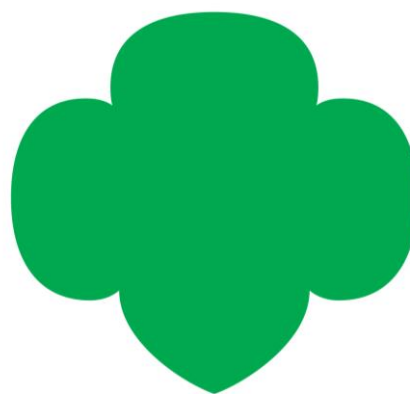




Volunteer Essentials 2018/2019



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Quick Reference Guide

Welcome to the great adventure that is Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers and mentors 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 Reference Guide to *Volunteer Essentials* is designed to give you just what you need to know now as you plan your first troop meeting.

The rest of *Volunteer Essentials* is 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, but there's no need to read it all today.

Ready to get started? Let's go!

Your Council – Girl Scouts of Silver Sage

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) charters 112 Councils nationwide that attract and retain members in a geographic area and provide ways for girls to participate in Girl Scouting.

Your Council, Girl Scouts of Silver Sage, has four (4) offices to support our volunteers throughout the Council:

Boise

8948 W Barnes St.
Boise, ID 83709
Hours Mon-Fri 9am-5pm
Wed 9am-7pm

Twin Falls

1455 Fillmore St. N
Suite 1105
Twin Falls, ID 83301

Pocatello

4155 Yellowstone Hwy
Suite 1293
Chubbuck, ID 83202

Idaho Falls

3910 S Yellowstone Hwy
Idaho Falls, ID 83402

Main phone line (208) 377-2011

A team of volunteers and staff provides you with local support, learning opportunities, and advice. As a volunteer, you will have the most contact with your Girl Scout volunteer support team, called a Service Unit. Never hesitate to contact the members on that team. They will guide, assist, train, and support you in all things Girl Scouting. You will also be supported by an entire Council team, consisting of a Recruitment Coordinator, a Placement Coordinator and a Membership Coordinator. This team that is assigned to you based upon your geographic area will guide you through every process from recruiting & placing girls in your Troop, to the actual management of your Troop.

My Service Unit Manager: _____

My Recruitment Coordinator: _____

My Placement Coordinator: _____

My Membership Coordinator: _____

We Are Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts was founded in 1912 by trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low, the original G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ powerhouse. We are the largest leadership development organization for girls in the world and a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a sisterhood of close to 10 million girls and adults in 150 countries.

Our Mission and Vision

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We are the premier leadership development 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 2. 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 92 countries around the world.

- **1.8 million** girls 5 to 18 years of age
- **14,400** Girl Scouts overseas
- **800,000** adult volunteers
- **Over 50 million** alumnae
- **112 councils** throughout the United States

At any given time, approximately 7 percent of girls are Girl Scouts, and it's interesting to know that:

- 50 percent of women business owners were Girl Scouts.
- 73 percent of female U.S. Senators were Girl Scouts.
- 57 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

Girl Scouts are all about practicing everyday leadership, preparing girls to empower themselves, and promoting G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)[™] experiences. At Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl: activities are girl-led, which gives girls the opportunity to take on leadership roles and learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment.

The Girl Scout Difference: Girl Scouts offers the best leadership development experience for girls in the world—one that is designed with, by, and for girls.

Girl Scouts unleashes the **G.I.R.L.** (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)[™] potential in every girl, preparing her for a lifetime of leadership— from taking a nighttime hike under the stars to accepting a mission on the International Space Station; from lobbying the city council with her troop to holding a seat in Congress; from running her own cookie business today to tackling cybersecurity tomorrow.

Our Girl Scout Leadership Experience is a **one-of-a-kind leadership development program for girls**, with proven results. It is based on **time-tested methods and research-backed programming** that help girls take the lead—in their own lives and in the world.

Girl Scouts is proven to help girls thrive in five key ways as they:



Develop a strong sense of self



Display positive values



Seek challenges and learn from setbacks



Form and maintain healthy relationships



Identify and solve problems in the community

The **inclusive, all-female environment** of a Girl Scout troop creates a safe space where girls can try new things, develop a range of skills, take on leadership roles, and just be themselves.

Did you know?

Girl Scouts fuels the female leadership pipeline.



50%
OF FEMALE
BUSINESS LEADERS



73%
OF FEMALE
U.S. SENATORS



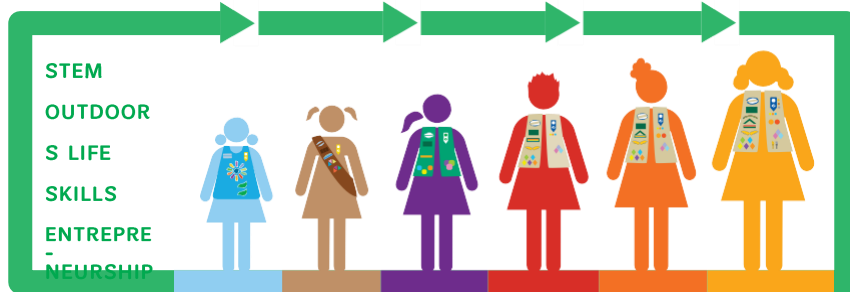
100%
OF FEMALE
U.S. SECRETARIES
OF STATE

...WERE GIRL SCOUTS.

Girl Scouts takes the potential of girls, combines it with robust skill-building programming, and adds caring adult mentors and strong female role models.

Our Program

Everything a Girl Scout does centers around STEM, the outdoors, development of life skills, and entrepreneurship, and is designed to meet her where she is now and to grow along with her.



Whether she's building a robotic arm, coding her first app, building a shelter in the backcountry, or packing for her first hike, a Girl Scout has an exciting array of choices to suit her interests at every age.



STEM

Computer science, engineering, robotics, outdoor STEM, and more



OUTDOORS

Adventure and skill building, including through camping experiences for all age levels, from the backyard to the backcountry



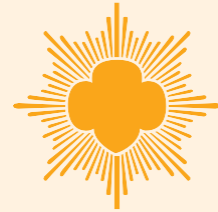
LIFE SKILLS

Civic engagement, healthy living, global citizenship, communication skills



ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Girl Scout Cookie Program—the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world—teaches goal setting, decision making, money management, business ethics, and people skills.



The Girl Scout Gold Award is the most prestigious award in the world for girls—and the most difficult to earn—and it's only available to Girl Scouts.

It's a one-of-a-kind opportunity for girls to engage in a rigorous process that calls for leadership at the highest level, as they tackle issues they feel passionately about.

Gold Award Girl Scouts:

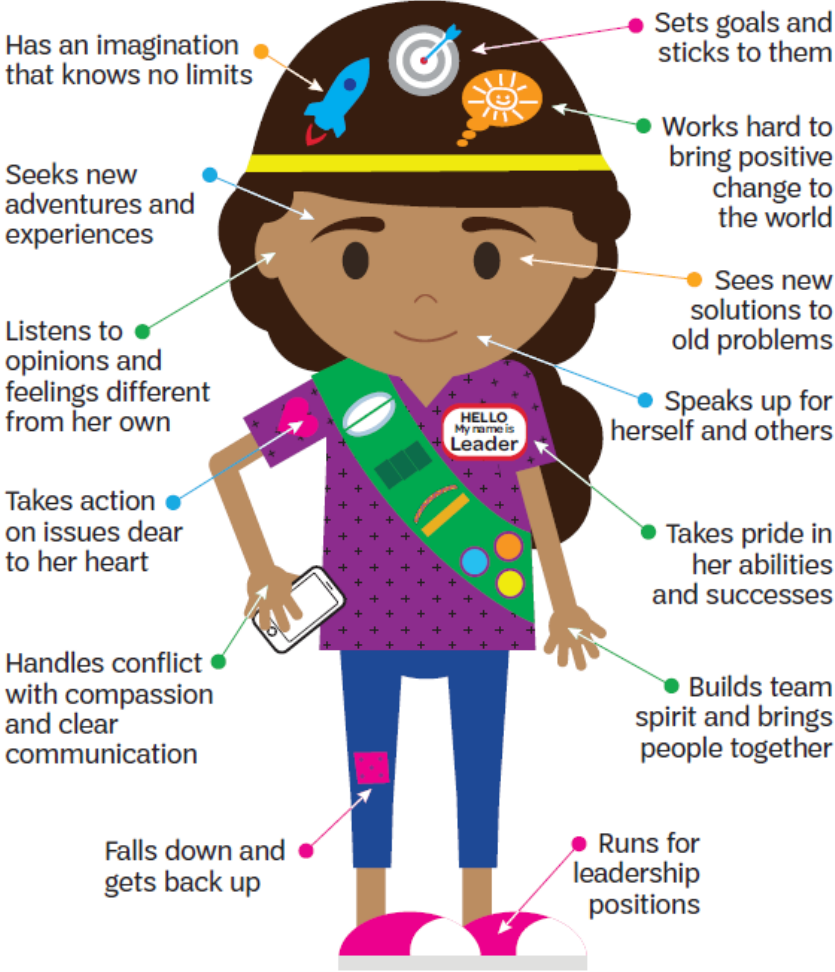
- Earn college scholarships
- Demonstrate high educational and career outcomes
- Are active in their communities

Connect with your Silver Sage Girl Scouts Council at: www.girlscouts-ssc.org, www.facebook.com/GirlScoutsofSilverSage and www.twitter.com/GSSSC, store.girlscouts-ssc.org, www.facebook.com/GirlScoutsofSilverSagestore

Connect with Girl Scouts of the USA at www.girlscouts.org, www.facebook.com/GirlScouts, <https://www.youtube.com/user/girlscoutvideos>, www.twitter.com/girlscouts, <https://www.instagram.com/girlscouts/>, www.pinterest.com/GSUSA and <https://www.linkedin.com/company/girl-scouts-of-the-usa/>.

DNA of a G.I.R.L.

She's a *go-getter, innovator, risk-taker, leader!*



POWERED BY GIRL SCOUTS

Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and the inherent power of girls and women together in an inclusive, supportive, girl-led environment. 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 troop, or any responsible adult (female or male, who has passed the necessary screening process) looking to help prepare girls for a lifetime of leadership—whatever that might look like for them.

What all members share are the Girl Scout Promise and Law, as well as our common characteristics as go-getters, innovators, risk-takers, and leaders. 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 for graduating girls or adults, please visit our website at www.girlscouts-ssc.org.

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)

Adding Girls to your Troop

Congratulations on your new troop! We're excited you're here. As you'll find out, Girl Scouts is always more fun with friends!

The recommended number of girls in a Troop is 12 with a minimum of 2 non-related* volunteers (Leader/Co-Leader).

Here are some quick tips on how you can recruit girls for your new troop:

- Hang posters at your girl's school.
- Send home invitations or flyers with girls from school inviting them to join.
- Ask parents you may know in your girl's class if they would be interested in joining.

Don't forget to ensure your troop is listed on the opportunity catalog. This is the listing of all the available troops within a certain zip code. Interested new girls will only be able to find your troop and register for it unless it's listed. The catalog will only show your troop number, general meeting area and time your troop meets. We will never share your private contact information on the catalog.

Contact your Council's Recruitment or Placement Coordinator to assist you with recruiting additional girls or placing your troop on the opportunity catalog.

* A related volunteer 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 have a related volunteer be a volunteer in your troop, but you must have a 3rd person who is not related present at all times.

Role of a Leader/Co-Leader

A Leader/Co-Leader is a mentor who facilitates girls' experiences, so they can learn and grow, build healthy relationships, develop core leadership skills, have fun, and feel safe. You achieve this by planning program activities, engaging girls' families, managing troop functions, and by being a healthy role model. There needs to be a minimum of 2 Leaders/Co-Leaders (non-related adults) to start a troop, but additional troop Leaders/Co-Leaders are strongly encouraged.

To be a fully approved volunteer, you should have:

- a current and valid membership with GSUSA
- completed a background check, valid for 5 years. Renewal after 5 years is reimbursed by Council if you have been a continued and active volunteer in a troop.

To be a fully approved Leader/Co-Leader, you should have:

- fulfilled all the requirements listed above
- completed both 101 & 102 trainings

Troop Details

Troop Number

Every troop is assigned a troop number. Depending on how and when your troop forms, you may know yours already, or you may not. If you do not have your troop number, please contact your Placement Coordinator.

Troop Meeting – Place, frequency, day & time

This is completely up to you, the Troop Leader/Co-Leader, along with input from your girls and families, factoring in safety and other considerations. Troop meetings are typically one (1) to two (2) hours in length.

If you are a first-time Troop Leader/Co-Leader, consider meeting only once or twice a month for your regular troop meeting. One of those monthly meetings can be a “go see” activity or an event, such as a visit to the Fire House, the Police Station, the local museum, a Service Unit organized event, etc. This will help you get your bearings while you continue learning.

It is important that you maintain a schedule that works for you so that you don't feel overwhelmed and forget to have fun with the girls. Remember that not only the girls grow and develop over time, you, as their mentor, will too.

Troop Meeting Structure

There is a traditional troop meeting structure, described below, but it is a guideline only. The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is a wonderful tool to help you set the troop structure. As you learn and develop with your girls, your troop meeting structure will most likely evolve.

Start-up - a simple activity to keep girls occupied while waiting for everyone to arrive.

Opening - open with the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Business - time for taking attendance, collecting dues, making announcements, etc.

Activity - the core of the meeting where you facilitate the 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 in Girl Scouts

The Girl Scout community works hard to offer many flexible ways to participate in Girl Scouting, both as a girl and as an adult.

Council-Sponsored Events

As a Girl Scout member, you will receive a monthly Council publication email, called “Program Chat”. This publication contains important Council information, in addition to any number of events and activities sponsored by our community partners. Try to add some of these activities as your monthly “go see” or encourage your girls and parents to participate on their own. Make sure to check the additional information on the website www.girlscouts-ssc.org/en/events/event-list.html because most events and activities require registration.

Service Unit-Sponsored Events

Your local Service Unit will hold events throughout the year to celebrate several of Girl Scouts special dates, such as Juliette Gordon Low’s Birthday, Thinking Day, Bridging, etc. It is a wonderful way for your girls to meet other Girl Scouts and learn the Girl Scout traditions.

Girl Scout Camp

Girl Scouts of Silver Sage has two (2) beautiful camps with a summer long camp program.

Camp Alice Pittenger – nestled among majestic pines, located on the beautiful shores of Payette Lake in McCall, Idaho. At Camp, girls can go swimming, fun-yaking and canoeing. They experience the team challenge course, archery, hiking, crafts, and Girl Scout traditions. Pioneer Girl Scouts can venture off for horse back riding. Adults can participate in family camp and/or (troop) core camp.

Camp Ta-Man-A-Wis – Located near Swan Lake in Eastern Idaho. It is every girl’s outdoor dream. Girls spend their time backpacking, learn how to do leather crafts, fire building, outdoor cooking, orienteering, and star-gazing.

In addition to the above 2 camps that are available, your Service Unit may organize a day camp during the summer, and overnight camping is also available at “Friendship Square”.

Friendship Square – located in Boise. This facility offers a meeting space, a kitchen, and is often used by Troops as a camping “progression” opportunity for younger girls. Friendship square is also often used by the Silver Sage Council to hold on-site events and activities.

Juliette Girl Scouting

Juliette Girl Scouts are registered girl members, K-12, who are busy, independent, self-confident girls. When troops are not available, or a girl becomes too busy with extra-curricular activities or sports, becoming a Juliette Girl Scout allows her to continue her Girl Scout experience on an individual basis. She won’t have to attend troop meetings, instead she works on Girl Scout programs or Highest Awards with the guidance of a caregiver or another adult mentor. She would decide what activities to participate in and which earned recognitions and awards she wishes to complete. A Juliette Girl Scouts may attend Council and Service Unit sponsored events and camp.

For additional information, please contact program@girlscouts-ssc.org

Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure

Girl Scouts is the world's largest nonprofit leadership development for girls, currently encompassing 1.8 million girl members and 800,000 volunteers! Three core structures support all our 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). You'll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers [on the GSUSA website](#).

[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.

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

Your Council

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

A team of volunteers and staff provides you with local support, learning opportunities, and advice. As a volunteer, you will have the most contact with your Girl Scout support team, which may be called a service unit or another name. 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, you can always go to your team for answers and ongoing support in all things Girl Scouting.

Getting Started with the National Leadership Program through Journeys

The Girl Scout experience is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), in which girls **Discover** themselves and what they're passionate about; **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. To guide girls on a great Journey, all you need is enthusiasm and a sense of adventure. Before you dive in, try these six simple tips:

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

Girl Scouts of the USA provides digital troop tools just for you! Be sure to check out the Volunteer Toolkit, available for troop leaders and parents of all troop levels with resources and activity plans for badges and journeys, as well as troop management tools. Simply click on My GS, then Volunteer Toolkit you're your council's website home page www.girlscouts-ssc.org



Planning in a Girl-Led Environment

Planning your time with the girls is key to a successful Girl Scout experience. You should consider the following questions and begin to map out your Girl Scout year:

- How many times each month will you meet? When do you plan to break for holidays?
- How many weeks do you need to allocate for the Girl Scout Cookie Program?
- Will you have time in your schedule for guest speakers and other visitors?
- If you've worked with this group before, what are their preferences: badge work? Field trips? Other activities? Our [Journey maps](#) for each grade level can help you with specific ideas to incorporate badges, trips, and other Girl Scout traditions into a Journey. The [Badge explorer](#) will also help you see the broad range of topics for badge work.

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

After you've drafted a loose framework, ask the girls what they think. Or create the online calendar together! Remember that you want girls to lead, but younger girls will need more guidance, and 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/badge, 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/badge.

Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)

Next step after planning with the girls, is to put the plan into action. The Volunteer Toolkit is a great tool to use. Leaders/Co-Leaders only have access to the VTK by going to www.girlscouts-ssc.org under the **My GS** tab. The VTK will help you build your calendar, set your year plan and meeting plan. It has lesson plans, hand-outs, material lists, meeting aids, etc. for both badges and journeys. You will be able to take attendance and keep track of all the badges your girls will earn throughout the year. This is where you update parent and girl contact information, email your parents the upcoming meeting details, etc. The VTK has a full list of all badges and journeys for Daisies through Juniors. A few Cadette through Ambassador plans are available and more will be coming. The VTK is updated monthly, so make sure to keep up-to-date.

The volunteer toolkit offers additional resources for all levels, and it is also where you will find the tab to submit your troop annual report each year in May.

Meeting with Girls for the First Time

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

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

If you already know which Journey or badge 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 or the instructions for the badge on the VTK). If your girls haven't chosen a Journey or badge yet, you can spend time during the first meeting talking about the themes of the three Journeys that are available for their grade level and find out which one the group would like to do. You can then discuss these points in the next meeting, if you run out of time.

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

Using Safety Activity Checkpoints



When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that specific activity. You can find these on your council's website and on the Volunteer Toolkit 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, 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 consideration the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities, while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.
- **Girls have the chance to learn cooperatively.** Have girls teach each other new skills they may need for the activities, rather than hearing all that from you.
- **Girls learn by doing.** If research or special equipment is needed, they'll learn better by doing that research themselves than by having you do the legwork and report back to them. Even Daisies can do basic research and give reports or do show-and-tell for each other. Ambassadors may need you only for moral support as they research, teach each other, and plan every detail of their excursions.

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

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

An additional note: Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from your council. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring volunteer who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a specific position. You are required to obtain permission slips signed by the girls' parents/guardians; go to www.girlscouts-ssc.org to print the "**Permission to Participate in Sensitive Issues**" form. See the "[Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels](#)" chapter of this handbook for more information.

Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scout troops are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow development of individual girls. The following 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' volunteer-to-girl ratios show the **minimum** number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls. (Councils may also establish **maximums** due to size or cost restrictions.) These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one volunteer has to respond to an emergency, a second volunteer is always on hand for the rest of the girls.

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

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

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

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

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

Following the Girl Scouts Safety Guidelines

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

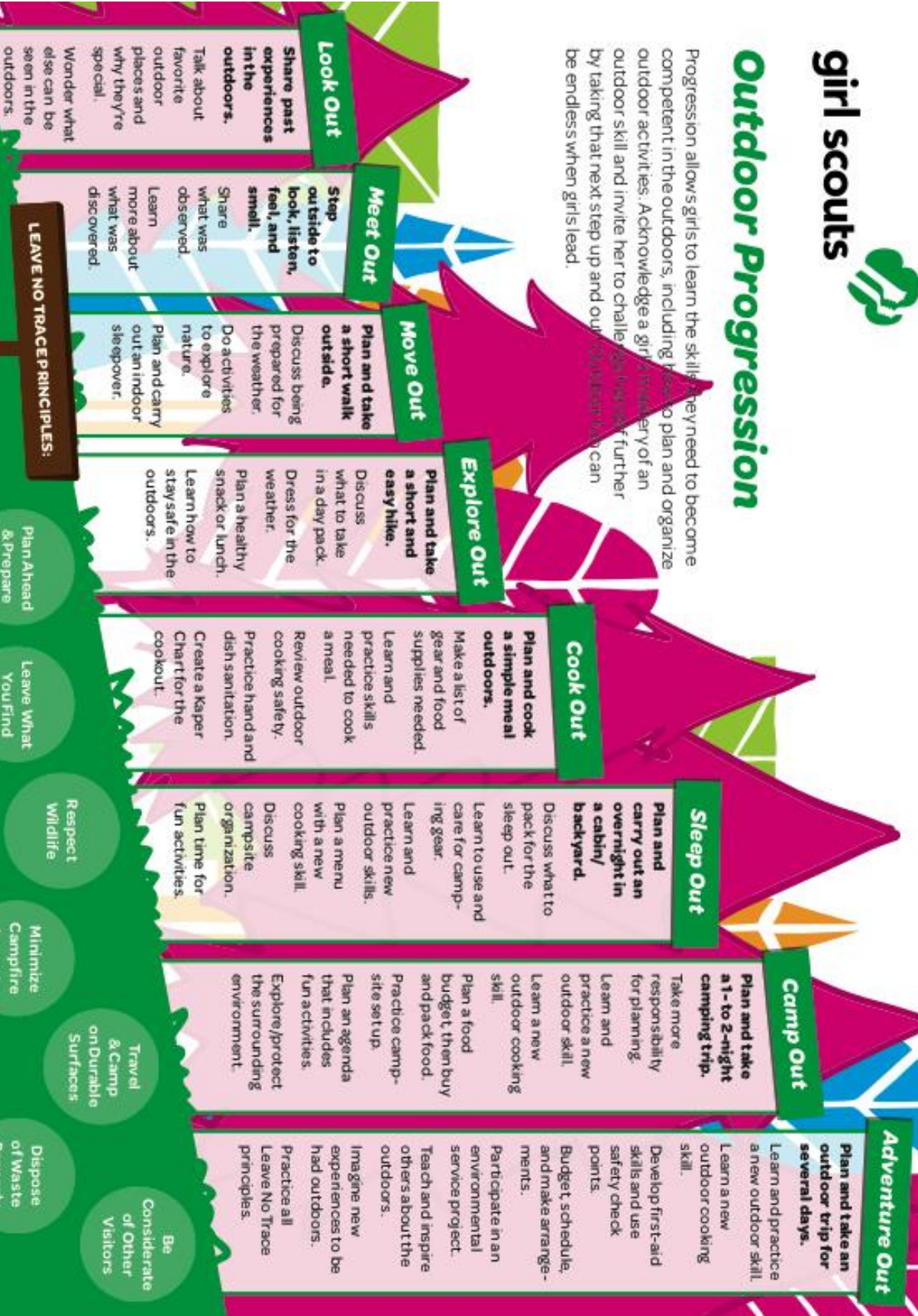
1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available from your council. Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities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

11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers. Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult. On group websites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it. Also available at www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp
12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product programs are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout products, 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 program and efforts.



Outdoor Progression

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



Look Out

Share past experiences in the outdoors.

Talk about favorite outdoor places and why they're special.

Wonder what else can be seen in the outdoors.

Meet Out

Stop outside to look, listen, feel, and smell.

Share what was observed.

Learn more about what was discovered.

Move Out

Plan and take a short walk outside.

Discuss being prepared for the weather.

Do activities to explore nature.

Plan and carry out an indoor sleepover.

Explore Out

Plan and take a short and easy hike.

Discuss what to take in a day pack.

Dress for the weather.

Plan a healthy snack or lunch.

Learn how to stay safe in the outdoors.

Cook Out

Plan and cook a simple meal outdoors.

Make a list of gear and food supplies needed.

Learn and practice skills needed to cook a meal.

Review outdoor cooking safely.

Practice hand and dish sanitation.

Create a Kaper Chart for the cookout.

Sleep Out

Plan and carry out an overnight in a cabin/backyard.

Discuss what to pack for the sleep out.

Learn to use and care for camping gear.

Learn and practice new outdoor skills.

Plan a menu with a new cooking skill.

Discuss campsite organization.

Plan time for fun activities.

Camp Out

Plan and take a 1- to 2-night camping trip.

Take more responsibility for planning.

Learn and practice a new outdoor skill.

Learn a new outdoor cooking skill.

Plan a food budget, then buy and pack food.

Practice campsite set up.

Plan an agenda that includes fun activities.

Explore/protect the surrounding environment.

Adventure Out

Plan and take an outdoor trip for several days.

Learn and practice a new outdoor skill.

Learn a new outdoor cooking skill.

Develop first-aid skills and use safety check points.

Budget, schedule, and make arrangements.

Participate in an environmental service project.

Teach and inspire others about the outdoors.

Imagine new experiences to be had outdoors.

Practice all Leave No Trace principles.

LEAVE NO TRACE PRINCIPLES:

Plan Ahead & Prepare

Leave What You Find

Respect Wildlife

Minimize Campfire Impacts

Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces

Dispose of Waste Properly

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts

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

Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

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

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll serve as a partner and role model to girls. You'll also work closely with a co-volunteer, because two volunteers must always be present 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 always be present, and only in cases of emergency is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer. Remember to also check the volunteer-to-girl ratios in the [Quick-Reference Guide](#) and the "[Safety-Wise](#)" chapter of this handbook.

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

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

Your Responsibilities

Your other responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Understanding the Three Keys to Leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Discover, Connect, and Take Action
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach
- Working in a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you'll also partner with other volunteers and council staff for support and guidance
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls' interests and needs
- Providing guidance and information regarding Girl Scout group meetings with girls' parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media, and any other method you choose

- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork, such as permission slips
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team as well as your council
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

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

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

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

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

and to

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

Your Volunteer Support Team

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

The other volunteers on your support team may help by:

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

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

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

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

Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts strives to provide you with the necessary information and knowledge 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. Trainings and additional information can be found on our website at <http://www.girlscouts-ssc.org/en/volunteers/volunteer-training.html>.

101 Girl Scouting – This required 60-minute GSUSA 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, and introduction to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), the Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting, and the Journeys program.

102 Girl Scouting – This Leader/Co-Leader required 2-hour session will acquaint you with your Girl Scout Council and the resources available to your questions, and who will help you along the way.

203 Journeys and Girl Guides – The full experience. Journeys can be a little overwhelming, so consider registering for an in-person or online session to familiarize yourself with this curriculum and learn how to customize it for your girls.

401 Planning Overnight Trips with Girls – Home study required before taking an overnight trip, including camping. This course reviews the essentials of planning and safety relating to taking trips with girls.

402 Outdoor Basics – This home study course is required when planning a troop camping trip with your girls and is a prerequisite for Course 403. It includes an introduction to progression in the outdoors, readiness assessment, planning outdoor activities, clothing and equipment planning, menu

planning and food safety, simple outdoor cooking, impact camping, tent basics, site selection and safety.

403 Troop Camping and Skills – This course is required for at least one (1) adult in your group before taking a troop camping trip. This course provides hands-on practice of many of the subjects covered in 402 Outdoor Basics. An opt-out option is available for experienced campers. This course is offered several times throughout the year. For dates and times, visit the Girl Scouts of Silver Sage online event calendar.

CPR, AED & Basic First Aid – Required for all overnight trainings.

30 – 60 – 90 Day Training – This training provides a roadmap to get Leaders/Co-Leaders through the next 30,60, and 90 days. The trainings under each checkpoint are suggested courses taken within that timeframe.

Short & Snappy – This resource allows you to get a quick overview of a particular subject.

Continued additional online training – additional training sessions which can be taken anytime throughout the Girl Scout year.

Annual Conference Workshops – Annually different workshops are offered at annual conference. It is a great resource and an opportune time to network with other volunteers.

Super Saturdays – Annual workshop event held in the Treasure Valley, Pocatello and Idaho Falls. Check Council's "Program Chat" publication or online calendar for dates, time and location.

Knowing How Much You're Appreciated

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

Just as you'll receive support throughout your volunteering experience, when you reach the end of the term you signed up for, you'll talk with your support team about the positive parts of your experience, as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return to this position or try something new. The end of your troop year, camp season, overseas trip, or series/event session is just the beginning of your next adventure with Girl Scouting!

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

Volunteer Appreciation Month

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

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

Annual Conference

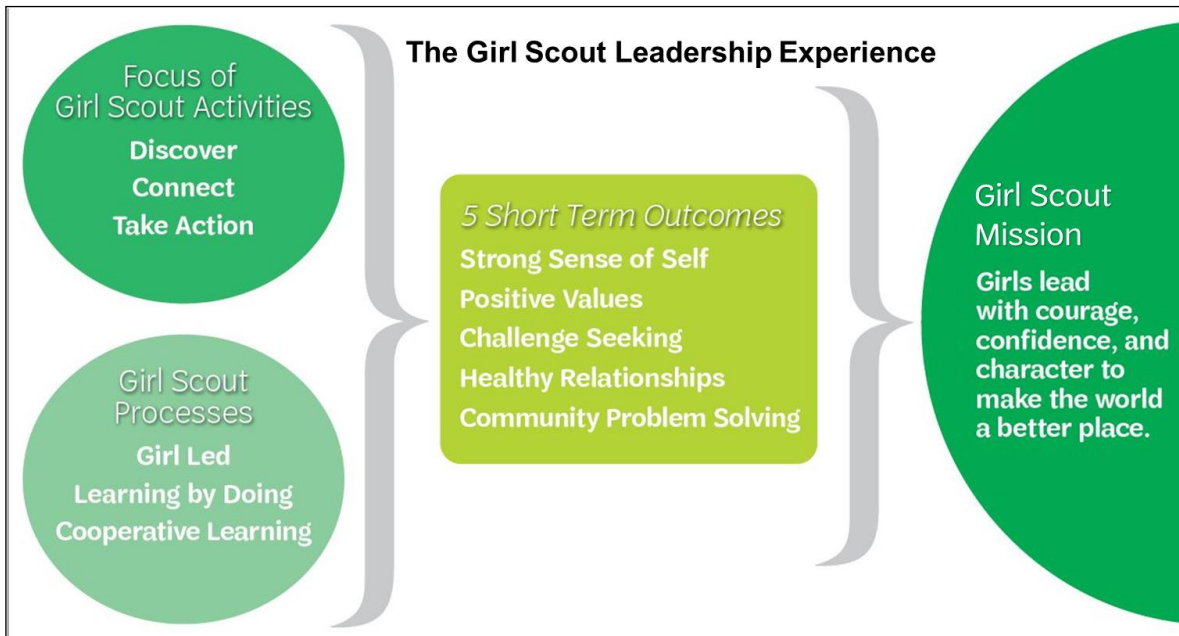
Girl Scouts of Silver Sage's Annual Conference is annually held in April. It is an opportunity for all Council members (volunteers, staff, and Board members) to come together socially and celebrate and award, member success and dedication, receive valuable professional development, share best practices, 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.

Everyone is invited to attend Annual Conference. In addition, we encourage you to participate by:

- **Nominating** outstanding volunteer Girl Scouts for recognition at the Annual Awards Luncheon. Check the *Volunteer Recognitions Manual* for a list of awards, qualifications and how to nominate. 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
 - Saturday morning round table discussions and workshops
 - Saturday afternoon Awards Luncheon, honoring outstanding service by volunteers and staff
 - Friday 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 Council office at (208) 377-2011 for additional information.

Chapter 2: Girl Scouting as a National Experience

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



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

What Girl Scouting Does for Girls

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

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

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

Girl Scouts Take Action to Change the World

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

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

[Where the Sidewalk Ends](#)

[Juniors Help Historic Building Save Energy](#)

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

Fun with Purpose

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

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

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

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

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

Girl Scout Participation in Activities with Other Scouting Organizations

The decision by Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to open the Boy Scout program to girls has fundamentally altered the nature of the relationship between BSA and Girl Scouts nationally and locally. Local relationships between BSA and Girl Scout councils that have led to partnerships and joint activities in the past will now expose our membership enrollment and brand to risks. This may mean that the relationship between a council and its BSA counterpart should fundamentally change.

Marketplace Confusion. To protect the integrity of the Girl Scout brand and reinforce our programming as unique, girl-only, and best in class, we must ensure that we take care that the activities in which girls participate are exclusive to the Girl Scout program, are safe and girl led, and are conducted under the appropriate supervision of Girl Scouts. Participation of Girl Scouts in activities with other scouting organizations creates risks to Girl Scouts. Confusion is in the marketplace regarding the relationship between Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts by the expansion of Boy Scouts to include girls in their programs.

Girl Scout participation in Boy Scout activities will increase that confusion and will contribute to the misperception that Girl Scouts has merged, or is somehow interchangeable, with Boy Scouts.

Brand. Associating with organizations who do not have a similar brand history, program portfolio, and track record for safety dilutes and tarnishes our brand, and allows Boy Scouts to leverage the reputation of Girl Scouts for their own purposes.



5 Ways Girl Scouts Builds Girl Leaders

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

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

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



STRONG SENSE OF SELF

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



POSITIVE VALUES

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



CHALLENGE SEEKING

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



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

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



COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING

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

Why do these five outcomes matter?

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

Youth who develop these five outcomes...



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

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



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



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



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

Join Girl Scouts today! girlscouts.org

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

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

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

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

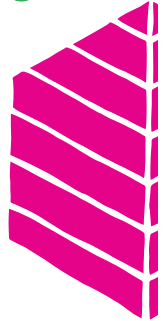
⁵ ManpowerGroup. (2015). [Talent Shortage Survey.](#)

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



Top Reasons Why Girls Should Get Outdoors

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



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

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

10-year-old Girl Scout, Missouri

Because of Girl Scouts...

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

71% of girls improved an outdoor skill.

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

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



More than S'mores



Start the fun now!

girlscouts.org/join

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

The National Program Portfolio

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

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

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

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

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

National Leadership Journeys

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

In July 2018, we're rolling out more new Journeys in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). These new Journeys are adding on to the choices that girls and volunteers already have. **Every Journey (whether new or old) is topic-specific, includes hands-on activities, and incorporates Discover, Connect and a Take Action project.** Depending upon the content, some Journeys are shorter, and some are longer, but they have been made simpler to use and easier to deliver.

As of July 2018, the following Journeys are available for volunteers to choose from. They are:

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

It's Your World—Change It:

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie and Junior ONLY

It's Your Planet—Love It:

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior ONLY

It's Your Story—Tell It!:

- Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors
- On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior ONLY

Outdoor:

- Available on the VTK for Brownie and Junior as nine sessions in total, which includes three outdoor badges plus three Take Action meetings.
- Available on VTK for Daisies as seven sessions in total, which includes two outdoor badges plus three Take Action meetings.
- Available for Multi-level for Daisies-Juniors on the VTK.
- Cadette, Senior, Ambassador, and Multi-level will be available for Back to Troop as PDFs on the VTK.

Think Like an Engineer:

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

Think Like a Programmer:

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

Think Like a Citizen Scientist:

- Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

Girl Scouts of the USA provides digital troop tools just for you! Be sure to check out the Volunteer Toolkit, available for troop leaders and parents of all troop levels with resources and activity plans for badges and journeys, as well as troop management tools. Simply click on My GS, then Volunteer Toolkit on your council's website home page at www.girlscouts-ssc.org.



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.

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 the 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.

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 application that takes girls step-by-step through the Gold Award requirements.

Visit http://www.girlscouts.org/program/highest_awards/gold_award.asp

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. Girl Scouts of Silver Sage offers a scholarship program for girls that complete the Gold

Award and continue to higher education too! A girl does not, however, have to earn a Bronze or Silver Award before earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. She is eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which she is registered.

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

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

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 your council or by visiting www.girlscouts.org/program/basics and clicking on “Program Basics” on the left side of the screen. Note that councils may offer different experiences, based on availability of resources and partners in your area.

A monthly Girl Scouts of Silver Sage publication, called “Program Chat”, is emailed to every Girl Scout member. It contains activities and events happening in our Council's geographic areas. Be sure to visit the website at www.girlscouts-ssc.org. An online version and registration for the activities listed in program chat can be found at <http://www.girlscouts-ssc.org/en/events/event-list.html>.

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

World Thinking Day: February 22

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

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

Time-Honored Ceremonies

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

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

- **Bridging** ceremonies mark a girl's move from one grade level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. (Note that **Fly-Up** is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Juniors.)
- **Closing** ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.
- **Court of Awards** is a time to recognize girls who have accomplished something spectacular during the Girl Scout year.
- **Flag** ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.
- **Girl Scout Bronze (or Silver or Gold) Award** ceremonies honor Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award (Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award; Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award) and are usually held for a group and combined with council recognition.

- **Girl Scouts' Own** is a girl-led program that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic (such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from the Girl Scout Promise and Law) using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or volunteers, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, or Daisy Girl Scout pin at this time.
- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and volunteers to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Hosting a Girl-Led Event

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

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

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

Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

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

Girl Scout Sign



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

fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise). Girls give the sign when they:

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

Girl Scout Handshake



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

Quiet Sign



The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer, so teach it to girls during your first meeting. Raise your right hand high with an open palm. As girls in the group see the sign, they

stop talking and also raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

Girl Scout Slogan and Motto

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

Songs

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

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to <http://gsuniversity.girlscouts.org/resource/song-leading-workshops/>. A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out your council shop or visit 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 or worship, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. For teens, you can also rotate meetings at coffee shops, bookstores, and other places girls enjoy spending time.

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

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

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

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

Girl Scout Group Size

Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow for development of individual girls. It is recommended that group sizes, when possible, are as follows:

- Girl Scout Daisies: 5-12 girls
- Girl Scout Brownies: 12-20 girls
- Girl Scout Juniors 12-25 girls
- Girl Scout Cadettes: 6-25 girls
- Girl Scout Seniors: 6-30 girls
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: 6-30 girls

A Girl Scout troop/group must have at minimum, five girls and two approved non-related adult volunteers. Adults and girls registering in groups of less than five girls and /or two approved, unrelated adult volunteers at least one of whom is female, will be registered as individual Girl Scouts to more accurately reflect their status and experience. Individual girls are still welcome to participate in Girl Scout activities and events.

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

Girl Scout Daisies	
At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grade), girls . . .	This means . . .
Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.	<i>They'll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.</i>
Are great builders and budding artists, though they are still developing their fine motor skills.	<i>Encouraging them to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need assistance holding scissors, cutting in a straight line, and so on.</i>
Love to move and dance.	<i>They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin, or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle.</i>
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	<i>Showing instead of telling, for example, about how animals are cared for. Plan visits to animal shelters, farms, or zoos; meet care providers; or make a creative bird feeder.</i>

Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time, and money.	<i>You'll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and, perhaps, the legs on a caterpillar!</i>
Are just beginning to write and spell, and they don't always have the words for what they're thinking or feeling.	<i>That having girls draw a picture of something they are trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them.</i>
Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so.	<i>Being specific and offering only one direction at a time. Acknowledge when girls have followed directions well to increase their motivation to listen and follow again.</i>

Girl Scout Brownies

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

Girl Scout Juniors

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

Girl Scout Cadettes

At the Girl Scout Cadette level (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades), girls . . .	This means . . .
Are going through puberty, including changes in their skin, body-shape, and weight. They're also starting their menstrual cycles and have occasional shifts in mood.	<i>Being sensitive to the many changes Cadettes are undergoing and acknowledging that these changes are as normal as growing taller! Girls need time to adapt to their changing bodies, and their feelings about their bodies may not keep up. Reinforce that, as with everything else, people go through puberty in different ways and at different times.</i>

Are starting to spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	<i>That girls will enjoy teaming-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities, as well as tackling relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects.</i>
Can be very self-conscious—wanting to be like everyone else, but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.	<i>Encouraging girls to share, but only when they are comfortable. At this age, they may be more comfortable sharing a piece of artwork or a fictional story than their own words. Throughout the activities, highlight and discuss differences as positive, interesting, and beautiful.</i>
Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.	<i>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what’s known as “fun failure:” girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</i>

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

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

Creating a Safe Space for Girls

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

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

Girl-Adult Partnership

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

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

Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl

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

Promoting Fairness

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

Building Trust

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

Managing Conflict

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

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

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

Inspiring Open Communication

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

Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:

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

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

- **L = Listen:** Hear her out, ask for details, and reflect back what you hear, such as, “What happened next?” or “What did she say?”
- **U = Understand:** Try to be understanding of her feelings, with comments such as, “So what I hear you saying is . . .” “I’m sure that upset you,” “I understand why you’re unhappy,” and “Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too.”

- **T = Tolerate:** You can tolerate the feelings that she just can't handle right now on her own. It signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Say something like: "Try talking to me about it. I'll listen," "I know you're mad—talking it out helps," and "I can handle it—say whatever you want to."
- **E = Empathize:** Let her know you can imagine feeling what she's feeling, with comments such as, "I'm sure that really hurts" or "I can imagine how painful this is for you."

Addressing the Needs of Older Girls

Consider the following tips when working with teenage girls:

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

Girl Scout Research Institute

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

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

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

Visit www.girlscouts.org/research.

When Sensitive Topics Come Up

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

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

When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult volunteer who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a specific 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 "*Permission to Participate in Sensitive Issues*" (www.girlscouts-ssc.org under Volunteer/Forms) for any locally planned program offering that could be considered sensitive. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls will take when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl and keep the forms on hand in case a problem arises. For activities not sponsored by Girl Scouts, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow your council's guidelines for obtaining written permission.

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

REPORTING CONCERNS

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

- Marked changes in behavior and personality (for example, unusual moodiness, aggressiveness, or sensitivity)
- Ask 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 or physical contact
- Excessive fearfulness or distrust of volunteers
- Abusive behavior toward other children, especially younger ones.

For additional 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 in the give 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.

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare

<http://healthandwelfare.idaho.gov/Children/Abuse/Neglect/ChildProtectionContactPhoneNumbers/tabid/475/Default.a.spx>

TDD: (208) 332-7205

Toll-Free: (800) 926-2588

Oregon Department of Human Services

(855) 503-SAFE (7233)

This toll-free number allows you to report abuse or neglect of any child or volunteer 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

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.

Don't feel nervous asking parents to assist in any aspect of the troop.

Just because you're the troop leader does not mean you have to be the cookie mom, the treasurer, the person planning the campouts, etc. Look to see what unique gifts and talents the girls' parents have. Maybe a mom is crafty, or a dad works in the finance department of a Fortune 500 company. Those two individuals can defiantly step up as troop volunteers in some capacity. Learn more below in the appendix about forming a troop committee, and always keep your eyes open for those who can assist.

You all 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 and for them to think about how they can also become involved in the troop.

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](http://www.girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy).

Using “I” Statements

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

Here are some examples of “you” statements:

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

Now look at “I” statements:

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

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

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

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

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

- For younger girls, arranged for a parent, another volunteer, or a group of older girls to do activities with the girls in your group while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too)
- Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law; benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters, including how the GSLE is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have; expectations for girls and

their parents/guardians; and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters' Girl Scout experiences

- Determined when product program (including Girl Scout cookie activities) will happen in your council; parents/guardians will absolutely want to know
- Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting
- Used the Friends and Family pages provided in the volunteer guides for many of the Journeys, or created your own one-page information sheet (contact information for you and co-volunteers and helpers, the day and time of each meeting, location of and directions to the meeting place, what to bring with them, and information on how to get Journey resources—books, awards, and keepsakes—and other merchandise like sashes, vests, T-shirts, and so on)
- Gathered or created supplies, including a sign-in sheet, an information sheet, permission forms for parents/guardians (also available from your council), health history forms (as required by your council), and GSUSA registration forms
- Prepared yourself to ask parents and guardians for help, being as specific as you can about the kind of help you will need (the Journey's Friends and Family pages will come in handy here)

Registering Girls and Adults in Girl Scouting

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

Pre-registration, called 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. 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.

Girl Scouts of Silver Sage recommends online registration, which is easy and convenient. Visit www.girlscouts-ssc.org to start your online registration.

When re-registering, a few options exist:

- A parent or guardian can re-register a girl with a credit/debit card by visiting www.girlscouts-ssc.org, and using the "My GS" tab – Member profile
- A Troop Leader/Co-Leader has access to the troop roster by visiting www.girlscouts-ssc.org, and using the "My GS" tab – Troop profile, and can re-register any girl in the troop using the troop credit/debit card
- Girls who are re-registering using Cookie Credits (also called Cookie Dough) can do so by attaching the Cookie Dough to a paper girl registration form and turning it into the Leader/Co-Leader or Council office or the Troop Leader/Co-Leader can use the "**Cookie Dough Reimbursement to Troop for Online Girl Membership**" form and submit it together with all the girls' cookie credits (cookie dough) to receive a check reimbursement. This form can only be submitted after the Troop Leader/Co-Leader re-registered the girls using the troop credit/debit card.

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. Check with your council for its specific registration guidelines. You may also want to email or hand out a brief information sheet before or at this meeting.
- Open the meeting by welcoming the girls and adults. Introduce yourself and other co-volunteers or helpers. Have adults and girls introduce themselves, discuss whether anyone in their families has been a Girl Scout, and talk about what Girl Scouting means to them. Welcome everyone, regardless of experience, and let them know they will be learning about Girl Scouts today. (If you're new to Girl Scouting, don't worry—just let everyone know you'll be learning about Girl Scouting together!)
- Ask the girls to go with the adult or teen in charge of their activity and begin the discussion.
- Discuss the information you prepared for this meeting:
 - All the fun girls are going to have!
 - When and where the group will meet and some examples of activities the girls might choose to do
 - That a parent/guardian permission form is used for activities outside the group's normal meeting time and place and the importance of completing and returning it
 - How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (a Facebook page or group, Twitter, email, text messaging, a phone tree, or fliers the girls take home are just some ideas)
 - The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law
 - The Girl Scout program, especially what the GSLE is and what the program does for their daughters
 - When Girl Scout cookies (and other products) will go on sale and how participation in product program teaches life skills and helps fund group activities
 - The cost of membership, which includes annual GSUSA dues, any group payments (ask your council), optional uniforms, and any resources parents/guardians will need to buy (such as a girl's book for a Journey)
 - The availability of financial assistance and how the Girl Scout Cookie Program and other product programs generate funds for the group treasury
 - That families can also make donations to the council—and why they might want to do that!
 - That you may be looking for additional volunteers, and in which areas you are looking (be as specific as possible!)
- If your council doesn't offer online registration and you've distributed paper registration forms, collect them.
- Remind the group of the next meeting (if you'll have one) and thank everyone for attending. Hold the next meeting when it makes sense for you and your co-volunteers—that may be in two months if face-to-face meetings are best, or not at all if you're diligent about keeping in touch with parents/guardians via Facebook, Twitter, text messages, email, phone calls, or some other form of communication.
- After the meeting, follow up with any parents/guardians who did not attend, to connect them with the group, inform them of decisions, and discuss how they can best help the girls.

Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

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

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

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

A Variety of Formats for Publications

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities

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

Chapter 4: Being Safety-Wise

(Revised April 2018)

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

1. Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.

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

2. Points common to all Safety Activity Checkpoints include:

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

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

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

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

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

Get a weather report. On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, and/or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with

girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.

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

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

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

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

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

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

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

Responsibilities of Girls

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

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

Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

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

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

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

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

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

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

Transporting Girls

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

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

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

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

Anyone who is driving a vehicle with more than 15 passengers (bus) must also be a professional driver who possesses a commercial driver's license (CDL) – Check with your 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 can 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 a flatbed truck or trailer during parades or hayrides only. *See Activity Checkpoint for Hayrides.* In those cases, notice will be given to your Membership Coordinator 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, except for rental car agreements, even if there is no cost associated with the rental. Such agreements must instead be signed by the person designated by your council.
- Check with your Membership Coordinator to ensure that you are following accepted practices when using private transportation. This ensures that both you and your council are protected by liability insurance in the event of an accident.
- If your council has given permission to use a rented car, read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. For example, in many cases the minimum age of drivers is 25, and the maximum age is often under 70. In addition, make sure the car is adequately insured and you know who is responsible for damage to, or loss of, the vehicle. Finally, ensure you have a good paper trail that shows the vehicle rental is Girl Scout-related.
- Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.
- See Safety Checkpoints for any additional safety requirements that must be adhered to.

Checklist for Drivers

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

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

Product Sales Program Safety

Girl Scout council-sponsored product programs, 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 program, especially those related to cookie booths, and any safety precautions they might suggest. While Police Departments vary from state to state and city to city, many of them have resources such as:

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

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

Prepare for Emergencies

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

Arrange for Volunteer Supervision

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

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

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

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

Plan for Safeguarding Money

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

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

Use the Buddy System

Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one (1) 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 participating in product programs, 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 activity only during daylight hours

- Wear a membership pin, uniform, or Girl Scout clothing (e.g., Girl Scout T-shirt) to clearly identify themselves as Girl Scouts.
- Avoid a house or person that makes them uncomfortable. They should walk away and find the next person/place that does not make them uncomfortable
- Call 9-1-1 if they see someone that seems to be acting in a way that makes them feel unsafe. This could include, but is not limited to, any person who is staring at them for long periods, seems to be following them for no apparent reason or takes pictures of them
- Use safe pedestrian practices, such as crossing at corners and obeying walk signals
- Not enter the home or vehicle of a stranger, and avoid approaching 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)

Cookie Booths

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

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

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

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

- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
- Having an adult volunteer keep the money by, for example, securing it in a front-facing pouch tied around her waist.
- Reduce cash transactions by offering credit card payment options per your council guidelines.

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.

Computer/Online Safety

Understand the Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge

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

Safeguard Information

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

- Girl Scouts should only use their first names
- A Girl Scout's last name, address, phone number, or e-mail address should never be posted. For Digital Cookie a girl may post her unique Digital Cookie URL on her Facebook page and may email it to friends and family (for additional information please refer to Safety Activity Checkpoint for Online Product Program, Digital Cookie Terms & Conditions for Volunteers and Digital Cookie Pledge for Girls)
- Always have a parent's or guardian's permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old
- Do not post addresses of group meeting places, dates and times of meetings, events or trips on a website. Instead, a volunteer who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an e-mail to the families
- Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a website. All postings to message boards, social media and guest books should have volunteer oversight, and be screened prior to posting live.
- Ensure that websites do not show personal e-mail addresses of girls, but use a troop, group or volunteer's e-mail.

Safety in Technology Based Product Programs

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 activities:

- Girls must read, understand and accept the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, prior to conducting any online sales or marketing activities, which is available at the end of the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)
- Girls may send e-mail messages to alert friends and family about product programs and accept customer orders via email
- Social media sites may be used to market product program to friends and family, however, all applicable GSUSA and council guidelines must be followed
- Girls writing product e-mails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name and their council name.
- Personal e-mails or street addresses of girls should never be used. Instead, use one of the following:
 - A blind return address account where the girls' name or personal e-mail is not revealed to the customer and is instead hosted on a secure site
 - A group account monitored by a volunteer
 - A volunteer's e-mail account, which is supervised by that volunteer
- Marketing on the internet for the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program should be to friends and family only.
 - For clarity purposes friends and family are people that the girl or her family knows personally.
 - Marketing on the Internet should always be girl led with supervision and oversight of parents or caretakers.
 - The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl led program, friends and family of the girl should not market or share girl contact information and sales links
- Internet sales transactions are approved for friends and family only on the following platforms:

- Fall Program Vendor Sites (QSP, M2, Trophy and Ashdon)
- Digital Cookie Program (LBB and ABC)

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

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

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

Approaching Activities

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

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

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

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

- Bungee Jumping
- Flying in small private planes, helicopters or blimps
- Go-Carting
- Hang gliding
- Hot air ballooning
- Hunting
- Paintball Tag (target paintball is permitted)
- Motor biking
- Parachuting

- Parasailing
- Riding all-terrain vehicles
- Riding motorized personal watercraft such as jet skis
- Skydiving
- Stunt skiing
- Outdoor trampolining
- Zorbing

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

Health Histories (Including Examinations and Immunizations)

Everyone participating in Girl Scouting, both girls and volunteers, must have a **Health History** from either on his/her person or with a group leader always. 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 or adult'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, the adult, her parent/guardian and a healthcare provider.

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

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

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

See Safety Standards and Guidelines in Chapter 1 of Safety Activity Checkpoints for more on Health History forms.

Girl Scout Activity Insurance

Every registered Girl Scout and registered volunteer member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic Mutual of Omaha Activity Insurance plan upon registration. The premium for the Basic Plan, which provides supplemental medical insurance is paid for in full by Girl Scouts of the USA.

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

This insurance coverage is **not** intended to diminish the need for, or replace existing, family health insurance. When \$130 in benefits has been paid under this plan for covered expenses, any subsequent benefits from the basic plan will be payable (up to the specified maximum) only for expenses incurred that aren't covered under another insurance policy. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available under the basic plan.

Plan 2 – Members and Non-Members Accident Insurance

An optional Activity Insurance plan is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips (trips that are more than two overnight stays) and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These optional plans are secondary insurance that a council may offer to cover participants taking part in any council-approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. 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 3PI – Members and Non-Members Accident and Sickness Insurance

The 3PI insurance plan covers all participants for international trips. Not subject to the Non-duplication provision.

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

Experts

The Safety Activity Checkpoints for most activities require having an expert on hand to help girls learn an activity. Please remember that **all experts must be approved by your council**. Some things to keep in mind:

- **Does the person have documented training and experience?** He or she should have documented experience for the activity in question, such as course completion certificates or cards, records of previous training to instruct the activity and letters of reference.
- **What does he or she need to be able to do?** This person should have the knowledge and experience to make appropriate judgments concerning participants, equipment, facilities, safety considerations, supervision and procedures for the activity. At the very least, she or he should be able to give clear instructions to girls and volunteers, troubleshoot unexpected scenarios and respond appropriately in an emergency.
- See more on Experts under Safety Standards and Activity Guidelines in Chapter 1 of Safety Activity Checkpoints under the topic of Instructor Credibility.

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 volunteers 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 the 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 volunteer must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group
- **Assemble a well-stocked first-aid kit that is always accessible.** First-aid administered in the first few minutes can 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 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, EMP America, American Heart Association, or other sponsoring organizations approved by our Council. As a partner of GSUSA, American Red Cross offers discounts on certification courses. Check Council’s updated Community Partner information for updated first-aid/CPR workshop opportunities at www.girlscouts-ssc.org. 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 volunteers.

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

Since activities can take place in a variety of locations, the presence of a first-aider and the qualifications he or she may need to have 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. 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. In that case, the first-aider will need to have knowledge of wilderness first aid. 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 consider both how much danger is involved and how remote the area is from emergency medical services.

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

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

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

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

First-Aid Kit

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

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain your council and emergency telephone numbers. Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms and health histories may also be included.

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 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.

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 found on the Council Website under **Volunteer, forms**, within 24 hours and send to the address below

Emergency Contacts

<p>During normal business hours, call the Boise Office at one of these numbers: (208) 377-2011 or 1-800-846-0079 Fax: (208) 377-0504</p> <p>If you are on an international trip and have an emergency, please contact CEO, Pat Pyke 208-850-9176</p> <p>From most international locations dial: 00+1+208+Local Number</p>	<p>Chief Executive Officer Pat Pyke 208-850-9176</p> <p>Our address is: Girl Scouts of Silver Sage Council 8948 W Barnes St Boise, ID 83709</p>
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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 Girl Scout needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially regarding notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, let council-designated staff discuss the incident with media representatives.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, the police **must** be notified, and a responsible volunteer must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings and follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, your council and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

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 volunteer 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

If medical bills must 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 volunteer
- **Assemble a well-stocked first-aid kit that is always accessible.** First-aid administered in the first few minutes can make a significant difference in the severity of an injury. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911, and then administer first aid, if appropriately trained.

You Witness or Experience Abuse

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

For additional information please check the following resources:

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

Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances

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

Girl Scout groups are funded by a share of money earned through council-sponsored product sale activities (such as Girl Scout cookie activities), group money-earning activities (council-approved, of course), and any your group may charge. (This is in addition to the \$40 annual membership dues that go to the national organization.) This chapter gives you the ins and outs of establishing a group account and helping girls manage their group's finances, practice successful product-sales techniques, and understand how to collaborate with sponsors and causes.

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

Establishing an Account

It will take money to run your troop and to pay for program supplies (handbooks, activity supplies, etc.) as well as money for troop plans, activities and/or trips. Leaders/Co-Leaders are responsible for overseeing troop funds, managing a budget and a checking account, and adhering to all Council requirements regarding money-earning and money-spending.

Opening a Troop Checking Account

One of the first steps for Leaders/Co-Leaders 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 approved volunteers.) GSSSC recommends a few financial institutions to establish an account with.

Once the form is filled out, your Membership Coordinator will prepare and send a letter to the bank to open the troop account under Council's non-profit tax id. Your Membership Coordinator will alert you once the letter is sent so that the bank account signers can finalize anything necessary with the bank branch.

If you're taking over an existing group, you may inherit a checking account. The signers on the account may have changed, so make sure to fill out the Troop Checking Account Request form, specifically the "troop signers" portion, and send it to your Membership Coordinator, who will in turn prepare the bank letter and alert you once that is completed.

Consider these tips when working with a group account:

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

All troop checking accounts are required to have the council's Employer Identification Number (EIN # 82-0259644). Accounts without it are not accepted.

- **Council requires two (2) approved* adult volunteers' signatures on each account**
- **Authorized approved signers may not be related by blood or marriage**
- **Authorized approved signers may be issued a debit card**

* To be considered an approved volunteer, the individual must:

- Be a registered volunteer 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

When closing a personal account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it and realize that you may have to close the account in person. Turn remaining funds over to a council staff member.

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 (2) signers on the account, and we strongly recommend that you have 3 signers. It makes sense for both Leader/Co-Leader to be signers.

Debit Card

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

Troop Dues

The Leader/Co-Leader and the girls will establish troop dues based on the troop's plans and anticipated expenses. For further guidance on what is appropriate, you can reach out to your Service Unit Manager, Troop Mentor and/or Membership Coordinator.

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) volunteers have been appointed as Troop Leaders
- A minimum of five girls, from two or more families, have registered as Girl Scouts

Troop Money Earning

The Cookie Program is the primary money-earning opportunity for troops. Other money-earning projects are permissible (with restrictions), troops are encouraged to 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
- Keeping receipts
- Completing an annual Troop Annual Report
- Communicating with families

Disbanding a Troop

A troop is considered disbanded if it no longer meets or has not registered as a troop for four (4) months from the expiration of its last registration. 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/Co-Leader submit the *Troop Disband Notice* form found on website under **Volunteer, Forms** or on the VTK.

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, they must be sent to Council.

If a troop disbands, any monies remaining in the troop account shall be divided equally by the number of girls in the disbanded troop as follows:

- If any girl or girls transfer to another troop within GSSC, her proportional share will be distributed to her new troop.
- For girls who do not continue or transfer out of Girl Scouts of Silver Sage's service area, their proportional share shall be held for one (1) year in a Girl Scouts of Silver Sage holding account. After one (1) year, the remaining funds shall be distributed to their former Service Unit to be used for financial aid for girls. If the troop is merging with an existing troop, all money and equipment from the disbanding troop is transferred to the merged troop.
- 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.

See Board Policies for Troop Finances.

Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program

Did you know that the Girl Scout Cookie Program powers amazing experiences for girls? 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.

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!

Council-sponsored product programs, 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.

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

- Pre-sales: 2 weeks
- Goal Getter: 4 weeks
- Booth Sales: 3-4 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 two-month timeframe.

Before beginning any cookies or other product sales with your group, refer to the cookies section of www.girlscoutcookies.org

A Sweet Tradition

It has been **over 100 years** since Girl Scouts began selling home-baked cookies to raise money. The idea was so popular that, in 1936, Girl Scouts enlisted bakers to handle the growing demand. For more on Girl Scout Cookie History, visit http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gsc_cookies/history.asp

Two commercial bakers are currently licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies—Little Brownie Bakers and ABC Bakers—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.

Council's Role

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

Knowing Where Proceeds Go

Girl Scouts of Silver Sage will provide a breakdown of "how the cookie crumbles" in your council. Please share this information with girls and their parents/guardians so everyone's clear on how

revenue raised through product program 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 volunteers as part of the product sale activity orientation.

The income from product sales does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for rewards 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. For older girls, **your** job is to oversee their work, as **they** learn to keep impeccable records.

Recognizing Cookie Sellers in the Media

The Girl Scout Cookie Program has always been about and focused on the program outcomes, through which girls learn important entrepreneurial and life skills and invest their earnings to positively affect their local communities; the cookie program has never been about and does not focus on individual girls' sales results.

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

The Girl/Volunteer Partnership

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

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

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

- A volunteer helping a girl understand her responsibility to support her local council but ensuring that her participation is voluntary.

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 Being Safety-Wise – Volunteer Essentials
- Girl Scout Cookie/Council – Sponsored Product Sale Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Safety Tips for Product Sales
- Computer/Online Use: Safety Activity Checkpoints

Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies and Other Products

Girl safety is the top priority while selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products. Volunteers, parents, and girls should be familiar with and practice Safety Wise (Chapter IV)

A few other considerations will help keep girl's 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 volunteer must know each girl's whereabouts when she is engaged in product sales, and when she is online.
- Girls should be identifiable as Girl Scouts by wearing an official uniform, tunic, sash, vest, or other Girl Scout clothing.
- Approved volunteers must monitor, supervise, and guide the sale activities of girls at all age levels.
- Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors must always be accompanied by a volunteer. 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) a volunteer. 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 personal social media sites like Facebook or sending emails to friends, family members, and former customers, if they use a group email address, the account or address of a parent/guardian or 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) 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. Marketing to Facebook "Buy, Sell Trade" sites, eBay, Craigslist, and other public sites is prohibited.

Preparing for your Girl Scout Cookie Booths

Cookie booths, or temporary sales set-ups in areas with lots of foot traffic, are a popular way for girls to sell cookies as a team. Your council may have established cookie booth locations; contact the council before planning a cookie booth of your own. Booth locations are approved by the Council, facilitated within Council jurisdiction and you must follow all Council guidelines regarding setting up, manning and taking down a booth

Here are some notes about locations for a cookie booth:

- **As an adult volunteer, use your best judgement in setting up cookie booths in locations that will be open, accessible, and safe for all girls and potential customers.**
- Certain locations may be inappropriate for young girls based on the standards of your local community, may negatively impact the cookie program experience for girls, and/or may negatively impact our brand in your community.
- For additional clarity, *girls should not sell in or in front of establishments that they themselves cannot legally patronize.*
- Additionally, with respect to marijuana dispensaries, we have been steadfastly combating the unauthorized uses of the Girl Scout trademark by the cannabis community, which has been marketing—without our authorization—certain cannabis products under our youth-appealing brand. We are continuing to aggressively fight these unauthorized uses of the Girl Scout brand and *hope that our councils and volunteers will join Girl Scouts of the USA's efforts by discouraging cookie booth locations at such locations.*

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

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

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

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

- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
- Having a 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 our Council according to guidelines.

For additional information about setting up a booth and safety and security suggestions, consult the Council 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 your council. This is a great talking point for girls to share with their customers and a great way to help teach girls that the cookie program can make a big impact in their community and to others.

Here are some things to remember about cookie donations:

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

Handling Product Complaints

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

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

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

Girls may use Facebook, text messaging, IMs, and emails as online marketing tools to let family, friends and former customers know about the product sales and collect indications of interest. For clarity, “friends and family” are people whom the girl or her family personally know. Girls under 13 cannot independently set up online marketing sites. Girls under 13 can use their parent/guardian online sites with their approval and supervision.

- The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl-led program and online marketing and sales efforts *should always be led by a girl while also being supervised by her parents or caretakers.*
- Friends and family of a girl participating in the cookie program must not market or share a girl’s contact information, sales links, or sales information on public-facing online sites. They also should not share their sales link with any news outlets (this includes online and traditional news media, such as radio, television, or magazines).

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

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

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

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 programs 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 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. (A 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 volunteer 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 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.

Fall Product Program

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 Troop Cookie Manager

Implementing the Fall Product and Cookie Program involves some very important logistics and management aspects that require a "Troop Cookie/Troop Fall Product Manager" (aka Cookie/Fall Product Mom/Dad) who has the skills and desire to help with the money, inventory, and record keeping aspects of the Cookie Program. These positions will be important ones to recruit once you get your troop up and running.

Money-Earning Basics

Record Keeping and Reporting

We recommend that you recruit a Troop Treasurer who is experienced with the basics of money management so that the Troop Leaders can focus on program activities. The Treasurer, of course, must be an "approved" adult 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, note the expense or income detail on the monthly bank statement, and have at least two approved signers sign the monthly bank statement.

- Deposit money promptly, keep deposit slips attached to your statements, and make a note of the income detail on the statement.
- When you receive your monthly statement, balance promptly against your income and expenses.
- Annually, a troop annual report must be filed either online (through the VTK tab) or on paper. This report is due May 31st and copies of the monthly banks statements signed by two (2) authorized signers must be submitted along with the troop report.

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. Your membership coordinator will review your troop annual report as part of the Council's audit process, and prior to your reappointment as Leader/Co-Leader. 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. 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.**

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

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

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

- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl (see Chapter 4 for guidance)
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

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

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

- All rewards earned by girls through the product-sale activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel, and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).
- Rewards are based on sales ranges set by councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
- Troops and Groups are encouraged to participate in Council product sales as their primary money-earning activity; any group money-earning shouldn't compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other Council product sales.
- Obtain written approval from your Council before a group money-earning event; the **Application for Troop Money Earning Project** form must be submitted for approval before the event.
- Girl Scouts discourages the use of games of chance. Any activity which could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo) must be approved by the local Girl Scout Council and be conducted in compliance with all local and state laws.
- Girl Scout Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash. Girls can collect partial payment towards the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and Girl Scout Fall Product Program products through participation in Council approved product sale donation programs.
- Girl Scouts forbids product demonstration parties where the use of the Girl Scout trademark increases revenue for another business (For example: In home product parties). Any business using the Girl Scout trademark must seek authorization from GSUSA
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the GSLE.
- Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product sales. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following council procedures.
- 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, bed, etc.), they can use troop funds instead.
- **Cash contributions to another organization is prohibited; however, Girl Scouts encourages troops to donate to the Silver Sage Council Tribute Fund, which supports the costs for girls who do not have the resources to be a Girl Scout.** This includes money that can be donated by disbanding troops.
- Do not assign a value to an in-kind gift. This is the responsibility of the investor and his/her accountant. If a value is provided, please note who provided the value to you on the In-Kind Form. Contact your Membership Coordinator to obtain the needed information and form.

Appropriate Activities for Money Earning

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washing cars with volunteer supervision • Window washing with volunteer supervision • Raking leaves or other lawn work without power equipment • Shoveling snow or walking pets | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Making and selling craft items • Sponsoring dances, talent shows, fashion shows, haunted houses, or other forms of entertainment • Group baby-sitting with volunteer supervision (such as at a Service Unit |
|--|---|

- Holding a garage sale
- Recycling items (Christmas trees, ink cartridges, cell phones)
- Painting house numbers on curbs with volunteer supervision and homeowner permission (observe local 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
- 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)
- 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 Events:

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

Service(s):

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

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

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 must be tracked by GSSSC for tax purposes and it will be credited back to the troop upon processing. For example: Kohl's Cares or Walmart employee fund.

Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Sponsors help Girl Scout councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations,

and individuals may be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, offer in-kind donations, provide activity materials, or loan equipment. The sponsor's contribution can then be recognized by arranging for the girls to send thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony, or working together on a Take Action project.

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

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 donating supplies to another organizations, no cash donation can be made from your group's account. Girl Scouts as individuals can participate in whatever events they choose, if they're not wearing anything that officially identifies them as "Girl Scouts."
- **Avoid 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" are any products 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 or check donation
- Your troop information
- How your troop plans to use the contributed funds
- Donor information

Checks will be processed by Council within 5-7 business days.

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 programs—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the group’s goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference in anticipated expense and anticipated income? Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group’s financial goals? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.
5. **Write it out.** Once the group has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out an application for approval from your council and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created.

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

Reviewing Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level

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

Girl Scout Daisies

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

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

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

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

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 program.

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 program.

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

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

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

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

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

Appendix: For Troop Volunteers

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

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

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

Paperwork

The paperwork we require relates to minimizing the risk to girls and volunteers 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/Co-Leader.

Membership Registration

Everyone participating in Girl Scouting, both girls and volunteers, must be registered members of Girl Scouts of the USA. This is accomplished by completing a membership registration and paying the one-year membership 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. Membership dues may not be transferred to another member and are not **refundable**.

Pre-registration for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring. Early registration helps ensure uninterrupted receipt of forms and materials from the council, helps girls and councils plan, and gets girls excited about all the great activities they want to do as Girl Scouts next year.

Lifetime membership is available at a reduced rate for graduating seniors. 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: 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, and press “Join” to begin your online registration. The Membership Support Team is available to assist with any online registration questions that may arise. If you are adding a family membership to an already existing registration, make sure to use the **MY GS** tab to manage your profile.

As a troop leader/co-leader, you will ensure that all active girls and volunteers in your troop are registered either by the troop or by the families 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/co-leader you will be able to register girls online that want to use cookie dough by using the troop debit card and submitting the form to council for reimbursement.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR GIRLS

The Silver Sage Girl Scout Council is committed to ensuring that all girls can participate in Girl Scouting. Those needing assistance are encouraged to submit at least part of the registration fee. Girls who have earned Cookie Dough are encouraged to use their Cookie Dough funds for girl registration. All information is strictly confidential and will not be shared. If using the paper Financial Assistance form, the Parent/Guardian signatures are required. A Financial Assistance form may be requested or completed thru the online registration process.

Health History Form

Everyone participating in Girl Scouting, both girls and volunteers, must have a **Health History** form on file with the troop. As a troop leader/co-leader, you are responsible to ensure that everyone has given you one and that you have these with you always.

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.

Forming a Troop Committee

Never feel like you have to go on this Girl Scout volunteer adventure alone - involve other adults in the troop by forming a troop committee!

Brainstorm 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:** *these volunteers will need to register as Girl Scout members, fill out volunteer application forms, undergo a criminal 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 your volunteer support team for advice and support. Also, look to the troop parents to see who has the ability and capacity to assist.

Feel free to use the sample welcome letter and friends/family checklist in the Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie, and Junior Leadership Journeys to assist you in expanding your troop's volunteer network.

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

Your troop committee members might help by:

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

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

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

Set up roles that work for you and draw on other volunteers who possess skill sets you may lack. When you're ready to invite parents, neighbors, friends, colleagues, and other respected adult

volunteers to partner with you, send them a letter, and invite them to their first troop committee meeting.

Holding Troop Meetings

Girl Scouts of the USA provides digital troop tools just for you to help plan and run troop meetings! Be sure to check out the Volunteer Toolkit, available for troop leaders and parents of all troop levels with resources and activity plans for badges and journeys, as well as troop management tools. Simply click on My GS, then Volunteer Toolkit you're your council's website home page www.girlscouts-ssc.org



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

As Girls Arrive	Start-up activities are planned so that when girls arrive at the meeting they have something to do until the meeting begins. For younger girls, it could be coloring pages; teen girls might jot down a journal entry or just enjoy a little time to talk.
Opening	The opening focuses the meeting and allows girls to start the meeting. Each troop decides how to open their own meeting—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and then add a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other ceremony designed by the girls. Girl Scout Brownies, for example, might create a new tradition by skipping in a circle while singing a song. Ceremonies, even when brief or humorous, make Girl Scout time special. The Journey adult guides contain ideas about openings that correspond to Journey themes.
Business	Troop business may include taking attendance, collecting dues, making announcements, and planning an upcoming event or trip. This is a good time for girls to take turns leading, especially as they grow up! (Some troops may move the business portion of the meeting to an earlier or later slot.)
Activities	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. 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.

Clean-up	Clean-up is a great habit for girls to get their meeting space back to the way it was when they arrived—maybe even cleaner! Girls can also take leadership of the cleaning themselves, deciding who does what. They might even enjoy the tradition of a kaper chart (a chore chart that lists all the chores and assigns girls' names to each), so that everyone takes turns at each responsibility.
Closing	The closing lets the girls know that the troop meeting is ending. Many girls close with the friendship circle, in which each girl stands in a circle, puts her right arm over her left, and holds the hand of the girl standing next to her. The friendship squeeze is started by one girl, and then passed around the circle until it comes back to the girl who started it. When the squeeze is finished, girls twist clockwise out of the circle lifting their arms and turning around and out of the circle. In addition, you may find some helpful, Journey-related closing ceremony ideas in the Journey's adult guide.

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

Letting Girls Lead

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

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

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

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

Transporting Girls

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

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

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

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

Looking at a Sample Troop Year

Girl Scouts of the USA provides digital troop tools just for you! Be sure to check out the Volunteer Toolkit, available for troop leaders and parents of all troop levels with resources and activity plans for badges and journeys, as well as troop management tools. Simply click on My GS, then Volunteer Toolkit you're your council's website home page www.girlscouts-ssc.org



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 other's 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.

<p style="text-align: center;">October</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Founder’s Day Event • Investiture/Rededication Ceremony • Yearly Planning 	<p style="text-align: center;">November</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start Your Journey • Badge-Earning Activities • Service Project 	<p style="text-align: center;">December</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Your Journey • Badge-Earning Activities • Service Project • Cookie Program Goal Setting
<p style="text-align: center;">January</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Your Journey • Badge-Earning Activities • Cookie Program Starts 	<p style="text-align: center;">February</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cookie Program Continues • Thinking Day Activity • Continue Your Journey 	<p style="text-align: center;">March</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cookie Program Booth Sales • Girl Scout Week Activity
<p style="text-align: center;">April</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue Your Journey • Badge-Earning Activities • Service Project 	<p style="text-align: center;">May</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day/Overnight Trip • Journey Wrap-Up • End of Year Celebrations 	<p style="text-align: center;">June - August</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Troop Camping • Girls/Troops Attend Girl Scout Camp

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. **An approved copy of this report must be submitted to the Girl Scout Council office before purchasing awards.**

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 Volunteers and 5 girls registered by October 1.
- For Returning Troops: At least 70% of our girls and Volunteers 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 Volunteers) by the Early Bird June deadline.

Total Points: _____

Promise & Law (5 points)

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

Volunteer Participation (5 points)

- In addition to our two approved volunteers necessary to meet minimum girl-volunteer 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: _____

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 volunteers
- 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

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.

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.

Your Membership Coordinator and the Membership Support Team

Your Membership Coordinator and the Membership Support Team stand ready to help you 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. Operating hours are Monday – Thurs from 9am to 5pm and Fri 9am to 4:30pm. You may contact the team by phone at 208-377-2011 or by email at membershipsupport@girlscouts-ssc.org. If you plan to visit any of our regional offices, please call ahead to make an appointment. Their office hours may change depending on their travel schedules in the area.

Service Unit Team and Service Unit Meetings

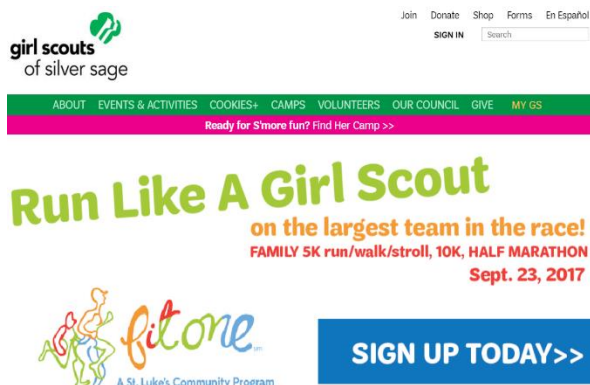
Your Service Unit Manager is your primary point of contact. Your Service Unit will have regular meetings, with a portion of those meetings focused on supporting troop leaders with information and learning opportunities. Make sure to attend the Service Unit Meetings or designate another troop volunteer to attend.

Silver Sage Website

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** tab.

- 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 **Resource Central** page contains a long list of resources related to program planning, traditions, and more

On the **MY GS** tab, you can renew your girls and access the **Volunteer Toolkit**, which also houses a complete “Resources” tab.



GSUSA Website

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

Girl Scout Store

Our Girl Scout store is 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. The GSSSC store email is store@girlscouts-ssc.org and check out the GSSSC Facebook page: silver sage store

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. For more information, tips and resources for traveling with your girls, refer to the "Let's Go" resource on the council website.

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 nationally-sponsored events that foster global friendships that connect Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 145 nations, such as Destinations to World Centers and other GSUSA-organized events. Click [here](#) to donate to the fund.

Traveling with Girls

<http://www.girlscouts-ssc.org/content/dam/girlscouts-girlscouts-ssc/documents/Let's%20Go!%20Troop%20Travel%20Resource%20Guide.pdf>

See Also, Safety Checkpoints.

Some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout's life happen while taking trips. Travel offers a wealth of opportunities for girls to develop leadership, confidence, and practical life skills. The following information can help you and girls prepare for local, regional, or international travel.

Girl Scouts is a great place for girls to learn how to plan and take exciting trips, because travel is built on a progression of activities—one activity leads to the next. Daisies can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips—even global trips!

For Daisies, this could mean a day trip to an arboretum as part of the Journey they are achieving. For Seniors or Ambassadors, it might mean whitewater rafting in Costa Rica or exploring the Our Chalet World Center in Switzerland.

Although many troops decide to travel together, Girl Scouts may also get together specifically for the purpose of traveling. Girls might join a trip with other girls from around their council or form a new troop with other girls who like to travel. Girl Scouts of the USA also offers individual Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors the chance to travel independently and meet other Girl Scouts from across the country through the [Destinations](#) program.

The recommended progression of trips and travel for Girl Scouts are:

1. **Short trips to local points of interest (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.
 - o 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.

2. **Day trip (Daisies 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. *Note:* Full-day trips may be very challenging for Daisies, especially for kindergarteners who have not experienced short trips. Make sure girls take some short trips before they progress to a full day trip.
 - 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.

3. **Overnight trips (Daisies and older):** A trip of one (or possibly two) nights away could start with one-night camping or staying at a Girl Scout property, and progress to a visit to a state or national park, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground – or even an overnight at a large museum! These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not long enough to generate homesickness. *Note:* A Daisy troop may participate in an overnight experience if the girls are ready. Brownie troops can participate up to two nights. For camp this differs: girls who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Girls who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights.
 - 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.

4. **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three or four nights camping or staying in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls' home region - up to a few hours away from home.
 - 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. 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**.

5. **National trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of ordinary recreational trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component such as incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country. Perhaps the girls want to plan a trip to some national parks as part of the [Girl Scout Ranger program](#).
 - 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.

6. **International trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation.

International trips are available to Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, but only to those who have successfully participated in a progression of overnight and extended trips within Girl Scouting. WAGGGS World Centers or your Girl Scout council may have additional or different guidelines regarding age requirements for international travel. Always consider the girls'

readiness for the next step in the travel progression, particularly for an international trip. (See below chart “Travel Progression Checklist”).

When girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact your council to get permission to plan the trip and download the [Global Travel Toolkit](#). Visiting one of the [four World Centers](#) is a great place to start, but there are many options for planning a global adventure! Be sure to review the Safety Activity Checkpoints “Travel/Trips” section for important safety information about traveling internationally.

- 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.

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)

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, Juniors can plan a camping trip and earn the Eco Camper badge, Cadettes can explore the food in other regions or countries for their New Cuisines badge, Seniors can find out about international business customs as part of their Business Etiquette badge, and Ambassadors can work on their Photography badge while documenting their trip.

Be sure to visit the “Girl Scouting as a National Experience” chapter in this handbook to find out more about the three (3) exciting series of Journeys and *The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting*.

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

Including Girls with Disabilities

Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. A great reference to learn more about travelling with disabilities is the Open Doors organization. Visit [Open Doors Organization](#).

Seeking Council Permission

Before most trips, you and the girls will need to obtain council permission, although your council may not require this information for trips of one day with no overnight stay. Check with our council for specifics, and also see whether specific forms must 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/times
- Location and type of premises to be used
- Numbers of girls who will be participating (parental permissions must be obtained)
- Names and contact information for the volunteers participating
- Any other groups, organizations, consultants, or resource people who will be involved
- Participants’ skill levels, if applicable (language skills, backpacking or camping experience, and so on)
- Any specialized equipment that will be used, if applicable
- Required agreements or contracts (for example, hiring a bus, use of premises)

From the Birth of Girl Scouting to the World Centers

[The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace](#) 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 your council to see whether council-owned camps and other facilities can be rented out to the group of girls with whom you’re working.

Involving Chaperones

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

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

Be sure, every chaperone, reviews and follows the 12 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, available both in the Quick-Start Guide to this handbook and in the “Safety-Wise” chapter. For international trips, chaperones should have previous international travel experience.

Adults in Addition to Chaperones

Traveling with Girl Scouts is unique from other organizations because girls take the lead – both during the planning and on the trip. This helps girls build essential skills, develop confidence, overcome challenges, and practice collaboration. Girls are most likely to achieve these outcomes when they travel with the recommended girl/adult ratios, rather than with too many adults on the trip. When there are too many adults participating, it becomes difficult for the trip to remain girl-led. You may want to start your travel experiences with Daisies by inviting parents to join local field trips and day trips. When parents are involved, make certain you model for them girl-led practices, and help them take a support role to girl decision-making. That way, by the time girls are ready for a weekend trip, and definitely a regional or national trip, your girls are ready to do the planning and to make decisions fully on the trip. Avoid having parents tag along on your regional, national, and international trips. If girls are not ready to travel without a parent, they are not yet ready to step up to a more intensive trip. When you give girls the chance to travel independently (with their leaders, of course!) you help girls build decision-making skills, independence, and confidence, and provide them with a powerful component in girls’ full Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

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 consider contacting the airline, which can make special arrangements for any unaccompanied minor. With the girl herself, develop a trip plan, discuss 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 or iPads) that are attractive to pickpockets.

Staying Safe During the Trip

Be sure to review the Safety Activity Checkpoints "Travel/Trips" section for important safety information, including information about insurance, transportation, and international travel.

When preparing girls, be sure to discuss the following items with the girls and their parents before you leave on any trip. You may also want to work with your girls to create a group behavior contract, and have girls sign it, and to create a personal emergency action plan that each girl can write herself and carry with her:

- 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.

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

Request for New Troop Startup Funds	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.
Financial Aid Application for Girl Registration	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.
Application for Troop Money Earning Project	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.
Troop Sponsorship Agreement	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.
Troop or Service Unit Contribution	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.
Troop Annual Report	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.
Troop Disband Notice	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.

Risk Management & Travel Forms

Health History	<p>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.</p>
Permission for Special Activities	<p>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 <u>MUST</u> have signed permission forms from every parent.</p>
Troop Overnight Trip	<p>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.</p>
Permission to Participate in Sensitive Issues	<p>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.</p>
Accident/Incident Report	<p>Use this form to report any incident or accident, even minor ones if it is deemed important to have documentation.</p>

Additional Resources

Raising Awesome Girls

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

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

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