocating for Girls

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

Using “I” Statements

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

Here are some examples of “you” statements:

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

Now look at “I” statements:

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If a Parent or Guardian . . .</th>
<th>You Can Say . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is uninvolved and asks how she can help but seems to have no idea of how to follow through or take leadership of even the smallest activity,</td>
<td>“I do need your help. Here are some written guidelines on how to prepare for our camping trip.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantly talks about all the ways you could make the group better,</td>
<td>“I need your leadership. Project ideas you would like to develop and lead can fit in well with our plan. Please put your ideas in writing, and perhaps I can help you carry them out.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells you things like, “Denise’s mother is on welfare, and Denise really doesn’t belong in this group,”</td>
<td>“I need your sensitivity. Girl Scouting is for all girls, and by teaching your daughter to be sensitive to others’ feelings you help teach the whole group sensitivity.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shifts parental responsibilities to you and is so busy with her own life that she allows no time to help.

“I love volunteering for Girl Scouts and want to make a difference. If you could take a few moments from your busy schedule to let me know what you value about what we’re doing, I’d appreciate it. It would keep me going for another year.”

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

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

- For younger girls, arranged for a parent, another volunteer, or a group of older girls to do activities with the girls in your group while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too).
- Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law; benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters, including how the GSLE is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have; expectations for girls and their parents/guardians; and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters’ Girl Scout experiences.
- Determined when product sales (including Girl Scout cookie activities) will happen in our Council; parents/guardians will absolutely want to know.
- Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting.
- Used the Friends and Family pages provided in the adults guides for many of the Journeys, or created your own one-page information sheet (contact information for you and co-volunteers and helpers, the day and time of each meeting, location of and directions to the meeting place, what to bring with them, and information on how to get Journey resources—books, awards, and keepsakes—and other merchandise like sashes, vests, T-shirts, and so on).
- Gathered or created supplies, including a sign-in sheet, an information sheet, permission forms for parents/guardians (also available from our Council website), health history forms (as required by our Council), and GSUSA registration forms.
- Prepared yourself to ask parents and guardians for help, being as specific as you can about the kind of help you will need (the Journey’s Friends and Family pages will come in handy here).

Registering Girls in Girl Scouting

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

Pre-registration (Early Bird) for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring. Girls are encouraged to register early to avoid the fall rush. Early registration helps ensure uninterrupted receipt of forms and materials from the Council, helps girls and Councils plan ahead, and gets girls excited about all the great stuff they want to do as Girl Scouts next year. Each girl receives an Early Bird patch, and there are Troop and Service Unit incentives to Early Bird register as well.

Girl Scout grade level is determined by the current membership year beginning October 1.

Lifetime membership is available at a reduced rate. A lifetime member must be at least 18 years old (or a 17-year-old high-school graduate) and agree to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
**Online Registration:** Life can be super busy and paper can be hard to keep track of, so we’re offering an easy way to get online and take care of registration whenever it’s convenient for you. As troop leaders, service unit volunteers and parents who support in countless ways, we know your time is valuable and we are excited to offer you this new flexible tool to register. We now have a family based online registration system that will make it easier to register your family all at once. Please visit our website, [www.girlscouts-ssc.org](http://www.girlscouts-ssc.org), to get started on your online registration. The Membership Support Team is available to assist with any online registration questions that may arise.

- **Troop leaders can also view current troop rosters online to keep up to date with who has re-registered!**
- **Also available is the Cookie Dough Reimbursement to Troop for Online Girl Membership form.** As a leader you will be able to register girls that want to use cookie dough online using the troop debit card and be reimbursed.

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

- **As the girls and adults arrive, ask them to sign in.** If the girls’ parents/guardians haven’t already registered them online, you’ll want to email or hand out information so they can do so. If you are using paper registration forms, you can pass them out at this time. You may also want to email or hand out a brief information sheet before or at this meeting.

- **Open the meeting by welcoming the girls and adults. Introduce yourself and other co-volunteers or helpers.** Have adults and girls introduce themselves, discuss whether anyone in their families has been a Girl Scout, and talk about what Girl Scouting means to them. Welcome everyone, regardless of experience, and let them know they will be learning about Girl Scouts today. (If you’re new to Girl Scouting, don’t worry—just let everyone know you’ll be learning about Girl Scouting together!)

- **Ask the girls to go with the adult or teen in charge of their activity and begin the discussion.**

- **Discuss the information you prepared for this meeting:**
  - All the fun girls are going to have!
  - When and where the group will meet and some examples of activities the girls might choose to do.
  - That a parent/guardian permission form is used for activities outside the group’s normal meeting time and place and the importance of completing and returning it.
  - How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (a Facebook page or group, twitter, email, text messaging, a phone tree, or fliers the girls take home are just some ideas.)
  - The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law.
  - The Girl Scout program, especially what the GSLE is and what the program does for their daughters.
  - When Girl Scout cookies (and other products) will go on sale and how participation in product sales teaches life skills and helps fund group activities.
  - The cost of membership, which includes annual GSUSA dues, any troop dues (this is optional), optional uniforms, and any resources parents/guardians will need to buy (such as a girl’s book for a Journey).
  - The availability of financial assistance and how the Girl Scout Cookie Program and other product sales generate funds for the group treasury.
  - Families can also make donations to our Council—and why they might want to do that!
  - That you may be looking for additional volunteers, and in which areas you are looking (be as specific as possible!)

- **If you’ve distributed paper registration forms, collect them.**
- **Remind the group of the next meeting (if you’ll have one) and thank everyone for attending.** Hold the next meeting when it makes sense for you and your co-volunteers—that may be in two months if face-to-face meetings are best or not at all if you’re diligent about keeping in touch with parents/guardians via Facebook, Twitter, text messages, email, phone calls, or some other form of communication.
• After the meeting, follow up with any parents/guardians who did not attend, to connect them with the group, inform them of decisions, and discuss how they can best help the girls.

Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

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

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

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

A Variety of Formats for Publications

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say . . .</th>
<th>Instead of . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She has a learning disability.</td>
<td>She is learning disabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has a developmental delay.</td>
<td>She is mentally retarded; she is slow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She uses a wheelchair.</td>
<td>She is wheelchair-bound.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities

Girls with cognitive disabilities can be registered as closely as possible to their chronological ages. They wear the uniform of that grade level. Make any adaptations for the girl to ongoing activities of the grade level to which the group belongs. Young women with cognitive disorders may choose to retain their girl membership through their 21st year, and then move into an adult membership category.
Chapter 4: Safety-Wise

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

Knowing Your Responsibilities

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

Responsibilities of the Volunteer

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

1. Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.

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

   **No Alcohol or Tobacco Use.** Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council is committed to providing strong role models for youth, who support the values of our organization. All facilities, properties and vehicles owned, leased, or operated by the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council and all program sites are operated alcohol, tobacco and vape-free. No alcohol, tobacco or vaping is allowed in the presence of youth.

2. Points common to all Safety Activity Checkpoints include:

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

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

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

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

   **Be prepared for emergencies and compile key contacts.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults and site security. Give an itinerary to a contact person at home; call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls’ parents/guardian contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and Council contacts—keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories and contact information for girls’ families. Check Safety Activity Checkpoints to determine the type of first aider needed.
Get a weather report. On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, and/or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

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

3. Report abuse. Sexual advances, improper touching and sexual activity of any kind with girl members, as well as physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is strictly forbidden. Follow your Council’s guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.

4. Travel safely. When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.

5. Ensure safe overnight outings. Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.

6. Role-model the right behavior. Never use illegal drugs. Don’t consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls, unless given special permission by your Council for group marksmanship activities. See also, APPENDIX: Personnel Policies for Volunteers.

7. 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 a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior and discrimination.

8. Ensure that no girl is treated differently. Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, planning and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

9. Promote online safety. Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult. On group websites, publish girls’ first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge and have them commit to it.

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

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

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

- Provide permission for their daughters to participate in Girl Scouting as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place. This can include such activities as: product sales, including Digital Cookie; overnight travel; the use of special equipment; or sensitive issues.
- Make provisions for their daughters to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner, and inform you if someone other than a parent or guardian will drop off or pick up their child.
- Provide their daughters with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or contact you before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and equipment.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their children to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/guardian meetings.
- Understand what appropriate behavior is for their daughters, as determined by the Council and you.
- Assist volunteers if their daughters have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.

Responsibilities of Girls

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

- Assist you and other volunteers in safety planning.
- Listen to and follow your instructions and suggestions.
- Learn and practice safety skills.
- Learn to “think safety” at all times and to be prepared.

Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation. Know how, when, and where to get help when needed

Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

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

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

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

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

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratios, please remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old.

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

- The “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Group Meetings</th>
<th>Events, Travel, and Camping</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:</td>
<td>Two unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Daisies (grades K–1)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1-12</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Transporting Girls

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

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

- Every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, must be 20 years of age or older, hold a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle, and have experience necessary for anticipated weather, traffic and highway conditions.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in Volunteer Essentials must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in Volunteer Essentials must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats, and chartered flights. Each driver of motorized private transportation must be at least 20 years old and hold a valid operator’s license appropriate to the vehicle—state laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here. Anyone who is driving a vehicle with more than 15 passengers (bus) must also be a professional driver who possesses a commercial driver’s license (CDL)—check with our Council to determine specific rules about renting large vehicles.

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

- No more than 12 girls may be transported in a 15 passenger van.
- Truck beds and trailers may not be used for transporting passengers to and from Girl Scout activities. Girls are permitted to ride on flatbed trucks or trailers during parades or hayrides only. See Safety Activity Checkpoints for Hayrides. In those cases, notice will be given to the Membership Support Team at least four (4) weeks in advance, and each situation will be explored to be certain that these activities are done in a safe manner.
- Even though written agreements are always required when renting or chartering, you are not authorized to sign an agreement or contract in the name of Girl Scouts of Silver Sage.—even if there is no cost associated with the rental. Any agreements to rent or borrow vehicles must be in the name of the adult Girl Scout who will be the driver or the rented/borrowed vehicle and subject to his/her personal automobile and liability insurance.
- If an adult Girl Scout holds a Commercial Driver’s license and intends to transport girls using a bus (more than 15 passengers), the individual MUST comply with federal and state statutes concerning this mode of transportation, including appropriate licensing. The individual driver is NOT protected from liability and must rely on their own automobile insurance, or ask to be added to the vehicle owner’s company policy. A signed contract for service must be completed.
- Additional Safety Checkpoints must be followed. See, Safety Checkpoints.
- Check with the Membership Support Team to ensure you are following accepted practices when using private transportation; this ensures that both you and our Council are protected by liability insurance in the event of an accident.
• If your Council has given permission to use a rented car, read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. Note the minimum age of drivers (often 25), as well as the maximum age (often under 70). Be sure the car is adequately insured, knowing who is responsible for damage to or the loss of the vehicle itself. Also, ensure you have a good paper trail, with evidence that the vehicle rental is Girl Scout–related.

• Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.

Checklist for Drivers

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

• Ensure all drivers are adults (at least 20 years of age)—girls should not be transporting other girls.

• Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first-aid kit and a flashlight.

• Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns, and fluid levels before each trip and check them periodically on long trips.

• Keep all necessary papers up to date, such as your driver’s license, vehicle registration, any state or local inspections, insurance coverage, and the like.

• Wear your seat belt at all times, and insist that all passengers do the same; keep girls under 12 in the back seats.

• Plan rest stops every few hours; if driving with others, prearrange stopping places along the way. When planning longer trips, arrange for relief drivers. Check with your Council for specific guidelines.

Approaching Activities

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What’s safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. An incoming storm, for example, might force you to assess or discontinue an activity. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, call the Membership Support Team with full details and don’t proceed without approval. Exercise appropriate caution and make the safety of girls your most important consideration. Prior to any activity, read the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints (available on your Council’s website) related to any activity you plan to do with girls.

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

• **Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from your Council for girls ages 12 and older who will:
  
  o Take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable (See Whitewater Rafting Safety Activity Checkpoints).

**CAUTION:** When activities involve unpredictable safety variables, these activities are not within Girl Scout safety guidelines. If you have questions about these please contact the Membership Support Team. These include but are not limited to:

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

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

Health Histories

Everyone participating in Girl Scouting, both girls and adults, must have a **Health History** form either on his/her person or with a group leader at all times. This ensures that quick and accurate medical response can be provided in the event of an incident.

Keep in mind that information contained in a girl’s health history is confidential and protected by law. This information may only be shared with people who have a need to know this information such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian and a healthcare provider.

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

• Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl’s custodial parent or guardian. Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen, or diabetes medication. You must have documentation from the girl’s parent or guardian that it is acceptable for the girl to self-administer these medications.
• Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, and seafood. This means that, before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies, or chips), **ask** whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products, or wheat! Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with their parents/guardians is always a good idea.
• Anyone who has a known complicating medical problem, who has had a serious illness or injury, or has had an operation since her last health examination must submit a written statement from her physician giving permission to participate in any activity that normally requires a current health history form or health examination.
Girl Scout Activity Insurance

Plan 1 – Basic Coverage

Every registered Girl Scout and registered adult member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic plan upon registration. The entire premium cost for this protection is borne by Girl Scouts of the USA. The basic plan is effective during the regular fiscal year (October to the following October). Up to 14 months of insurance coverage is provided for new members who register in the month of August. This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity, after the individual’s primary insurance pays out. This is one reason that all adults and girls should be registered members. Non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons are not covered by basic coverage.

This insurance coverage is not intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. When $130 in benefits has been paid for covered accident medical or dental expense, any subsequent benefits will be payable only for expenses incurred that aren’t compensable under another insurance policy. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available.

Plan 2 – Supplemental Accident Insurance

The purchase of supplemental insurance is required for extended travel and camping trips, when girls will be engaged in activities with risk of injury, or at an event in which non-Girl Scouts are present.

This plan extends basic coverage to cover:
- Trips that last longer than two nights (if you are travelling for three nights and one of the nights is a federal holiday, you are covered under the basic plan).
- All participants at the event whether or not they are registered (such as family and community guests at a bridging ceremony).
- Registered Girl Scouts who are considered “tagalongs” (in a different grade level than the activity is designed for).

**WARNING**: If you take an extended trip and do not purchase supplemental insurance, the basic coverage will not be in effect. You will not be covered at all.

Purchasing Plan 2 Insurance

You can find information about purchasing supplemental insurance, on the Forms page of the website (www.girlscouts-ssc.org) under the Volunteer Resources menu.

Plan 3 – Supplemental Insurance for International Travel

Plan 3 insurance is required for any travel outside the U.S. This plan provides coverage for accidents and sickness and includes all participants, for approved international trips. Contact our Council for more information.

You can review the Girl Scouts insurance plans here: www.mutualofomaha.com/girl_scouts_of_the_usa/index.html
Providing Emergency Care

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

- **Know what to report.** See the “Procedures for Accidents” section later in this chapter.
- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.** Certain extreme-weather conditions may occur in your area. Please consult with your Council for the most relevant information for you to share with girls.
- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost person/s, and building-security responses.** Every girl and adult must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.
- **Assemble a well-stocked first-aid kit that is always accessible.** First-aid administered in the first few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911.

**First-Aid/CPR**

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. First-Aid/CPR is required when going on any outing, at least one adult volunteer needs to be first-aid/CPR-certified. For that reason, many Service Units provide opportunity to get trained in Council-approved first-aid/CPR. You can take advantage of first-aid/CPR training offered by chapters of the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, MEDIC FirstAid, American Heart Association, or other sponsoring organizations approved by our Council. As a partner of GSUSA, American Red Cross offers discounts on certification courses. Try to take age-specific CPR training, too—that is, take child CPR if you’re working with younger girls and adult CPR when working with older girls and adults.

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

**First-Aider**

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

Activities can take place in a variety of locations, which is why first-aid requirements are based on the remoteness of the activity—as noted in the Safety Activity Checkpoints for that activity. For example, it’s possible to do a two-mile hike that has cell phone reception and service along the entire route and EMS (Emergency Medical System) is, at maximum, 30 minutes away at all times. It is also possible to hike more remotely with no cell phone service at a place where EMS would take more than 30 minutes to arrive. It’s important that you or another volunteer with your group has the necessary medical experience (including knowledge of evacuation techniques) to ensure group safety.

The levels of first aid required for any activity take into account both how much danger is involved and how remote the area is from emergency medical services.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to EMS</th>
<th>Minimum Level of First Aid Required</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30 minutes</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 30 minutes</td>
<td>Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

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

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**First-Aid Kit**

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

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain our Council and emergency telephone numbers. Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms, and health histories may be included, as well.

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**Procedures for Accidents**

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe Council procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the sick or injured person. Follow established Council procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of Council staff, parents/guardians, and emergency services such as the police, fire department, or hospital emergency technicians.

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**Steps to be followed by a person(s) in charge at the scene of an accident or incident:**

1. Give priority attention to providing all possible care for the injured.
2. Secure doctor, ambulance, police, and clergy as appropriate.
3. In the event of fatality or other serious accident, always notify the police. Retain a responsible person at the scene. See that the victim and the surroundings are not disturbed until the police have assumed authority.
4. Contact one of our Council staff members listed below immediately to report the emergency and secure additional assistance even if all the above facts have not been gathered. Collect calls are acceptable.
5. Refer all media inquiries (press, radio, television) to the Council contact persons listed below. **Make no statements to the press. Do not discuss the incident, place any blame, or accept liability.**

6. Complete an *Accident/Incident Report* form within 24 hours and send to the address below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emergency Contacts</th>
<th>Chief Executive Officer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>During normal business hours, call the Boise Office at one of these numbers:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(208) 377-2011 or 1-800-846-0079</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax: (208) 377-0504</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>After hours, call the number shown on the right.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If you are on an international trip and have an emergency, please contact Maureen O’Toole at 208-995-1447</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From most international locations dial: 00+1+208+Local Number</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our address is:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1410 Etheridge Lane</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boise, ID 83704</td>
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After receiving a report of an accident, our Council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance at the scene, if needed, and will notify parents/guardians, as appropriate. If a child needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow our Council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, let our Council-designated staff discuss the incident with these representatives.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, notify the police. A responsible adult must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings. Follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, our Council, and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

**Reporting Accidents/Incidents**

The Accident/Incident Form must to be completed and sent into the Membership Support Team within 24 hours when:

- There is an accident or incident no matter how minor or major it is
- If a girl attends a Girl Scout function and the leader/co-leader notice any kind of bruises, scrapes, scratches, etc. that are questionable

When the information shall include:

- Person injured
- Parents’ name and contact information if the injured person is a girl
- Name of event where the accident/incident occurred
- Nature of accident/incident
- Name and contact information of adult supervisor(s) at time of accident/incident
- What happened, date, time, and exact location
- What did the person(s) at the scene of the accident/incident do
- Cause of accident/incident
- Witness to accident/incident
- Person completing the Accident/Incident Report from and their contact information
In the event that medical bills have to be sent to Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council insurance, the following items are to be submitted to the Accounting Department:

- Accident/Incident form
- Intent to Operate a Service Unit Event or Overnight Trip Form (if applicable)
- Medical bills
- Insurance form to be completed and signed by the girl's parent or the injured adult.

Sensitive Topics

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

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

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

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

Parents/guardians make all decisions regarding their girl’s participation in Girl Scout program that may be of a sensitive nature. As a volunteer leader, you must get written parental permission for any locally planned program offering that could be considered sensitive. You must have a copy of the Permission to Participate in Sensitive Issues form (see our Council website Forms page). Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep the forms on hand in case a problem arises. For activities not sponsored by Girl Scouts, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow your Council’s guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Report concerns: There may be times when you worry about the health and well-being of girls in your group. Alcohol, drugs, sex, bullying, abuse, depression, and eating disorders are some of the issues girls may encounter. You are on the frontlines of girls’ lives, and you are in a unique position to identify a situation in which a girl may need help. If you believe a girl is at risk of hurting herself or others, your role is to promptly bring that information to her parent/guardian or to the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare.

Reporting Concerns

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

- Marked changes in behavior or personality (for example, unusual moodiness, aggressiveness, or sensitivity).
- Declining academic performance and/or inability to concentrate.
- Withdrawal from school, family activities, or friendships.
- Fatigue, apathy, or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities.
- Sleep disturbances.
- Increased secretiveness.
- Deterioration in appearance and personal hygiene.
- Eating extremes, unexplained weight loss, distorted body image.
- Tendency toward perfectionism.
- Giving away prized possessions; preoccupation with the subject of death.
- Unexplained injuries such as bruises, burns, or fractures.
- Avoidance of eye contact or physical contact.
- Excessive fearfulness or distrust of adults.
- Abusive behavior toward other children, especially younger ones.

For more information about the signs of abuse/neglect, visit:
www.childwelfare.gov/pubs/factsheets/signs.cfm

### HOW TO REPORT

- Share your concern with the girl's family, if this is feasible and appropriate given the situation.
- Otherwise, here is the link to the Idaho state agency for children services and the main telephone number to report child abuse and neglect in Idaho, Oregon and Nevada: See Also

**Idaho Department of Health and Welfare**
TDD: (208) 332-7205
Toll-Free: (800) 926-2588

**Oregon Department of Human Services**
1-855-503-SAFE (7233)
This toll-free number allows you to report abuse or neglect of any child or adult to the Oregon Department of Human Services.

**Nevada Child Welfare and Child Protective Services**
Winnemucca Field Office
475 W Haskell St, Box 7
Winnemucca, NV  89445-3781
Phone: (775) 623-6555
Helping girls decide what they want to do, and coaching them as they earn and manage money to pursue their goals, is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). Your Girl Scout group plans and finances its own activities, with your guidance. At the same time, the girls learn many valuable skills that serve them throughout their lives.

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

Establishing an Account

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

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

One of your first steps will be to designate authorized signers for the troop’s checking account and to open a checking account. Once you have chosen a bank, you will need to fill out the Troop Account Checking Request form that is located on our website and send to your Membership Coordinator. (Note: all authorized signers must be fully appointed volunteers)

If you are taking over a troop and the current bank holding the troop checking account is acceptable at its current location, then all you need to change is the authorized signers on the account. To do so fill out the Troop Account Checking Request form that is located on our website and send to your Membership Coordinator.

If you are taking over a troop and the current bank is not acceptable, then you will need to fill out the Troop Account Checking Request form that is located on our website and mail your Membership Coordinator. Once the account has been opened, a check from the previous account will be written out to the new troop checking account and the old account closed.

All troop checking accounts are required to have the council’s Employer Identification Number (EIN # 82-0289644). Accounts without it are not accepted.
While it is recommended that there be three signers on the account, there must be at least two. All signers on Troop Checking Accounts must be approved volunteers. To be considered an approved volunteer, the individual must:

- Have a completed Interview Check List form or Troop Volunteer Approval Form on file at the Council Office
- Be a registered Adult Girl Scout for the current membership year
- Have successfully completed the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage background check within last 5 years
- Have been issued an official appointment letter

New Troop Startup Funds

New Troops are eligible for a one-time $25 payment from Council Funds. A new troop is defined as:

- A Daisy Girl Scout troop or a troop where 75% of the girls are new to Girl Scouting
- Two (non-related) adults have been appointed as Troop Leaders
- A minimum of five girls, from two or more families, have registered as Girl Scouts

Disbanding a Troop

When a troop disbands, the Troop Disband Notice must be completed and sent to your Membership Coordinator. Every effort is to be made to have the leader submit the Troop Disband Notice.

Every effort is to be made to place girls interested in continuing into an existing troop(s) with distribution of money and equipment as indicated by placement of girls. All troop funds belong to the troop members that are part of the troop when the troop disbands; however, monies cannot be refunded to the individual girls.

Money must be handled as follows:

- If the troop is merging with an existing troop, all money and equipment from the disbanding troop is transferred to the merged troop.

- If girls from one troop transfer in to several different troops, the money and equipment is divided proportionately among the troops involved on a per-girl basis. Example: the disbanding troop has nine (9) girls when the troop disbands; three (3) girls transfer to Troop A; three (3) girls transfer to Troop B, and three (3) girls transfer to Troop C. Troops A, B, and C would each receive one-third of the disbanding troop’s funds.

- If no girls continue or transfer, troop inventory, books, reports, badges, flags, and supplies must be turned over to the Service Unit Manager and monies must to be sent to the Council office.

- Any funds remaining from a disbanded troop account are held in a Council holding account for one year. If any girls from the disbanded troop continue and transfer to a different troop within the year, the money will be distributed accordingly. Any funds remaining in the holding account at the end of that year will be used for Financial Aid.

NOTE: After disbursement of funds to existing troops or deposit at Council, the troop checking account must be closed by the troop leader or your Membership Coordinator.
Money-Earning Basics

Record Keeping

We recommend that you recruit a Troop Treasurer who is experienced with the basics of money management so that troop leaders can focus on program activities. The Treasurer, of course, must be an “approved” volunteer. This is a great volunteer opportunity for one of your girl’s parents, or for a tax accountant or banker in your local community.

Consider keeping a money-management notebook so that everything is in one place. Here are a few money-management tips you might consider (which will also make end of year financial reporting much easier!):

- For every money transaction, notate in your notebook the date of the income/expense, the source/purpose, and have at least two approved signers initial the line item.
- Use the categories found on the Troop Annual Report form as a guide for coding your transactions.
- Deposit money promptly, keep deposit slips in your notebook, and make a note of the money source.
- Keep all receipts in your notebook and make note of the expense purpose.
- If you are writing checks, keep good notes in your check register as well.
- Make notes on your bank statements on charges especially anything over $150.
- When you receive your monthly statement, balance promptly against your notes and receipts, have two authorized signers from your checking account sign each statement (a copy of which will be turned in with your Troop Annual Report in June).

Reporting

By June 15, each troop is required to submit an annual report (using the Troop Annual Report form), that includes all bank statements, to their Service Unit Manager who reviews and then forwards it to Council. Every bank statement is required to be signed by two of the authorized signers on your bank account.

Don’t wait until the end of the year to organize your financial records. Implement good record-keeping practices all along the way to stay aware of your financial status and to make end-of-year reporting easier. And, use your Troop Annual Report this year as your starting point for next year’s budgeting process.

If your troop will be completing projects over the summer months, you will report those expenses on the next year’s annual report. The Council accounting staff have access to all troop accounts and will review as necessary as part of the Council’s audit process.

Communicating with Families

Parents/guardians have a right to know the status of troop funds. Set up a system (newsletter, financial report, regular parents’ meeting, etc.) to keep them informed about how troop money is being used. Troop financial records and all bank statements should be open for parental inspection at all times. Troop leaders should provide the parents with a copy of the Troop Annual Report. Parent/guardians also need to know that money in the troop’s treasury does not belong to individual girls. Troop money cannot be divided among the girls for personal use. If a girl drops out of the Girl Scouts, she cannot take troop money with her.

If a girl transfers to another troop it is the troop as a whole (girls and adults) to decide if any money follows her to her new troop.
Primary Money Sources

Groups earn money for their troop in two distinct ways:

- **The Girl Scout Cookie Program and other sales** of Girl Scout–authorized products organized by our Council and open to all Girl Scouts. Girls can participate in two Council-sponsored product sale activities each year: the cookie sale and one other Council-authorized product sale if available. All girl members who take part in any way of Girl Scouting (troop, camp, travel, etc.), including Daisies, are eligible to participate in Council-sponsored product-sale activities, with volunteer supervision. Please remember: volunteers and Girl Scout Council staff don’t sell cookies and other products—girls do.

- **“Group money-earning”** refers to activities organized by the group (not by our Council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with adults) and that earn money for the group.

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

- Voluntary participation.
- Written permission of each girl’s parent or guardian.
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed.
- An understanding that money-earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its activities.
- Observance of local ordinances and Council policies.
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl.
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money.

**Note:** To participate in group money-earning activities, the group must have participated in our Council product sale.

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

- All rewards earned by girls through the product-sale activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel, and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).
- Rewards are based on sales ranges set by Councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
- Troops and Groups are encouraged to participate in Council product sales as their primary money-earning activity; any group money-earning shouldn’t compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other Council product sales.
- Obtain written approval from our Council before a group money-earning event; the Application for Troop Money Earning Project form must be submitted for approval before the event.
- Girl Scouts forbids use of games of chance (raffles, contests, bingo) must be approved by Council and be conducted in compliance with all local and state laws.
- Girl Scout Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash. Girls can collect partial payment towards the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and Girl Scout Fall Product Program products through participation in Council approved product sale donation programs.
- Girl Scouts forbids product demonstration parties where the use of the Girl Scout trademark increases revenue for another business (For example: In home product parties). Any business using the Girl Scout trademark must seek authorization from GSUSA.
- Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product sales. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following Council procedures.
• Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the GSLE.
• Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals with the exception of a Destinations project participant upon Council approval. Girls may be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from Girl Scout product sales.
• Girl Scouts may not raise funds on behalf of another organization; however, if a troop votes to raise funds to purchase supplies (cat/dog food, beds, etc.) they are allowed to use troop funds.
• **Cash contributions to another organization is prohibited;** however, is encouraged for the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council Tribute Fund which supports the costs for girls who do not have the resources to be a Girl Scout. This includes troops that are Disbanding and have money in their troop checking account.
• Do not assign a value to an in-kind gift. This is the responsibility of the investor and their accountant. If they provide a value, please note who submitted the value to you on the In-Kind form (which you can obtain by contacting our Chief Development Officer).
• Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for in the troop’s annual report.

The best way to earn money for your group is to start with Girl Scout cookie activities and other Council-sponsored product sales if available. From there, your group may decide to earn additional funds on its own but note that to participate in group money earning activities, the group must have participated in our Council product sale. Certain exceptions may be made for this, but first complete the **Application for Troop Money Earning Project** form available on our website and consult with our Membership Support Team.

For more information on the Cookie Program and on-line safety precautions, see the **Appendix: Girl Scout Cookie Program**.

**Additional Money Earning Activities**

Product sales are a great way to earn the funds necessary for girls to travel or carry out Take Action projects. If income from the product sale isn't enough, however, girls have more options available to them.

• Note: Obtain written approval from the Membership Support Team before a group money-earning event; the **Application for a Troop Money Earning Project** form must be submitted for approval before the event

**Appropriate Activities for Money Earning**

- Washing cars with adult supervision.
- Window washing with adult supervision.
- Raking leaves or other lawn work without power equipment.
- Shoveling snow or walking pets.
- Holding a garage sale.
- Recycling items (Christmas trees, ink cartridges, cell phones).
- Painting house numbers on curbs with adult supervision and homeowner permission (observe local ordinances).
- Making and selling craft items.
- Sponsoring dances, talent shows, fashion shows, haunted houses, or other forms of entertainment.
- Group baby-sitting with adult supervision (such as at a Service Unit meeting, Council function, or community organization’s event or meeting).
- Putting on parties or story hours for children.
- Hosting a face painting booth (follow all applicable health ordinances).
• Collecting trash after community events (following strict safety guidelines).
• Hosting a fundraising event such as a games or badge workshop, fair, etc.
• Running a concession stand at a Girl Scout event.
• Holding a cookout, spaghetti feed, barbeque, etc. for Girl Scout families.
• Wrapping gifts.

• Hold a lunch-box auction, where you prepare a meal and auction it off.
• Charge for a cooking class or other specialty class.
• Collect donated frequent-flyer miles.
• Hold a silent auction (donations from local businesses or Girl Scout families auctioned off).
• Ushering or helping in other ways at special events in the community.

Although you cannot resell products, you can offer services, such as the following:

Collections/Drives:
• Cell phones for refurbishment.
• Used ink cartridges turned in for money.
• Christmas tree recycling.

Food/Meal Event:
• Lunch box auctions (prepared lunch or meal auctioned off).
• Themed meals, like high tea, Indian meal, Mexican dinner (if girls are earning money for travel, tie the meal to their destination).

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

Prohibited Fundraising Activities and/or Events
• Product demonstrations parties.
• Raffles and drawings.
• Games of chance.
• Activity or event that raises or solicits money for other organizations, including walkathons, telethons, or similar activities.
• Grant-writing.
• Money-earning activity conducted on the Internet, including e-bay and Craig’s List.
• Fireworks sales.
• Sales of commercial products.
• Solicitation of customers at a business (such as distributing flyers for a Girl Scout pizza night at a local restaurant).
• gofundme.com.
Working with Community Partners

Troops have opportunities to do additional group money-earning activities. If the money the troop receives is more than $500 it must be reported and require Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Board approval. All monetary contributions $500 or more has to be tracked by GSSSC for tax purposes and it will be credited back to the troop upon processing. For example: Kohl's Cares.

Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations

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

For information on working with a sponsor, consult the Chief Development Officer for guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting responsibility, and any Council policies or practices that must be followed. Silver Sage may already have relationships with certain organizations, or may know of some reasons not to collaborate with certain organizations.

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

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

- **Steering clear of political fundraisers:** When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your group may not participate (directly or indirectly) in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Letter-writing campaigns are not allowed, nor is participating in a politically rally, circulating a petition, or carrying a political banner.

- **Being respectful when collaborating with religious organizations:** Girl Scout groups must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice of the sponsoring group.

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

Donations

If a donor requests a tax-deductible donation letter for monetary contribution, the money must be sent to our Council Headquarters, Attn: Fund Development, for processing. Please send the following:

- The cash donation.
- Your troop information.
- How your troop plans to use the contributed funds.
- Donor information.
Council processes checks on the 15th and 30th/31st of the month. Checks should be received within 4 days following a check processing.

Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals

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

1. **Set goals for money-earning activities.** What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities present themselves?

2. **Create a budget.** Use a budget worksheet that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, and so on) and available income (the group’s account balance, projected cookie proceeds, and so on).

3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.

4. **Make a plan.** The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans. Will cookie and other product sales—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the group’s goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference in anticipated expense and anticipated income? Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group’s financial goals? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.

5. **Write it out.** Once the group has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out an application for approval from our Council and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created.

**Remember:** It’s great for girls to have opportunities, like the Girl Scout Cookie Program, to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals as part of the GSLE. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and spending money. Take Action projects, for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money!

Reviewing Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level

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

**Girl Scout Daisies**

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

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

Girls can participate in Girl Scout cookie activities and other Council-sponsored product sales.
Daisies are always paired with an adult when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but adults handle the money and keep the girls secure.

### Girl Scout Brownies

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

- Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on).
- Girls set goals for and participate in Council-sponsored product sales.
- Girls may decide to pay dues.

### Girl Scout Juniors

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

- Girls set goals for and participate in Council-sponsored product sales.
- Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer (selected by the girls).
- Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group, on the basis of plans and income from the group dues.
- Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.
- Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.

### Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

Girls estimate costs based on plans.

- Girls determine the amount of group dues (if any) and the scope of money-earning projects.
- Girls set goals for and participate in Council-sponsored product sales.
- Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning projects.
- Girls budget for extended travel, Take Action projects, and leadership projects.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girls may be involved in seeking donations for Take Action projects, with Council approval.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls keep their own financial records and give reports to parents and group volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Silver or Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix
Appendix: Troop Management

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

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

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

Forming a Troop Committee

You’ll want to involve other adults in the troop—there’s no need to do it alone or depend on too few adults! Many hands make light work, and the role is more fun when it’s shared. Think about the people you know whom you admire, who can connect with girls, who are dependable and responsible, and who realistically have time to spend volunteering. (Remember that these adults will need to register as Girl Scout members, fill out volunteer application forms, complete a background check, take online learning sessions, and review written resources.)

Consider business associates, neighbors, former classmates, friends, and so on. If you have trouble finding reliable, quality volunteers to assist, talk to the Membership Support Team for advice and support. And feel free to use the sample welcome letter and friends/family checklist in the Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie, and Junior Leadership Journeys to assist you in expanding your troop’s adult network.

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

Your troop committee members might help by:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Letting Girls Lead**

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

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

- **Daisy/Brownie Circle:** While sitting in a circle (sometimes called a ring), girls create a formal group decision-making body. The circle is an organized time for girls to express their ideas and talk about activities they enjoy, and you play an active role in facilitating discussion and helping them plan. Girls often vote to finalize decisions. If girls are talking over each other, consider passing an object, such as a talking stick, that entitles one girl to speak at a time.

- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Patrol or Team System:** In this system, large troops divide into small groups, with every member playing a role. Teams of four to six girls are recommended so that each girl gets a chance to participate and express her opinions. Patrols may be organized by interests or activities that feed into a Take Action project, with each team taking responsibility for some part of the total project; girls may even enjoy coming up with names for their teams.

- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Executive Board:** In the executive board system (also called a steering committee), one leadership team makes decisions for the entire troop. The board’s responsibility is to plan activities and assign jobs based on interests and needs, and the rest of the troop decides how to pass their ideas and suggestions to the executive board throughout the year. The executive board usually has a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer and holds its own meetings to discuss troop matters. Limit the length of time each girl serves on the executive board so all troop members can participate during the year.

- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Town Meeting:** Under the town meeting system, business is discussed and decisions are made at meetings attended by all the girls in the troop. As in the patrol and executive board systems, everyone gets the chance to participate in decision-making and leadership. Your role is to act as a moderator, who makes sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that all ideas are considered.
Transporting Girls

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

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

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

*Must be 20 years of age or older.

For more about driving, see the “Transporting Girls” section of Chapter 4: Safety-wise of this handbook.

Looking at a Sample Troop Year

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

- Hold a parent/guardian meeting.
- Open a checking account, if needed.
- Register all the girls in the troop.
- Meet together for the first time, allowing the girls to decide how they can learn each others’ names and find out more about each other.
- Kick off a Leadership Journey with the opening ceremony recommended in the first sample session, or a trip or special event that fits the theme. Have the girls brainstorm and plan any trip or event.
- Enjoy the full Journey, including its Take Action project.
- Along the way, add in related badge activities that girls will enjoy and that will give them a well-rounded year.
- Have the girls plan, budget for, and “earn and learn” in the Girl Scout Cookie Program.
- Help girls plan a field trip or other travel opportunity.
- Encourage girls to plan a culminating ceremony for the Journey, including awards presentations, using ideas in the Journey girls’ book and/or adult guide.
- Pre-register girls for next year.
- Camp out!
- Participate in a Council-wide event with girls from around your region.
- Have the girls plan and hold a bridging ceremony for girls continuing on to the next Girl Scout grade level.
At the beginning of each membership year (the membership year starts on October 1 and ends on September 30), your troop will start planning the program activities for the year.

Many troop leaders suggest loosely planning the entire year structure with ‘room to move.’ These leaders find that they add detail or make changes to the basic plan as they have planning discussions with their girls, and then make changes throughout the year as they notice what the girls enjoy doing and how long it takes them to accomplish activities.

Here is a generic troop year structure that you might use as a starting point.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>October</th>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Founder’s Day Event</td>
<td>Start Your Journey</td>
<td>Continue Your Journey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investiture/Rededication Ceremony</td>
<td>Badge-Earning Activities</td>
<td>Badge-Earning Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yearly Planning</td>
<td>Service Project</td>
<td>Service Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Cookie Program Goal Setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>February</td>
<td>March</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue Your Journey</td>
<td>Cookie Program Continues</td>
<td>Cookie Program Booth Sales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badge-Earning Activities</td>
<td>Thinking Day Activity</td>
<td>Girl Scout Week Activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cookie Program Starts</td>
<td>Continue Your Journey</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>May</td>
<td>June - August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continue Your Journey</td>
<td>Day/Overnight Trip</td>
<td>Troop Camping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Badge-Earning Activities</td>
<td>Journey Wrap-Up</td>
<td>Girls/Troops Attend Girl Scout Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service Project</td>
<td>End of Year Celebrations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reengaging Girls

The end of the troop year doesn’t have to be the end of a girls’ time with Girl Scouting, or the end of your time with girls. Some girls may no longer have time for a full-year commitment and will be unsure what’s next for them. Others won’t be able to imagine their lives without this same group of girls. Here’s how you can best reengage your troop:

- Some girls may want other options besides troops. That’s okay—Girl Scouts offers many ways to participate. Talk to girls about day and residence camp, travel opportunities, series offerings, and events our Council may offer. Older girls, especially, enjoy these shorter-term, flexible ways to be Girl Scouts.

- Some girls will be excited to bridge to the next grade level in Girl Scouting, and will look to you for guidance on how to hold a bridging ceremony. Even if you’re not sure of your continued participation with Girl Scouts (and we hope you will find lots of exciting ways to be involved, even if leading a troop no longer fits your life), be sure to capture their excitement and work with them to a plan a meaningful bridging ceremony.

- If you plan to stay with this troop, but some girls are bridging to the next grade level, talk to our Council about helping them decide how they’d like to continue in Girl Scouting—perhaps in series, events, or travel!
• Talk to girls about earning their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards, which are opportunities for them to make a dramatic difference in their communities—and to have plenty to brag about with college admissions officers, too.

And what about you? If you want to stay with this troop, start working with them to plan their group activities next year. And if you’re a little worn out but are interested in staying with Girl Scouts in other, flexible ways, be sure to let the Membership Support Team know how you’d like to be a part of girls’ lives in the future. Are you ready to volunteer at camp? help organize a series or event? take a trip? The possibilities are endless.
Earning the FIVE STAR TROOP Award

Purpose:
The FIVE STAR TROOP Award is to encourage and support Troops in having a diversified and high-quality Troop year. (Earning this award is optional.) The first year it is earned the Five Star patch and the year strip are earned. Each additional year it is earned, just the year strip is awarded. This is worn on the back of the uniform and can be transferred from one uniform to the next.

Instructions:
To earn the award, a Troop must earn at least 80 points (Daisy and Brownie at least 70 points) during the year, as described below, and complete and submit the worksheet to their Service Unit Manager by September 30th. Once approved by your Service Unit Manager, you can purchase the patch and/or year patch additions. Keep this form for your records.

Troop Leader Name: __________________________ Troop #: _______ SU #: _______
Address: ___________________________________________________________________________
Phone: ______________________________ Email: ________________________________

Troop Grade Level: ☐ Daisy ☐ Brownie ☐ Junior ☐ Cadette ☐ Senior ☐ Ambassador

☐ This is the first time our Troop has earned the Five Star Troop Award.
☐ This is the _______ time our Troop has earned the Five Star Troop Award.

Registration (5 points)

☐ For New Troops: We had at least 2 adults and 5 girls registered by October 1.
☐ For Returning Troops: At least 70% of our girls and adults re-registered by October 1.

Total Points: __________

Registration Bonus (5 points)

☐ We registered at least 2 new Girl Scouts to our Troop by October 1 (girls transferring from another Troop do not count).

Total Points: __________

Early Bird Registration (5 points)

☐ Our Troop re-registered over 50% of our Troop (girls and adults) by the Early Bird June deadline.

Total Points: __________
## Promise & Law (5 points)

- For Daisy & Brownie Troops: All of the girls and adults in our Troop can recite the GS Promise by heart.
- For Junior, Cadette, Senior, & Ambassador Troops: All of the girls and adults in our Troop can recite the GS Promise and GS Law by heart.

Total Points: ____________

## Girl-Led Troop Year Planning (5 points)

- We involved the girls in age-appropriate girl-led planning.

What is one example of how girls took the lead in planning their year?

________________________________________________________________________

Total Points: ____________

## Journeys (10 points)

- We completed this Journey: _____________________________________________

Our Journey Take-Action project was: _______________________________________

Total Points: ____________

## Journeys Bonus (5 points)

- We submitted our Take-Action project story using the Share Your Story form on the GSSSC website or on the GSSSC Facebook.

Total Points: ____________

## Outdoor Education (5 points each)

- Our Troop went on a nature day trip and girls participated (age-appropriately) in trip planning.

  AND/OR

- Our Troop went camping and girls participated (age-appropriately) in trip planning.

Briefly describe the trip:

________________________________________________________________________

Total Points: ____________

## Ceremonies (5 points)

- We participated in at least two Troop or Service Unit ceremonies.
Which ones? ____________________________________________________  Total Points: ____________

**Events (5 points)**

- We planned or participated in at least one Girl Scout traditional event: Thinking Day, Founder’s Day, Girl Scout Birthday, etc.  
  Total Points: ____________

**Cookies (5 points each)**

- Our Troop participated in the cookie product program.  
- We participated in activities during the cookie program focused (age-appropriately) on the 5 skills: goal-setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics.  
  Total Points: ____________

**Community Service (5 points)**

- Our Troop participated in at least one Troop or Service Unit community service project (This must be separate from the Journey Take Action project).  
  Briefly describe: _____________________________________________  
  Total Points: ____________

**Parent Involvement (5 points each)**

- We communicate on a regular basis with our parents. (e.g., email, newsletter, take-home, etc.).  
- We hold a yearly parent meeting.  
- At least 2 of our parents help out occasionally with Troop activities.  
  Total Points: ____________

**Money Management (5 points each)**

- We carefully tracked our income and expenses.  
- We communicated the state of our Troop finances on a regular basis with our parents.  
- We incorporated Girl Led aspects to our troop money management.  
  Total Points: ____________

**Annual Report (5 points)**
☐ We turned in a complete and accurate Troop Annual Report by the June deadline.

Total Points: __________

Training (10 points)

☐ At least two of our approved volunteers have completed the following training:
  • Course #203 online or in-person Journey & Girl Guides – The Full Experience
  • Enrichment opportunities (Super Saturday, Annual Conference, Septoberfest, etc.)

Names: ________________________________

Total Points: __________

CPR/FA (5 points)

☐ We have at least one Troop volunteer who holds a current CPR/First-Aid certification.

Total Points: __________

Adult Participation (5 points)

☐ In addition to our two approved volunteers necessary to meet minimum girl-adult supervision ratios, and our Troop Cookie Manager, our Troop has at least one additional approved volunteer available to assist with supervision or transportation when needed.

Name(s): ________________________________

Total Points: __________

Service Unit Participation (5 points)

☐ We have at least one Troop volunteer representing us at every Service Unit Meeting (it could be a different person each time).

Total Points: __________

Council Participation (5 points)

☐ At least one of our Troop volunteers reads the Program Chat newsletter on a regular basis and shares information with the rest of the Troop.

Total Points: __________

Council Participation Bonus (5 points)
☐ At least one of our Troop volunteers checks the website regularly and shares any pertinent information with the rest of the Troop.

OR

☐ At least one of our Troop volunteers attended annual meeting and reported back to our Troop.

OR

☐ Utilizes the Community Program Partner Resource Guide

Total Points: ________________

______________________________________________________________
Total Number of Points Earned: ________________ Date Submitted: ________________

______________________________________________________________
Signature of Girl Representative: _______________________________________

______________________________________________________________
Signature of Troop Leader: __________________________________________

______________________________________________________________
Signature of Service Unit Manager: _____________________________________
Appendix: Travel

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

Juliette Low World Friendship Fund

To honor Juliette Gordon Low’s love of travel, of experiencing different cultures, and of making friends, Girl Scouts created the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund in 1927. Today, this fund supports girls’ international travel, participation in adult learning, and attendance at other international events—any event that fosters global friendships that connect Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 145 nations.

Traveling with Girls

See Also, Safety Checkpoints.

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

- **Short trips to points of interest in the neighborhood (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.
  - Paperwork required for this type of trip is the Permission for Special Activity. This form stays with the leader. It is not to be sent to Council.

- **Day trip (Brownies and older):** An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home.
  - Paperwork required for this type of trip is the Permission for Special Activity. This form stays with the leader. It is not to be sent to Council.

- **Overnight trips (Brownies and older):** One (or possibly two) nights away to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground. These short trips are just long enough to wet their appetites, but not long enough to generate homesickness.
  - Paperwork required for this type of trip is the Troop Overnight Trip. This form is to be reviewed by your Service Unit Manager and then sent to your Membership Coordinator for review. It should be turned in 4 weeks prior to the planned trip. Please don’t forget to attach all necessary paperwork. Example: copy of driver’s license, vehicle insurance, troop roster, etc.

- **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three or four nights camping or a stay in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls’ home region (for example, New England, the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest, and so on). Planning a trip to a large museum—and many offer unique opportunities for girls to actually spend the night on museum grounds—makes for an exciting experience for girls.
Paperwork required for this type of trip is the **Troop Overnight Trip**. This form is to be reviewed by your Service Unit Manager and then sent to your Membership Coordinator for review. It should be turned in 8 weeks prior to the planned trip. Please don’t forget to attach all necessary paperwork. For example copy of driver’s license, vehicle insurance, troop roster, etc.

- A Final Notification and Itinerary for Extended Trips must also be completed and given to the Service Unit Manager and forwarded to your Membership Coordinator at least two (2) weeks before the trip.

**National trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component—this often means no Disney and no cruises, but can incorporate some incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country.

- Paperwork required for this type of trip is the **Troop Overnight Trip**. This form is to be reviewed by your Service Unit Manager and then sent to your Membership Coordinator for review. It should be turned in 3 months prior to the planned trip. Please don’t forget to attach all necessary paperwork. For example, itinerary, troop roster, etc.
- A Final Notification and Itinerary for Extended Trips must also be completed and given to the Service Unit Manager and forwarded to your Membership Coordinator at least two (2) weeks before the trip. [What form is this?]

**International trips (Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors):** Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation; when girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact your Council to get permission to plan the trip and download the [Global Travel Toolkit](#). Adult volunteers should ensure that girls are mature enough to participate in the trip. Factors to consider are adaptability, good decision-making, previous cross-cultural experience, group dynamics, team capability, language skills (where applicable), and specific skills and interests related to the trip. Visiting one of the four [World Centers](#) is a great place to start, but also consider traveling with worldwide service organizations. Recently, girls have traveled to rural Costa Rica to volunteer at an elementary school, to Mexico to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, and to India to work with girls living in poverty in urban slums.

- Paperwork required for this type of trip is the **Troop Overnight Trip**. This form is to be reviewed by your Service Unit Manager and then sent to your Membership Coordinator for review. It should be turned in 3 months prior to the planned trip. Please don’t forget to attach all necessary paperwork. For example, itinerary, troop roster, etc.
- A Final Notification and Itinerary for Extended Trips must also be completed and given to the Service Unit Manager and forwarded to your Membership Coordinator at least two (2) weeks before the trip.

Although some girls who are in a group (for example, a troop of Cadettes) may decide to travel together, opportunities exist for girls who are not otherwise involved in a Girl Scout Troop to get together specifically for the purpose of traveling locally, regionally, and even internationally. Girl Scouts can travel regardless of how else they are-or aren’t-participating in Girl Scouting.

### Using Journeys and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting in Their Travels

Girl Scout travel is an ideal way to offer girls leadership opportunities. Encourage girls to choose one of the three series of National Leadership Journeys. The Journey’s theme will give girls a way to explore leadership through their travels. Use the adult guide to incorporate activities and discussions that help girls explore the Three Keys to Leadership (Discover, Connect, and Take Action) as they plan their trip and eventually travel.
Tying your trip to the topic of a Leadership Journey is a cinch. For example, if Cadette girls have chosen MEDIA, before their trip they can read online newspapers from the area to which they’re traveling—and evaluate when they arrive how well the media reflects the realities there. If Senior girls are using SOW WHAT?, they can plan to observe agricultural practices in other parts of the country or around the world. Ambassadors using BLISS: Live It! Give It! can build a trip around dreaming big—and empowering others in their community to dream big, too.

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

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

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

**Travel Progression Checklist**

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

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

**Seeking Council Permission**

Before most trips, you and the girls will need to obtain permission from the Membership Support Team, although you are not required to provide this information for trips of one day with no overnight stay. Check our Council website for specific forms to be filled out before traveling.

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

- A detailed itinerary, including specific activities involved, mode of travel, and all dates and times.
- Location and type of premises to be used.
- Numbers of girls who will be participating (parental permissions must be obtained).
- Names and contact information for the adults participating.
- Any other groups, organizations, consultants, or resource people who will be involved
- Participants’ skill levels, if applicable (language skills, backpacking or camping experience, and so on).
- Any specialized equipment that will be used, if applicable.
- Required agreements or contracts. See also, “Transporting Girls.”

Service Unit Program Events

The Intent to Operate a Service Unit Event Form shall be completed and sent to your Membership Coordinator when a Service Unit is planning an event for their troops and/or other Service Units.

The Service Unit Manager (SUM) will verify the following information before signing and sending it to the Membership Support Team for approval:

- Name of volunteer in charge
- Event date, time, and location
- Event description
- # of girls and # of adults
- If cookie dough be accepted as payment
  - Review flyer and check to see that on the flyer it has that cookie dough will be accepted
- Copy of the CPR/FA certification is attached

NOTE: Safety Activity Checkpoints must be followed. Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in these Checkpoints, available from the Council and on our website.

Service Unit Event Cookie Dough Reimbursement Form shall be sent to your Membership Coordinator filled out on its entirety. The Form will include the following:

- The original approved Intent to Operate a Service Unit Event Form is attached, including the flyer stating this event is a Service Unit event, the cost, and if cookie dough will be accepted is included.
- The amount of Cookie Dough that is attached to the form.
- Name and address where to send the reimbursement check.

The check will be sent to the person indicated on the form and should be received approximately two weeks after submission of the approved form.

Using Cookie Dough for Cadette and Older Troop Travel

The Intent to Travel with Troop and Use Cookie Dough Form is to be submitted to the Service Unit Manager (SUM) for review and then forwarded to your Membership Coordinator. The form is to be received at least four (4) weeks prior to the trip. If not received four weeks in advance, we reserve the right to refuse approval. The form shall include the following information:

- Event site and address
- Grade level
- Dates start to end
- # of girls and # of adults
- Adult in charge
- Names of adults accompanying the girls (all must be approved volunteers)
- Emergency Contact information
- Copies of valid driver’s license and proof of vehicle insurance attached for all adults driving girls is attached
- Copy of the CPR/FA certification attached
- Verification of obtaining Plan 2 Liability Insurance purchased through Council if trip is longer than two (2) nights

NOTE: Safety Activity Checkpoints must be followed. Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in these Checkpoints, available from your Membership Coordinator and on our website.

The Troop Overnight Travel Cookie Dough Reimbursement Form is to be completed and sent to the Membership Support Team when Cookie Dough has been used for an overnight trip for Cadette, Senior, and/or Ambassador Girl Scouts. The form shall include the following information:
- The amount of Cookie Dough attached to the form.
- The name and address where to send the reimbursement check
- The signed and approved Intent to Travel with Troop and Use Cookie Dough Form including the flyer stating that cookie dough will be accepted is attached

The check will be sent to the person indicated on the form and should be received approximately two weeks after submission of the approved form.

From the Birth of Girl Scouting to the World Centers

The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace in Savannah, Georgia, is a fantastic place for Girl Scout Juniors and older to visit. Reservations and Council approval are required to take a group of girls to visit the birthplace, and most educational opportunities are booked at least a year in advance, so book early! Families and individuals, however, do not need to reserve a tour in advance.

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

Closer to home, check with our Council to see about the availability of Council-owned property (Friendship Square) that can be rented out to the group of girls with which you’re working.
Involving Chaperones

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

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

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

Transporting Girls

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

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

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

* Must be 20 years of age or older.

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

Letting Girls Lead

Whether the trip is a day hike or a cross-country trek, the basic steps of trip planning are essentially the same. It’s true that as the locale gets farther away, the itinerary more complex, and the trip of greater duration, the details become richer and more complex, but planning every trip—from a day-long event to an international trek—starts by asking the following:
• What do we hope to experience?
• Who will we want to talk to and meet? What will we ask?
• Where are we interested in going?
• When are we all available to go?
• Will everyone in our group be able to go?
• Are there physical barriers that cannot be accommodated?
• What are visiting hours and the need for advance reservations?
• What are our options for getting there?
• What’s the least and most this trip could cost?
• What can we do now to get ourselves ready?
• How will we earn the money?
• What’s the availability of drinking water, restrooms, and eating places?
• Where is emergency help available?
• What safety factors must we consider?
• What will we do as we travel?
• What will we do when we get there?
• How will we share the Take Action story?

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

**Tips for Girls Traveling Alone**

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

**Staying Safe During the Trip**

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

• Who her buddy is—and how the buddy system works.
• What to do if she is separated from the group, whether by accident or because of a crime.
• What to do if she loses something significant: money, passport, luggage.
• How to report a crime.
• What to do if emergency help is needed.
• How to perform basic first-aid procedures.
• How to deal with a large crowd (if applicable).
• What to do in the event of a crime.
• What behaviors you expect—and what consequences exist for not living up to those behaviors.

**Travel Security and Safety Tips**

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

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

**Reengaging Girls**

The end of this trip doesn’t have to be the end of a girls’ time with Girl Scouting. Some girls participate in Girl Scouting in all sorts of ways; others are excited only about travel. What lies ahead for them—and for you?

• Girls who have never been involved in any other way besides travel may be looking for longer-term opportunities closer at home. Younger Cadettes may want to participate in resident camp, while Seniors and Ambassadors—as well as older Cadettes—will want to hear all about upcoming series and events at our Council.
• Girls who have traveled once tend to want to travel again. Be sure girls are aware that other travel opportunities, such as destinations, will exist for them in the years ahead. The great experiences they had on this trip may have prepared them for longer and more global trips in the future.
• Girls may want to hear about the Girl Scout Silver and Gold Awards, which are opportunities for them to make a dramatic difference in their communities—and to have plenty to brag about with college admissions officers, too.

And what about you? If you want to stay with this troop, start working with them to plan their group activities next year. And if you’re a little worn out but are interested in staying with Girl Scouts in other, flexible ways, be sure to let the Membership Support Team know how you’d like to be a part of girls’ lives in the future. Are you ready to volunteer at camp? Help organize a series or event? Take a trip? The possibilities are endless.
Appendix: Girl Scout Cookie Program and More

Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program

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

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

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

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

- Goal Setting
- Decision Making
- Money Management
- People Skills
- Business Ethics

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

A Sweet Tradition

It has been decades since Girl Scouts began selling home-baked cookies to raise money. The idea was so popular that, in 1936, Girl Scouts enlisted bakers to handle the growing demand.

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

Council’s Role

Each year, our Council provides training opportunities on the procedures to follow during each sale. Our Council also establishes guidelines and procedures for conducting the sale and determines how the proceeds and girl reward system will be managed.
Knowing Where Proceeds Go

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

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

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

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

The Girl/Adult Partnership

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

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

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

Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies and Other Products

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

- Chapter 4 Safety Wise-Volunteer Essentials.
- Safety Tips for Product Sales.
A few other considerations will help keep girls safe:

- Parents and guardians must grant permission for girls to participate and must be informed about the girls' whereabouts when they are engaged in product sale activities. Specific permission must be obtained when a girl intends to use the Internet for product marketing. A parent, guardian, or other adult must know each girl's whereabouts when she is engaged in product sales, and if and when she is online.
- Girls should be identifiable as Girl Scouts by wearing a Membership Pin, official uniform, tunic, sash, vest, or other Girl Scout clothing.
- Adult volunteers must monitor, supervise, and guide the sale activities of girls at all age levels.
- Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who participate in door-to-door sales must be supervised by (but do not need to be directly accompanied by) an adult. Girls of all grade levels must always use the buddy system.
- Money due for sold products is highly recommended to be collected upfront for the product/s the customer has ordered. Because all money including checks is deposited into the troop checking account be cautious about accepting checks from unknown people and checks for product sales should be written out to the troop.
- Personal customer information should remain private. Customer credit card information should not be collected by girls and should not be asked for on any form collected by girls.
- A girl's physical address, social media page address, IM name, Skype name or number, email address, or cell number should never be revealed to anyone outside her immediate circle of family and friends. You’ve heard it before, but it bears repeating.
- Girls can market cookies and other products by posting on social media sites like Facebook or sending emails to friends, family members, and former customers, as long as they use a group email address, the account or address of a parent/guardian or adult volunteer, a blind email address (in which the recipients cannot see the sender’s email address), or the online email tools provided by cookie vendors. Girls 13 and older can also use their social media sites (such as Facebook, or Pinterest) to do the same to her immediate circle of family and friends. Be sure each girl’s account uses the tightest privacy settings and doesn’t reveal information about her or her location to anyone outside her circle.

Please also keep in mind:

- Volunteers, parents, and Girl Scout Council staff do not sell cookies and other products; girls sell them.

Preparation for Your Girl Scout Cookie Booths

Cookie booths, or temporary sales set-up in areas with lots of foot traffic, are a popular way for girls to sell cookies as a team. Our Council has established cookie booth locations; contact our Council before planning a cookie booth of your own.

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

- Ensure that you have adequate space at the booth (table, products, and girls) to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes, and cars.
- Plan to have at least two adults and one girl at the booth at all times. From time to time, volunteers might want to take breaks or will have to accompany young girls to the bathroom, so make sure to have a few extra adults on hand.
- Girls make all sales, except in cases where adults are helping Daisies handle money.
- Respect the surrounding businesses by making sure your booth isn’t blocking a store entrance or exit.
- Attract customers with colorful signs. Remind girls to be polite and to have their sales pitch ready for interested shoppers.
- Be especially careful with the money box; make sure it’s under adult supervision and out of public sight. Arrange for cash to be removed from the site periodically. When you do travel with money, have someone accompany you to your vehicle and/or the bank.
- Report any suspicious people in the area to local security.

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

**Cookie Donation Programs**

Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council has a cookie donation program called Cookies from the Heart where customers may purchase cookies for the sole purpose of having them donated to an organization coordinated by Council. This is a great talking point for girls to share with their customers and a great way to help teach girls that the Cookie Program can make a big impact in their community and to others.

Here are some things to remember about cookie donations:

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

**Handling Product Complaints**

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

Troops/groups should notify their Council if they are aware of any customer dissatisfaction.

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

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

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

- **Can market to and collect indications of interest from customers within our Councils’ zip codes.** Refer prospects that come from outside Council jurisdiction to the Council finder at [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org). Family members and Digital Cookie sales are the exception to this rule.
- **Digital Cookie is the only approved online sales tool available for girls to use when selling cookies.** Outside of Digital Cookie, girls cannot set up online sites where cookies are sold and/or money is exchange via the Internet.
- **Marketing and/or selling online through sites like eBay, Craigslist, or Facebook Buy/Sell/Trade and community pages in not approved for Girl Scout Cookie sales. Girls may only share on social media sites that allow them to restrict access to friends and family (e.g., personal Facebook Pages).**
- **Must sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge** (available at [http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp)) before doing any online activities, and all online activities must be under the supervision of adults.
- **Cannot expose their own or any other girl’s email address, physical address, or phone number to the public.** When writing e-mail messages or online announcements, girls should sign with their first name only, along with their group number or name and their Council name.

### Setting Up a Troop/Group Website

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

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

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

Please adhere to these guidelines to ensure the girls’ safety:

- Use girls’ first names only.
- Never post girls’ addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses.
- Never, ever, ever post addresses of group meeting places or dates and times of meetings, events, or trips. (An adult volunteer who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of girls should use email instead of posting details on a website, unless that site is password protected or is a closed/secret Facebook group).
- Always have a parent’s or guardian’s signature on a photo release form before using pictures of girls on a website.
- Make yours a site that does not allow outsiders to post messages to the site, or make sure all postings (such as message boards or guest books) have adult oversight and are screened prior to posting live.
Don't violate copyright law by using designs, text from magazines or books, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder (and, generally, this permission is pretty tough to get!). Girl Scout trademarks (such as the trefoil shape, Girl Scout pins, and badges and patches) can be used only in accordance with guidelines for their use. (The Girl Scout trefoil, for example, may not be animated or used as wallpaper for a website.) Check with your Council’s website for complete graphics guidelines and approvals.

Daisies: Stay Especially Safe!

Girl Scout Daisies are too young to be marketing online through their group, parent or guardian websites, or social media sites. For this reason, Girl Scout Daisies are allowed to send out emails only when working directly with an adult. Daisies and their adult volunteers must use only blind emails or the online marketing tools provided by GSUSA product vendors on their websites.

Product Sales Program Safety

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

Prepare Early

Communicate with Parents

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

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

Communicate with Your Local Police Department

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

- School Resource Officers who have specific training for communicating with young people.
- Police departments can also provide information on areas and addresses to avoid, as well as access to known sex offender registries.
Prepare for Emergencies

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

Arrange for Supervision

Parents/guardians provide supervision and guidance for all grade levels, and must accompany their Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors when they are selling, taking orders for or delivering products.

Approved volunteers must be present at booth activities, regardless of the age of the girls (see also the section “Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need”).

Approved volunteers who oversee Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors must:

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

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

Plan for Safeguarding Money

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

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

Use the Buddy System

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

Be Streetwise and Follow Your Instincts.

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

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

Booth Sales

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

When setting up booth sales, it’s important that:
• Approved volunteers according to ratio are present at all times.
• There is adequate space at the booth for table, products and girls and to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes and cars.
• Girls are a safe distance from cars. If possible, set up a safety barrier between cars and the booth—perhaps a few volunteers could park their cars in spaces near the booth location.
• The booth is not blocking a store entrance or exit.
• Girls and adults do not confront or engage an irate customer, but call local authorities for assistance.

While girls can receive cash from buyers and make change, they should hand the money to an adult for safekeeping. It is important that cash is kept safe and out of sight. This can be accomplished by:
• Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes.
• Having an adult volunteer keep the money by, for example, securing it in a front-facing pouch tied around her waist.

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

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

Computer/Online Safety

Understand the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge

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

Safeguard Information

Girls must understand that the Internet is an open means of communication that anyone can access. As such, websites will often attract people other than their intended users. It is therefore imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and adults not be disclosed on a website. The following measures will help to ensure girls’ online safety:
• Girl Scouts should only use their first names.
• A Girl Scout’s last name, address, phone number, or e-mail address should never be posted. For Digital Cookie a girl may post her unique Digital Cookie URL on her Facebook page and may email it to friends and family (for additional information please refer to Safety Activity Checkpoint for Online Product Sales, Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Volunteers and Digital Cookie Pledge for Girls).
• Always have a parent’s or guardian’s permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old.
• Do not post addresses of group meeting places, dates and times of meetings, events or trips on a website. Instead, an adult who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an e-mail to the families.
• Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a website. All postings to message boards, social media and guest books should have adult oversight, and be screened prior to posting live.
• Ensure that websites do not show personal e-mail addresses of girls, but use a troop, group or adult’s e-mail.

Safety in Technology Based Sales
Girl Scouts use the Internet for a variety of reasons including the online marketing and sale of approved Girl Scout related products. Below are some key points to keep in mind for all online sales and marketing:
• Girls must read, understand and accept the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, prior to conducting any online sales or marketing activities, which is available at the end of the Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints.
• Girls may send e-mail messages to alert friends and relatives about product sales and accept customer commitments via email.
• Social media sites may be used to market product, however, all applicable GSUSA and Council guidelines must be followed.
• Girls writing product e-mails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name and their Council name.
• Personal e-mails or street addresses of girls should never be used. Instead, use one of the following:
  o A blind return address account where the girls’ name or personal e-mail is not revealed to the customer and is instead hosted on a secure site.
  o A group account, monitored by an adult.
  o An adult’s e-mail account, which is supervised by that adult.
• Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult.

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


APPENDIX: PERSONNEL POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Revised July 2016

This Volunteer Essentials Handbook is not intended to create a contractual relationship, either implied or explicit, between Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council and volunteers, and no specific duration to the relationship exists. Volunteers may be released at any time, with or without cause. Volunteers are free to resign at any time for any reason.

Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action

Silver Sage Council does not discriminate on the basis of a person’s race, color, creed, religion, sex, disability, national origin, citizenship, marital status, genetic information, or any other legally protected status. In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, every volunteer in Girl Scouting shall be selected under procedures that provide equal opportunities to all people. Silver Sage Council supports affirmative action in the recruitment, selection, training, and transfer of disabled individuals and of persons from groups that are underrepresented ethnically and racially. Silver Sage Council will make reasonable accommodations for physical and mental limitations of volunteers consistent with the performance of essential job functions and the effective operations of the business.

Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment

Girl Scouts is committed to creating a respectful, courteous environment free of discrimination and unlawful harassment of any kind. Silver Sage Council does not tolerate sexual or other unlawful harassment by any employee, volunteer, vendor, contractor, consultant, customer, or visitor. Harassment is a breach of Silver Sage Council policy, and a violation of state and/or federal law. In addition to any disciplinary action that Silver Sage Council may take, up to and including termination, offenders may also be personally liable for any legal and monetary damages.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is based on a person’s race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, citizenship, genetic information, marital status, or other protected group status. Silver Sage Council maintains a strict policy prohibiting unlawful harassment and discrimination. Silver Sage Council will not tolerate harassing conduct that affects unreasonably interferes with an individual’s volunteer duties, or that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment. Silver Sage Council is committed to taking all reasonable steps to prevent such harassment and discrimination.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Sexual harassment of an employee (female or male) by anyone (female or male), including any supervisor, coworker, volunteer, or Girl Scout member will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment may consist of unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and/or other verbal or physical acts of a sexual nature where submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or a
condition of an individual’s employment; where an employment decision is based on an individual’s acceptance or rejection of such conduct; or where such conduct interferes with an individual’s work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council has a firm commitment to providing a workplace where all volunteers and girl and adult members are treated with dignity and respect. All volunteers share responsibility and ownership for creating and maintaining a respectful and positive work environment.

In accordance with this policy, Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council will neither condone nor tolerate:

- any overt display or demonstration of sexual activity between and/or among employed staff or volunteers
- any overt display or demonstration of sexual activity between employed staff or volunteers and girl members
- sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between employed staff or volunteers and girl members
- use of the Girl Scout name, related activities, publications, and/or facilities as vehicles for public or private promotion of sexual orientation and/or practice; and
- Infliction of sexually abusive behavior upon girl members, including sexual touching and bodily contact, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and/or involvement of girl members in pornographic materials

Sexual harassment also encompasses other actions that create a hostile, offensive, or intimidating environment. Such actions can include, for example, inappropriate or overtly familiar touching, sexual innuendoes, obscene gestures, and jokes and remarks of a sexual nature, especially where exposure to such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual’s work performance or ability to do her/his job.

Sexual harassment is a form of misconduct that undermines the integrity of the volunteer relationship and is incompatible with the values, traditions, and purposes of Girl Scouting as stated in the Constitution of Girl Scouts of the USA.

Anti-Child Abuse Policy

Because some volunteer positions within Silver Sage Council involve direct contact with children, Silver Sage Council supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect. All 50 states have passed some form of mandatory child abuse and neglect reporting law in order to qualify for funding under the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA). CAPTA mandates "minimum definitions" for child abuse and sexual abuse. Child abuse or neglect is any recent act or failure to act:

...resulting in imminent risk of serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation of a child by a parent or caretaker who is responsible for the child's welfare (the definition of ‘child’ may vary from state to state, but is usually a person under the age of 18).
Sexual abuse is defined as:

...employment, use, persuasion, inducement, enticement, or coercion of any child to engage in, or assist any other person to engage in, any sexually explicit conduct or any simulation of such conduct for the purpose of producing any visual depiction of such conduct; or rape, and in cases of caretaker or inter-familial relationships, statutory rape, molestation, prostitution, or other form of sexual exploitation of children, or incest with children.

Sexual abuse may also include sexual touching and bodily contact, exhibitionism, voyeurism and/or involvement of children in pornographic material.

All states require certain professionals and institutions to report suspected child abuse. Failure to report suspected child abuse can result in criminal and/or civil liability. All states require the report to be made to some type of law enforcement authority or child protection agency. Reporting to a parent or relative will not satisfy the reporter's legal duty under the statutes. In accordance with these statutes, Silver Sage Council will neither condone nor tolerate:

- Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury upon girl members
- Physical neglect of girl members, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities
- Emotional maltreatment of girl members, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks
- Infliction of sexually abusive behavior upon girl members, including sexual touching and bodily contact, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and/or involvement of girl members in pornographic materials

Silver Sage Council reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the organization any employee or volunteer who is found guilty of child abuse or neglect or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect. Local (more stringent) prevailing statutes may supersede Girl Scout policies.

Reporting Child Abuse

All employees are required by state law to report any suspected child abuse (physical or sexual) or neglect to a law enforcement agency, Child Protective Services, or appropriate state agency (e.g., state agency operating, licensing, certifying, or registering a facility) within 48 hours of the event that led to the suspicion. Reports to Child Protective Services can be made to the State Abuse Hotline (800 4-A-CHILD 800 422-4453). State law specifies that an employee may not delegate to or rely on another person to make the report.

Anti-Retaliation Policy

Silver Sage Council feels very strongly that it is important to provide volunteers with confidential, non-threatening alternatives for registering their concerns without fear of retaliation. Silver Sage Council will not tolerate retaliation against anyone for stepping forward with a concern, complaint, or grievance.

Examples of concerns or complaints include, but are not limited to:

- safety concerns (e.g., OSHA complaints);
- unlawful harassment or discrimination complaints, including sexual harassment;
- cooperation in a harassment or discrimination investigation.
Alcohol/Substance Abuse
Silver Sage Council is committed to maintaining an atmosphere and environment free from alcohol and illegal drugs. Therefore, the use, distribution, manufacture, dispensation, sale, or possession of illegal drugs and/or alcohol, or the misuse of prescribed drugs, is prohibited at any time on the organization’s premises, in the conduct of the organization’s business, or off premises if it affects an individual’s volunteer performance. Any illegal substance found on council property will be turned over to the appropriate law enforcement agency and may result in criminal prosecution. In addition, all forms of tobacco are prohibited on Girl Scout property, including use of tobacco products in the presence of girl members.

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

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

Volunteer Selection
Every adult volunteer is selected on the basis of qualifications for membership, ability to perform the volunteer position, and the willingness and availability to participate in training for it.

Placement and Re-Appointment
Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of the Council. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the Council will take precedence over the needs of the individual. Individuals not placed in a position for which they applied may be recommended for another position, and they may request reassignment. Operational volunteers shall be appointed for a term of one year.

Membership
All volunteers participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall meet GSUSA membership standards, be registered through the Council as members of the Girl Scout Movement, and shall agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council. Each shall individually pay annual dues, except those who are lifetime members or who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity.

Training Policy
Upon appointment to a position, all operational volunteers will complete the appropriate training as soon as possible but no later than 6 months. It is recommended that all operational volunteers should attend at least one additional educational training event.

Uniforms
All Girl Scout members should wear the membership pin when participating in GS activities. Girl Scouts is a uniformed organization, and all members are entitled to wear the GS uniform. Although the wearing of the uniform is encouraged,
including Girl Scout logowear, it is not required for participation in Girl Scouting. Purchase of a uniform is at the volunteer's expense.

Performance Appraisal
The Membership Support Team works with volunteers throughout the year to mentor, support and provide feedback.

Reappointment
Upon completion and review of the Troop Annual Report, current registration and current background check, the Membership Support Team sends a letter of reappointment to Leaders and Co-Leaders.

Recognition
The Council's formal recognition system will be consistent with the GSUSA publication Adult Recognitions in Girl Scouting (Cat. No. 26-458). See also, Adult Recognitions Manual and Appendix of Forms in the following Appendix.

Grievance
A grievance is defined as an alleged violation of the terms of GSSSC or GSUSA policies, or a conflict between two or more individuals. A grievant may appeal in accordance with the procedure set forth below. If this process proves unsatisfactory, the grievance can be formally presented in succession to the staff person responsible, then the Grievance Committee, and finally to the CEO who will be the ultimate authority. (The Grievance Committee will be comprised of a management representative, an employee not involved in the conflict resolution process, and a council volunteer selected by the complainant.)

Procedure for Conflict Resolution and Dispute
The conflict resolution process is based on the fundamental values of respect for the individual and fairness. The policy exists so members of the organization can air their grievances and have avenues to solving them. All volunteers may use the conflict resolution procedure. Every volunteer may expect a fair resolution of her or his dispute without fear of jeopardizing her or his volunteer status. Informal counseling by volunteer and staff personnel is the first step in resolving a situation involving a conflict or dispute. The initiation of the conflict resolution procedure, however, will not restrict the council from taking immediate and appropriate action with respect to the volunteer. The procedure is as follows:

Step 1. If an informal resolution is not possible and further hearing is desired, the person filing the complaint must do so in writing, citing the issue. The signed and dated document must be specifically titled “Conflict Resolution/Dispute Request,” identify the person with whom the conflict is registered, and cite the policy or procedure that has allegedly been misapplied. A copy should be sent to the identified person’s supervisor. Within ten (10) working days, the supervisor will call a conference of all parties involved in the dispute and attempt to resolve the conflict. A written summary of the conference will be distributed to all parties.

Step 2. If the volunteer is not satisfied with the disposition of the conflict resolution, the council staff member or the council staff member’s supervisor will meet with the volunteer within ten (10) working days following her or his initial conference.

Step 3. In the event that the dispute is not resolved in Step 2, the staff member prepares a written report on the situation, including recommendations, and sends a copy to the CEO.

Step 4. The CEO convenes the Grievance Committee. The Grievance Committee will review the documentation of file and meet with the individuals involved. The Committee may seek additional information, if necessary, to aid it in making a final decision. The Committee will provide the CEO a written report of its findings and recommendations.
within ten (10) working days of the review hearing. Copies will also be issued to the volunteer and immediate supervisor.

If the recommended resolution is not acceptable to the volunteer or any of the supervisors involved, a request to submit the recommended resolution to the executive director for a final and binding decision will be made. The CEO may exercise the following options:

1. Accept the Grievance Committee’s recommended solution.
2. Provide an alternative final and binding decision.

The CEO’s final decision will be provided in writing to the concerned parties.

**Girl Discipline**

The purpose of discipline is to provide an atmosphere in which all Girl Scouts can comfortably and efficiently carry out their planned activities. It is the responsibility of the leader of the group to maintain positive leadership for the safety and general well-being of the participants. The goal of Girl Scouting is to present positive programs for girls and any disciplinary action should result in a cooperative relationship between girls and adults.

Physical or corporal punishment shall not be permitted in Girl Scout troops, camps, or events. At no time is discipline to include depriving a girl of sleep or food, placing a girl alone without supervision, or subjecting her to ridicule, threat of corporal punishment, or excessive physical exercise. Girls shall not be sent home alone or left alone for any reason. The policy applies to a leader’s own children also.

When a leader recognizes a persistent or serious behavior problem with a girl, a documentation procedure must be initiated. The leader needs to record the girl’s name, the behavior problem, any action taken, and the result of that action. If the girl’s behavior improves and no further action is necessary, the leader is to destroy the written documentation.

If girl behavior does not improve significantly and follow-on action is necessary, such as meeting with the girl’s parents to identify consequences for poor behavior or removing the girl from the troop, a second report must be made.

Examples of disciplinary problems include, but are not limited to, use of foul language, disrespect, habitual tardiness, sexual comments or behavior, bullying (including e-bullying), physical or verbal attacks and ethnic or racial comments.

A Girl Behavior Report should include:

- Date
- Who was involved?
- What was the nature of the inappropriate behavior?
- What corrective action was taken?
- Were parents/guardians of the girl(s) notified?
- Were any follow-on actions taken?

All matters are confidential and any written documentation will be destroyed when no longer active. In the event that a girl is removed from a troop, a copy of the dismissal documentation, such as a report or letter, should be sent to Council.
Volunteer Discipline/Release Process

Internal Issues/Concerns Process

- If a staff member who supervises volunteers identifies an issue/concern with a volunteer or if a volunteer or parent calls with a concern, the staff member will create an official file to capture all communication and action taken regarding the issue.
- The supervising staff member will discuss the issue with the volunteer and document the discussion for the file.
- All efforts will be made by the parties involved to resolve the issue directly, with each other, before formal proceedings are initiated.
- If the issue continues, the supervising staff member will discuss with the Director of Membership and document the next recommended steps. All discussions and actions are to be documented in the file.
- If the supervising staff member and Director of Membership determine that probation is warranted, a letter of probation will be sent to the volunteer, stating reason(s) and the probationary period (not to exceed 90 days) and cc: Director of Membership, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Executive Officer, and the file.
- If satisfactory resolution of the issue occurs, the supervising staff member will follow-up in writing to the volunteer lifting the probation and cc: Director of Membership, Chief Operating Officer, Chief Executive Officer, and the file.
- If there is no resolution, the supervising staff member and Director of Membership will discuss with the Chief Operating Officer and Chief Executive Officer.
- The decision to terminate lies with the Chief Executive Officer and the decision will be communicated, in writing, to the volunteer by the Chief Executive Office or her designee.

Release of Volunteers

The Council may terminate the services of a volunteer because of restructuring of volunteer positions, the elimination of the volunteer position in which a person serves, the refusal to comply with Council or GSUSA policies, the refusal to support the mission and values of the organization and the Council goals, or membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with those of GSUSA.

In addition, unacceptable behavior that may be cause for immediate suspension or termination shall include, but is not limited to:

- Willful violation of Council or GSUSA policies.
- Willful damage and/or misuse of property.
- Inability and/or unwillingness to fulfill the duties as outlined in the position description.
- Violence of any kind.
- Child Abuse-Neglect, physical injury or emotional maltreatment to include verbal and/or sexual abuse.
- Illegal Drugs-Use, sale, possession, or being under the influence of illegal drugs at a Girl Scout sponsored event.
- Improper conduct while under the influence of prescription drugs, including but not limited to transportation of girls while on a controlled substance.
- Alcohol-Use or being under the influence of alcohol is prohibited at all girl programs, activities, and events.
- Tobacco use, including e-cigarettes, in the presence of girls at a GS event or on GS property.
- Firearms/Ammunition/Weapons-No firearms or weaponry shall be in the possession of, on the person, or in a vehicle of any Girl Scout member or non-member accompanying them UNLESS the person is a sworn Law Enforcement Officer.
Inappropriate conduct, behavior, or acts during Girl Scout activities.
- Inappropriate, abusive, profane, or offensive language.
- Willful misuse of Council and/or Troop funds.
- Refusal to submit an accurate and timely Troop Annual Report.
- Falsification or significant omissions of any information on the Volunteer Application and/or Council reports.
- Harassment or intimidation, including sexual harassment or abusive behavior that creates a hostile environment.
- Lack of support for Council structure, Council staff, policies, and failure to maintain a positive representation of Girl Scouts of Silver Sage and GSUSA at all Girl Scout related activities and events.
- Adverse results from a criminal history background check or unwillingness to comply with a recheck upon request.

Any volunteer will be automatically discharged if a registered sex offender becomes part of their household.

Process for Release of a Volunteer

- Designated Council staff will bring to the attention of the CEO and Director of Membership any issues that may require termination of an appointed volunteer.
- Termination of Services prior to the end of appointment will be based on reasons delineated in this document and/or at the discretion of the CEO.
- Except in cases involving offenses that require immediate termination, prior to releasing a volunteer, the following process shall be followed:
  - An interview shall be conducted (via phone or in person) within two weeks of the offending incident or when it has been determined that the issue is not being resolved, at which time the volunteer will be told of the specific performance areas that are not satisfactory based on observable and documented information.
    - All circumstances, including all written documentation and communication concerning release from a volunteer position, shall comply with state regulations concerning confidentiality.
    - In all cases, reasons for non-reappointment and release will be documented and discussed with the volunteers by designated Council staff.
    - Volunteers will be informed of the Council grievance procedures at the time of their non-reappointment or release.
- If the decision is made to release a volunteer, a Letter of Termination will be mailed to the volunteer and a copy to: Membership Manager, SUD and file.

Resignation of Volunteers

Volunteers may initiate termination of services at any time. A volunteer unable to complete his/her term, or who chooses to terminate his/her services at the end of a term, should give written notice to his/her supervisor at least thirty (30) days in advance. She/he should make arrangements for an exit interview, and to share all information and materials with designated Council staff in order to ensure the uninterrupted experience for the girls.

After a notice of resignation has been received, the membership status of the volunteer will be transferred to a GSUSA adult position code of member non-defined position (14) until the end of the membership year.

All Troop/Group records, equipment, funds, and or major supplies **MUST** be returned to designated Council staff within 72 business hours of resignation or termination.
Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council (GSSSC) allows the use of alcoholic beverages during Girl Scout group events under conditions that:

1. Reasonably protect the interests of GSSSC
2. Reduce the liability of GSSSC
3. Indicate that alcohol is incidental to the program being presented
4. Prevent over-indulgence
5. Support the laws related to alcohol use.
6. Designated drivers are available

There may be adult-only functions where alcohol is available at a Girl Scout facility. This must be approved prior to the event by the Chief Executive Officer. Permits are not issued when either a single or a combination of characteristics creates adverse conditions for GSSSC. In some cases, special requirements may be imposed on an event to create an acceptable situation. The issuance of an alcohol permit will be largely dependent on the purpose and program of this proposed event.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Location*</th>
<th>Time &amp; Duration of Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of event</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Describe program or activity that is consistent with the stated purpose</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anticipated attendance</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name and title of person in charge of the event and requesting this permit**</td>
<td>Position</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Approval for use of alcohol at events will be limited to events on GSSSC property.
**Must be 21 years of age or older. Is responsible for compliance with applicable State laws and is required to attend the event during the entire period alcohol is served.

Explain why alcohol is incidental to this event
List nonalcoholic beverages and food that will be available during the entire time alcohol is being served:

A fourteen-day minimum processing time is required for review and approval of this request. The event host must:

- Post a sign at the event location requiring proof of identification prior to serving any person over the age of 21 and stating that GSSSC reserves the right to refuse service of alcohol to any individual.

- Checking identification for proof of age is over 21. Acceptable identification consists of a valid driver’s license with photo or other ID issued to non-drivers by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

Ensure that no open bottles or remaining beverages may be removed from the event.

In the review of an application to serve alcohol, the history of a group or event will be considered. A history may be available through facility reports, which are completed by the staff member in charge following events and other activities. A report of prior event problems may be cause for denial of permit or additional special condition.

**Person in charge:**

I am over 21 years of age and have accurately completed this form. I understand that I must attend this event during the entire time alcohol is being served and am responsible for enforcing the terms of this permit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Approved By Signature</th>
<th>Date Approved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>Email address</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address</td>
<td>Phone number(s)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Adult Recognitions Manual
2016-2017
Troop and Service Unit
Board-Approved National and Council

For questions or assistance,
Please contact:

Recognitions Coordinator
Girl Scouts of Silver Sage
1410 Etheridge Lane
Boise ID 83702
208-377-2011 x109
recognitions@girlscouts-ssc.org

Please visit our website at www.girlscouts-ssc.org; Volunteer Resources-
Adult Recognition and once on that page you will find the manual.
Appendix: Forms

Forms are an important part of membership support in that they provide ways to ensure responsible money management, good communication, safety, and program quality.

Here is a list of the most commonly used forms, with a brief description of each. All forms can be printed as needed from the Forms page of the Council website (www.girlscouts-ssc.org) under the Volunteer Resources menu.

**Troop Money Management Forms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Form Name</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Request for New Troop Startup Funds</td>
<td>This form is used to request $25 for new troops - in need of financial assistance - to purchase basic activity supplies. Review the requirements on the form carefully before applying.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Aid Application for Girl Registration</td>
<td>This form is used to request up to $25 to pay for a girl’s membership registration fee. Considerations are made after cookie money and troop treasury funds are considered. Review the questions on the form carefully.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application for Troop Money Earning Project</td>
<td>There are certain restrictions that apply to what Girls Scouts can do to earn money other than through cookie sales. Completing this form triggers an important review process to ensure compliance with Girl Scout guidelines and policies. Review the money-earning guidelines in Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troop Sponsorship Agreement</td>
<td>There are certain restrictions that apply to what organizations and community groups can contribute directly to a troop in terms of money, goods, and services. Completing this form ensures a thorough review and approval process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troop or Service Unit Contribution</td>
<td>Use this form if your troop or Service Unit is contributing money to our Council’s financial aid fund (Tribute Fund) or to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund which helps fund international Girl Scout efforts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troop Annual Report</td>
<td>Each troop must complete a troop annual report by mid-June of each year, which ensures a third-party review of each troop’s activities and money management for the year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troop Disband Notice</td>
<td>Completion of this form is required if a troop is disbanding so that Council records can be updated and any remaining troop funds be handled appropriately.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Risk Management & Travel Forms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Health History</strong></th>
<th>Every girl and adult participating in Girl Scouting must have a current Health History form either on her/his person or with a group leader at all times. This ensures that quick and accurate medical response can be provided in the event of an incident.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permission for Special Activities</strong></td>
<td>Every time a troop will be meeting outside their normal meeting place, or traveling for any reason (day trip, camping trip, etc.), or engaging in an activity that warrants extra permission, the troop/group leader MUST have signed permission forms from every parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Troop Overnight Trip</strong></td>
<td>Any time a troop is planning an overnight trip they must complete and submit this form to their Service Unit Manager at least 4 weeks prior to the trip. This form requires a significant amount of information that is subject to staff verification, so start well in advance of the 4-week deadline.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Permission to Participate in Sensitive Issues</strong></td>
<td>Any time a troop intends to address topics of a sensitive nature (any topic that might be considered controversial or unacceptable to some parents), they must have this permission form signed by every parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accident/Incident Report</strong></td>
<td>Use this form to report any incident or accident, even minor ones if it is deemed important to have documentation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Membership Registration Forms**

| **Girl Registration Form** | The new leader of a troop can obtain GSUSA membership registration forms from the Forms page of our website or can register the troop members online. |
| **Adult Registration Form** |                                                                                                                                                        |
| **Registration Dues Summary Form** | This form must accompany every “batch” (one or more) of membership registration forms to assist us in processing the registrations accurately. As more are needed, they can be printed from the Forms page of the website. |
| **Change of Membership Information** | Use this form anytime you or a member of your troop has a change to their membership record (name, address, email, phone, troop move, positions change, etc). We can only maintain current records if we are aware of needed changes. |