



New Leader Guide

**Your Go-To
Resource
for Starting
Your Troop**

**Membership
Year
2022-2023**



Welcome to Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways (GSNYPENN)!

We're thrilled you've decided to serve as a volunteer for our nation's preeminent all-girl, girl-led leadership development organization! As a volunteer for my child's troop, I know first-hand the impact your time will have on the lives of girls. Like you, adult volunteers have been at the heart of our Movement—building girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place for more than 110 years!

Serving as a GSNYPENN Troop Leader is a commitment to helping girls become their best selves by fostering a rich Girl Scout Leadership Experience. You are the gatekeeper of our Movement—connecting girls with opportunities, encouraging them to take smart risks and challenging them to think creatively about the difference they can make in their communities.

Girl Scouts is designed to be girl-led. With your guidance, girls take the lead to determine what they want to do as a troop—from what badges and Journeys they want to earn, to what they eat on their first campout together, to figuring out what to do with their hard-earned cookie money. When girls have the chance to make decisions, you're teaching them collaboration, teamwork and how to advocate for their ideas. As a Troop Leader, this is one of the most important aspects of Girl Scouts you can cultivate!

Through Girl Scouts, girls learn to empower themselves for life. We know from national research that girls who are Girl Scouts are more likely to advocate for themselves and others, aspire to leadership roles, have more confidence, have a stronger sense of self and are more likely to seek challenges and take smart risks in life. Just imagine the difference in our world when our girls grow up to be confident and courageous adults!

Your role as a Troop Leader makes all of this possible. Thank you for believing in the power of every girl and for inspiring yours to turn "Can I?" into "I will!"

I hope your Girl Scout year is full of adventure, friendship, success—and fun!

Yours in Girl Scouting,
Julie Dale, CEO
GSNYPENN



Girl Scout Mission

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

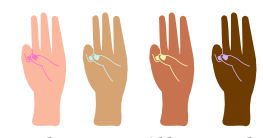
Girl Scout Promise

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.
*May substitute for the word God in accordance with your own spiritual beliefs.

Girl Scout Law

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

We're Here for You



GSNYPENN team members will reach out to guide you throughout all your steps to success.

When you first get started, we'll provide your troop number and schedule your New Leader Orientation

After you've completed orientation, you'll receive a New Leader Welcome email and a New Troop Starter Box!

Ensure you're opted in to receive GSNYPENN emails by checking your member communications preferences at mygs.girlscouts.org. and be sure to follow our council social media accounts below.



What's the Girl Scout Program?

At Girl Scouts, girls have tons of fun, make new friends and go on fantastic new adventures. Our program centers on something called the Girl Scout Leadership Experience—that is, what girls do and how they do it. Activities are girl-led, which gives girls opportunities to explore leadership roles and “learn by doing” in a cooperative-learning environment.



In Girl Scouts, girls will:

Discover

Find out who they are, what they care about and what their talents are.

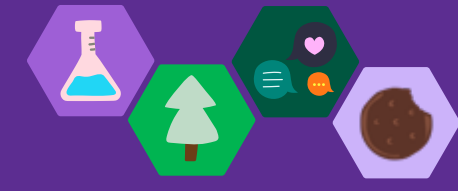
Connect

Collaborate with other people, locally and globally, to make a difference in the world.

Take Action

Do something to make the world a better place.

No matter what excites your girls, they'll find engaging and fun activities in the four areas that make up the core of the Girl Scout program:



STEM

Computer science, engineering, robotics, outdoor STEM and more

Outdoors

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

Life Skills

Civic engagement, healthy living, global citizenship and communication skills—to name a few

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

Whether they complete Journeys, learn new skills through badges, solve global problems with Highest Awards or create lifelong memories with fun patches, at Girl Scouts, every girl has countless ways to explore our Girl Scout Leadership Experience and hone the skills they'll need to power a lifetime of success—whatever that looks like for them.



Highest Awards | Bronze. Silver. Gold.

These represent the highest honors a Girl Scout can earn. All three give girls the chance to do big things while working on an issue they care about. Whether they want to plant a community garden and inspire others to eat healthy for their Bronze, advocate for animal rights for their Silver, or build a career network that encourages girls to become scientists and engineers for their Gold, they'll inspire others (and you)!

Journeys

Identify a problem, come up with a creative solution, create a team plan to make the solution a reality, put a plan into action and talk about what they have learned. As girls go on Journeys, they'll earn awards to put on their uniforms. The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) and Journey books are your resources for the requirements.



Badges

What have your girls always wanted to do? Make their own movie, go geocaching, plant a garden? Great news! They can learn to do all these things and more while earning Girl Scout badges. Badges are worn on the front of the vest or sash and indicate an increase in knowledge or skill in a subject area. The VTK and Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting are your resources for the requirements.



Patches

Think of patches like collecting memories in Girl Scouts. They're often a part of the fun activities girls can do in Girl Scouts without the requirements of badges. Patches are always worn on the back of the vest or sash.



Your Troop & How You Belong

Governing Structure

Members

Girls, adults and lifetime Girl Scouts that join in their commitment to the mission.



Troops & Juliettes

Troops are volunteer-supervised groups of girls who participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Girl Scouts who are not members of a troop are Juliettes (or individually registered members/IRMs) and participate in Girl Scouts individually.



Service Units

Volunteers who support the work of troops within a given territory.



Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways (GSNYPENN)

Independent 501(c)3 nonprofit chartered by GSUSA operating under the direction of a local Board of Directors and overseeing all Service Units and troops within a given territory.



Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)

A national organization supporting the work of more than 100 councils across the U.S. for more than 100 years. Headquartered in New York City.

Variations of the Troop



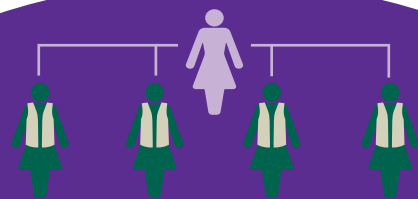
Traditional

Two unrelated adults lead a troop. Other caregivers volunteer help as needed.



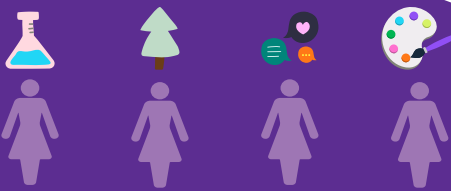
Troop Coordinator/Troop Mentor

(This works well in a multi-level troop.) One adult acts as the “administrator,” responding to emails, planning the troop calendar, etc. Other caregiver volunteers lead specific grade levels, meetings or activities based on skill or preference.



Girl-Led

One adult acts as the “leader,” and each girl and caregiver rotates leading meetings, activities and events. This is a great option to promote the “girl-led” experience, as they get to teach their friends a new skill. Also, a great option to rotate locations, purchasing supplies and snacks to cut down on troop dues.



Team-Led

All caregivers volunteer as Troop Leaders, and evenly divide responsibility by interest and/or skill set.

What Makes a Successful Troop Experience?

No matter where your girls live, a universal Girl Scout experience connects them to their sisters around the country. And there are so many ways to make sure your girls get the full Girl Scout Leadership Experience in a way that excites and inspires them!

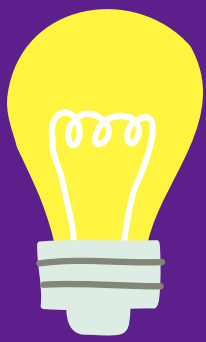


Throughout the troop year, you'll support your girls as they...

- Get Outdoors
- Attend Regular Meetings
- Earn Badges & Girl Scout Awards
- Complete Take Action Projects
- Participate in Cookie & Product Sales programs
- Learn Girl Scout Traditions
- Go on Field Trips

You can count on Girl Scouts to provide...

- All-Girl Spaces
- Supportive Adult Members
- Tools for Family Improvement
- Cooperative, Hands-On Learning
- Rigorous Safety Standards
- Girl-Led Activities



Your Steps to Success!

- Log in to gsLearn to start the “Welcome to GSNYPENN” learning path
- Meet with your support staff to complete your New Leader Orientation and sign the appropriate position description/agreement
- Set your troop meeting schedule and location using the “Update My Troop” form at gsnypenn.org/forms
- Invite girls and families to join your troop, watch your troop roster grow in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)
- Meet with your co-leader, check out VTK tutorials and begin planning your Girl Scout year
- Plan and host a caregiver meeting (tips on page)
- Plan and host your first troop meeting (tips on page)
- Open a troop bank account with a GSNYPENN partner bank and request troop startup funds (tips on page)
- Connect with your Service Unit and keep your Girl Scout connection strong

Amazing Leaders Are Formed, Not Born

To help you be the best, join our **GSNYPENN Leader Academy on Facebook**. This free online community is just for Troop Leaders with mentors who offer guidance and support while answering your questions. Look for your invitation or search the group name on Facebook and request to join.

We need you to attend a **New Leader Orientation**. New leaders also find **Leadership Essentials** a helpful course to grasp the value and mechanics of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience which centers on 3 processes, 4 pillars and 5 outcomes. Complete **Leadership Essentials, New Leader Learning Path** and more on **gsLearn** (see pg. 7). We also share special events on gsnypenn.org/volunteersupport.



New Troop Starter Box

Includes a binder filled with meeting plans, Girl Scout traditions and resources and is a great way to discover Girl Scouting as you get started.



Council & Partner Programs

To find a variety of in-person and virtual programs for your troops, girls and families, check gsnypenn.org/events. We also share info via our e-newsletters, website, social media and printed collateral.



Volunteer Essentials

Includes information about engaging girls, safety requirements, managing finances and more. The beginning of the manual is a quick-start guide perfect for brand-new volunteers. Find the latest version at gsnypenn.org/volunteersupport.



Safety Activity Checkpoints

An online list with everything you need to be prepared and keep girls safe during activities outside the normal troop meeting is located at gsnypenn.org/safetycheckpoints.



Volunteer Policies

Our local governing document includes all policies to ensure your troop is functioning within our guidelines. By agreeing to be a volunteer, you’re agreeing to follow items laid out in this resource. Check out gsnypenn.org/forms for this and more.



Online Staff Directory

The who’s who for every question you may have during your volunteer experience, visit gsnypenn.org/staff.

Volunteer Toolkit (VTK): Your Digital Troop Assistant!

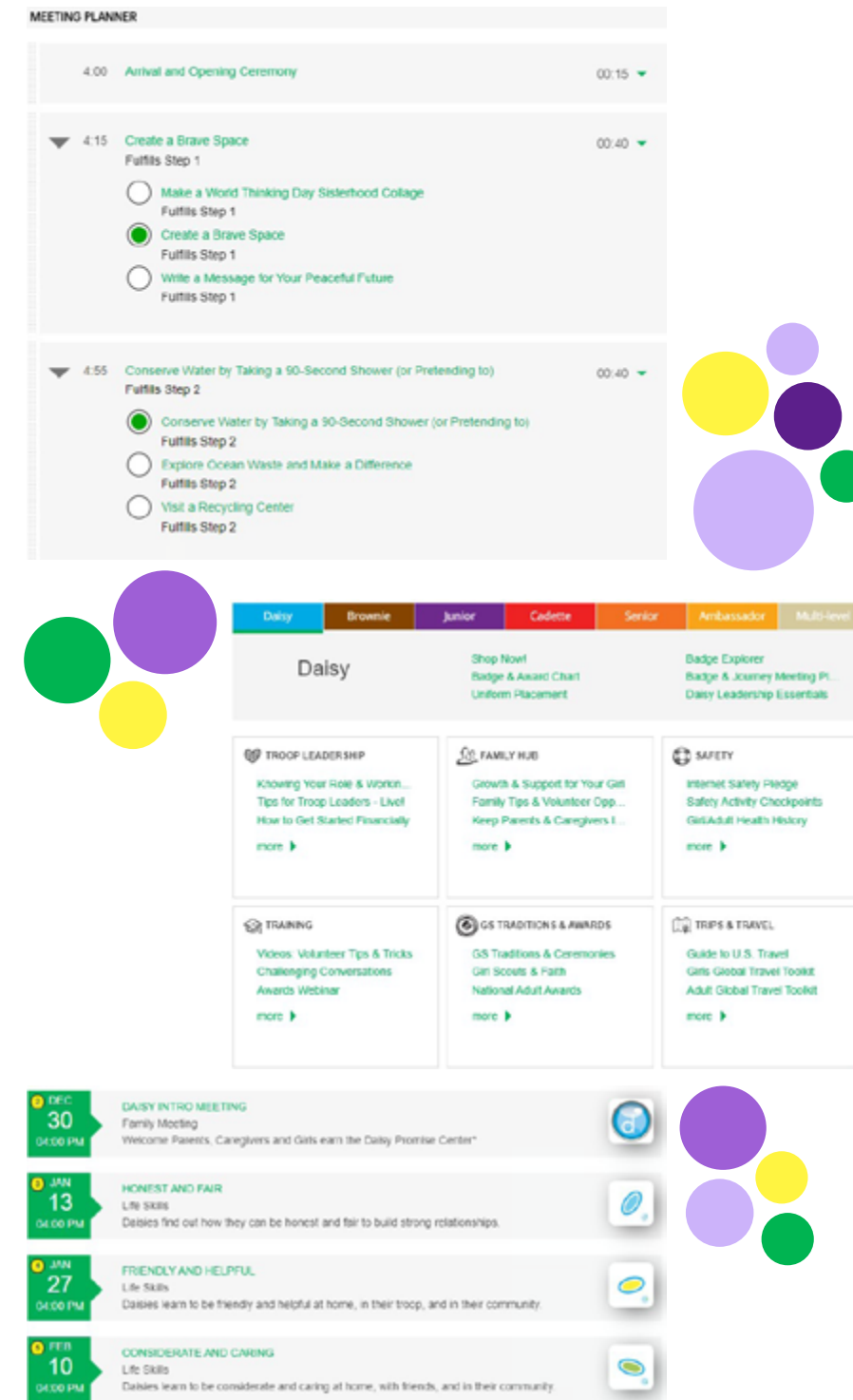
The VTK gives you program content and other resources to manage your troop planning all year long—and keep it running smoothly!

Go to mygs.girlscouts.org and check it out!

You can:

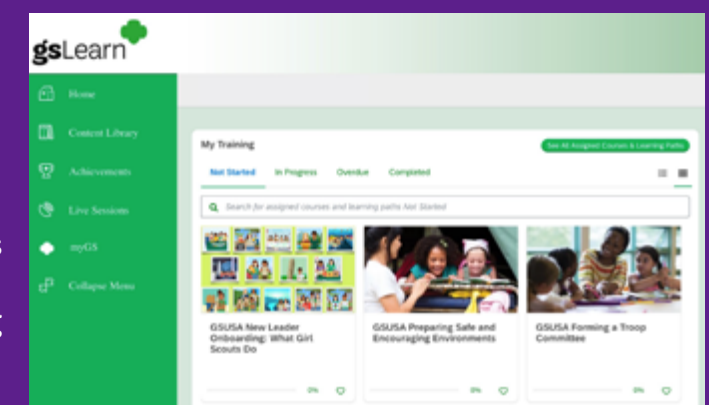
- Access Journey, petal and badge troop meeting plans
- See step-by-step activity guides for each troop meeting
- View and edit your troop roster
- Manage renewals for girls and adults
- Email caregivers with a single click
- Share troop meeting activities with caregivers
- Log girls’ petal/badge and Journey achievements
- Add events and your own troop activities
- Submit your annual Troop Finance Report

The VTK now offers multi-level troop access and program content for STEM and Outdoors. Fully customizable, the VTK is digitally responsive so you can plan and prepare practically anywhere.



gsLearn

Unleash the confident troop leader within through our online training forum, gsLearn! Training for new leaders, service team members, facilitators and more is available for all active volunteers. Dive in and access courses on the go, track your progress and more by signing into your myGS account at mygs.girlscouts.org and clicking the gsLearn logo.*



*If you don’t see the gsLearn option after logging into your myGS, contact our Customer Care team at 1.800.943.4414 or info@gsnypenn.org for assistance.

You & Your Role – A Girl Scout Leader

What does it mean to be a Girl Scout Leader? It's the amazing journey of helping girls build courage, confidence and character through Girl Scouts. As a leader, it's important to remember that leadership can bring many joys, including developing a personal relationship with each girl in the troop, building adult friendships through the sisterhood of Girl Scouts, receiving sincere appreciation and thanks from caregivers, and most importantly, knowing you are shaping the future by working with a girl today.

What does it mean to you to be a Girl Scout Leader? That's something you'll discover throughout your time with the girls and adults in your troop, as well as through relationships you make with fellow volunteers and families. It's an exciting adventure!



As you build relationships, leadership...

- Will develop as you get to know each girl and adult troop member
- Means communicating with caregivers and Co-Leaders
- Includes understanding the needs and interests of the girls, helping them plan activities and excursions beyond the troop meeting, and guiding them as they discover new interests

As a leader, it's important to remember...

- You cannot know everything the girls might ever want to learn
- You'll also explore and learn many things along with the girls
- You're expected to know where to go for information and resources, and get it when needed
- It's okay not to know; you're not expected to know everything about Girl Scouting

Leadership is teaching...

- Girls that they can do and be anything
- Girls that they are decision-makers
- Girls not only for the sake of knowing things but also for the sake of development and growth
- By being a good role model

See yourself as a coach...

- Not as a teacher with a canned lesson or activity or as someone who must perform for the girls each week
- Who guides and instructs
- Who advises and discusses
- Who works so each girl can carry out responsibilities within the troop
- Who helps the girls build their skills and ethics
- Who gives more responsibilities to the girls as they grow and develop

“Belonging” in leadership means...

- Understanding you are part of a troop and a team
- Listening, providing suggestions and contributing ideas
- Sticking with the girls through good times and bad
- Recognizing you belong to a larger organization beyond the troop that will provide support and resources

Shaping Your Troop Experience

Before you hold your first troop meeting, consider the support and resources you'll need throughout the year. Host a friends and family meeting to rally additional volunteers.



Tips for Structuring Your Troop:

1. Troop Formation

- Troops may be assigned by grade level or leaders may choose to facilitate multi-level troops with girls of all ages combined into one troop.

2. Meetings

- Determine the frequency of your meetings and the meeting/activity schedule. Use the VTK to help you through this process.
- Most troops meet twice per month, but you can choose a schedule that works best for you.
- Your meeting space should be somewhere safe, clean and secure that allows all girls to participate. Some great meeting space ideas include schools, churches, libraries or community centers.
- Troop meetings can be hosted in person, online or a combination of both. See what works best for your troop families!

3. Meeting Structure

- Girl Scouts is designed to be girl-led. Talk to the girls and caregivers about what they'd like to get out of Girl Scouts this year.
- Think about how you want to lead. Do you want to run every troop meeting?
- Consider rotating the responsibility with the different members of your troop. Each caregiver and girl can team up to lead one meeting.

4. Cost

- Consider supply costs. Does your troop need to charge monthly or annual dues to help offset costs? Will you charge families per activity? It's important to talk with caregivers about financial expectations upfront. Assign a caregiver volunteer to help manage troop finances.

5. Communication

- Keep everyone in the loop. Make sure caregivers know when and where your activities will be and how they can help.

Four Hours, For Her

Troops excel when caregivers take part.

Caregivers, friends and family members can provide time, experience and ideas to a new troop.

Girls who have family support and participation in their adventures are more likely to stay in Girl Scouts. Consider volunteering four hours this year for her!



Girls can earn GSNYPENN's Four Hours, For Her patch for every 4 hours a caregiver volunteers with her troop. Be sure to have families complete the Four Hours, For Her form included in your New Troop Starter Box.

Family volunteers can:

- Manage the troop's cookie program as Troop Cookie Manager
- Coordinate communication (i.e., Facebook group, caregiver emails, etc.)
- Volunteer to get First Aid certified to help with activities
- Manage troop funds and bank accounts as Troop Treasurer
- Offer to host and facilitate meetings or coordinate the use of a local venue (church, library, rec center, school, etc.)
- Organize badge work for the troop; rotate leading badge activities
- Organize community service projects and activities for the troop
- Provide snacks and more

**Most important:
make sure you're having fun!**

Your Caregiver Meeting

Hold This Meeting To:



Get to know your Girl Scouts and their families



Ask for support and help at troop meetings and outings



Set clear expectations for the troop—including dues, meeting/activity schedule, financial obligations, uniforms, etc.



Brainstorm all of the exciting things your troop wants to do this year

Meeting Preparation Checklist

- Arrange a meeting time and place such as your home, school, church, library or Zoom
- Use your troop roster in myGS (login at mygs.girlscouts.org) to invite all caregivers and girls
- Bring Annual Permission Forms for each girl and adult registered in the troop, completed forms stay on file with you as Troop Leader (10 copies available in your New Troop Starter Box, download more at gsnypenn.org/forms)
- Use the Four Hours, For Her form to enlist caregiver support (10 copies in your New Troop Starter Box, download more at gsnypenn.org/volunteersupport)
- Use the Caregiver Meeting Plan from your New Troop Starter Box as a pre-planned meeting
- Arrange for another adult to do a craft or activity with the girls while you talk with caregivers
- Meet with your Co-Leader to practice what you want to say and the information you want to share
- Remember—this will be their first experience with Girl Scouts, make sure you have fun!



Tonight's Agenda

Welcome

- Introduce Troop Co-Leaders
- Caregiver introductions
- Recite Promise & Law—also a great time to reference values Girl Scouts cultivates in girls
- Review Family Connection Guide (encourage caregivers to fill in troop/Service Unit #s and important contact info for future reference)

Our Troop

- Overview - our troop, Service Unit, council
- Discuss and establish meeting dates, time and location
- Finances
 - GSUSA annual membership - \$25
 - Local troop dues, how they are used
 - Troop uniform/insignia, purchase for girls or direct caregivers to council store (gsnypenn.org/shop)
 - Financial assistance available through council (gsnypenn.org/forms)
- Events - SU/troop/council events, payment, permission form requirements
- Troop communication - how caregivers will be informed of happenings
- Emergency communication - late pick-up, cancellations, etc.

Sample Caregiver Meeting Agenda

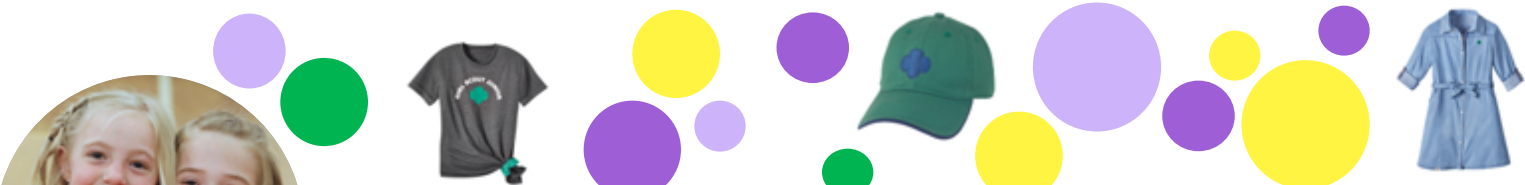
Troop Leader Responsibilities

- Liaison with Service Unit
- Troop bank account
- Additional enrichment training as needed to be awesome (gsnypenn.org/volunteersupport)
- Caregiver/Family Responsibilities
- Review pages 3 and 18 in Family Connection Guide
- Complete Annual Permission Form (in New Troop Starter Box and gsnypenn.org/forms)
- Complete Four Hours, For Her Promise - how every caregiver can help (in New Troop Starter Box and gsnypenn.org/volunteersupport)
- Volunteer roles (Troop Co-Leader, Troop Cookie Manager, Troop Treasurer, Troop Committee Member) - require online registration, adult membership paid through GSUSA and background check

How To Dress for Success

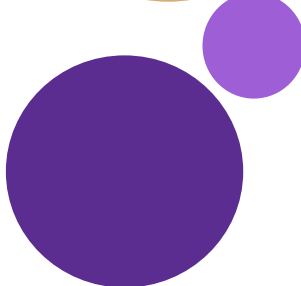
- Uniforms connect girls to Girl Scout Traditions, display their accomplishments and create memories to last a lifetime.
- GSUSA requires girls wear one official uniform item (vest, sash, tunic) at all Girl Scout events.
- Troops will discuss which uniform elements and apparel they want to wear to display their badges and patches.
- Troop Leaders may collect money from caregivers to purchase these items or may ask caregivers to purchase items themselves from GSNYPENN stores or online.

Visit one of our stores to purchase uniforms, starter kits and more. Our staff is here to help! Learn more and how to order online or via phone/email at gsnypenn.org/shop.



Now You're Ready to Meet!

There are six elements of a troop meeting. This guide will give you the framework for how a typical meeting will run. Be sure to use the pre-planned meetings from your New Troop Starter Box to get started. When ready, dive into the VTK for more meeting options.



1. Start Up

Plan activities for girls as they arrive at the meeting, so they have something to do until the meeting begins. It could be as simple as singing or journaling.

2. Opening

Girls decide and lead their meeting opening. Most begin with the Promise & Law, a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story or other activity. (5-10 minutes)

3. Business

This is the time to let girls plan upcoming meetings or decide what SU/ troop/council events they want to attend as a troop, collect dues and make announcements. (5-10 minutes)

4. Activities

Support your troop as they complete their pre-selected activities to work towards badges and Journeys. This portion of the meeting should be heavily girl-led with the Troop Leader aiding on the side. (30-45 minutes)

5. Clean Up

Girl Scouts should always leave a place better than they found it! (5 minutes)

6. Closing

Just like the opening, each troop can decide how to close—with a song, game or story. (5-10 minutes) As caregivers arrive, provide any important updates or reminders about upcoming meetings and activities.

First Meeting Preparation Checklist

- Cover the basics. Review details about when and where the meeting will take place and be sure all caregivers know that information. You might find it helpful to visit the location beforehand.
- Get ready. Use the VTK to verify your troop roster and email caregivers. This might be a great time to ask them to provide you with any needed items, such as Annual Permission Forms, uniform orders or troop dues.
- Know the agenda. Use “Six Elements of a Troop Meeting” on this page and the VTK meeting agenda to customize your plan.
- Review and practice your agenda. You’ll feel calmer and more flexible during the actual meeting.
- Research Girl Scout Traditions. Introduce some of them to your troop.
- Expect to have fun! When girls and caregivers see that you’re prepared and ready to have a great time, they’ll follow your lead!

Ceremonies, Traditions & Troop Management

Even while participating in outdoor adventures, exploring STEM and running a girl business, participating in Girl Scout Traditions & Ceremonies adds special memories to a girl’s experiences and reinforces the significance of being part of a worldwide sisterhood.



Kaper Chart	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4
Lead Opening Ceremony				
Collect Dues & Attendance				
Serve Snack				
Lead Closing Ceremony				

Kaper Chart

A kaper chart assigns girls or patrols to complete duties (or kapers) during a troop meeting, outdoor adventure or when traveling. Sharing of responsibilities assists the troop in maintaining structure and ensuring they work as a team. Girls can help decide their patrols, decorate the chart and then complete their responsibilities.

Troop Agreement

Creating a group agreement is an excellent way to prevent conflict and create a happy, safe and healthy environment both for girls and families. To create a group agreement have all participants discuss expectations of behavior and communication. Once the agreement is complete, have all members sign it. Keep the agreement displayed at meetings as a reminder of how everyone will treat each other.

When kaper charts and troop agreements are partnered together they help facilitate healthy relationships!



Girl Scout Sign
Members hold three fingers in the air, holding their pinkie finger down with their thumb.



Girl Scout Quiet Sign
Leader holds right hand in the air. Girls put their right hands up and stop speaking.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program

When girls participate in the annual cookie program, their troops earn proceeds from each package sold. Troops decide how funds are spent, from supporting a troop camping trip to working on their Bronze Award. In the last few years, the average profit per troop was over \$1,000. The cookie program also gives girls the opportunity to earn badges. Participation in the program is optional but highly encouraged.

More information can be found at gsnypenn.org/cookies.

Troop Leaders receive information about getting started in the cookie program in early winter. In preparation for the program—which traditionally begins in January runs through end of March/early April—we encourage you to ask for caregiver help early! Helping can be as simple as picking up cookies, managing the online system (eBudde) or hosting a kick-off rally. Ask another troop volunteer to serve as the Troop Cookie Manager (TCM). The TCM is an extremely valuable member of your troop leadership team, taking ownership of this important program while you continue normal troop operations.



Important Things to Know About Finance

1. Bank Account

All troops establish a bank account with two unrelated adult signers for collection of optional troop dues, payment of supplies, activities, cookie program and Treats, Reads & More (fall product program). GSNYPENN has established connections with Community Bank and NBT to support troop leadership. Find the Opening or Changing a Girl Scouts Bank Account form at gsnypenn.org/forms. All money must be deposited into troop account before being spent/paid out.

2. Funding for Troops

GSNYPENN provides \$75 start-up funds to active, new troops once they are fully established; simply submit the Funding for New Troops form. Once your troop leadership completes Five Essentials of Training, the troop can earn the Troop Training Bonus—an additional \$20! Both forms are at gsnypenn.org/forms.

3. Troop Dues

Many troops collect dues to help provide start-up funding for activities and supplies. This could range from 50¢-\$1 per meeting to \$20-50 for the entire membership year paid at one time. It's up to each troop to decide what works best for them.

4. Money-Earning Activities

The cookie program is the primary money-earning activity for a troop. If a troop participates in our Treats, Reads & More fall product and cookie programs, they may also opt to participate in a limited number of additional money-earning activities. See gsnypenn.org/policies. To learn more check out the 169 Financial Fitness Path in gsLearn.

5. Financial Reporting & Receipts

To stay organized, troop leadership should use receipts to help track any incoming funds, outgoing expenses and cookie activities. Every troop should report out to troop caregivers about finances at least three times per year. An annual Troop Financial Report is due by May 31.

6. Tax Exemption

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, volunteers can utilize our tax-exempt form when purchasing supplies and materials (except at council stores). The form is online on the Resources tab of the VTK.

7. Financial Assistance

Financial difficulties shouldn't stand in the way of a girl's participation in our Movement. Any member needing financial assistance for membership can request it. Assistance is also available for books, badges, uniforms and programs. Request online using the related tab at gsnypenn.org/forms.



GSNYPENN Annual Planning Calendar

Summer-Early Fall

July

- Send girls to summer camp - we offer overnight, day and family options
- Attend our annual Leadership Summit
- July 1 - on-time renewal begins

August

- Attend one of our regional Fall Kick-Off events for volunteers
- Encourage other girls and adults to join Girl Scouts
- Prepare for back to school and start forming your troop
- Update your troop in myGS
- Plan Investiture & Rededication Ceremonies
- On-time renewal continues

September

- Engage existing troop members (girls and adults) to renew by September 30
- Start your meetings for the year
- Hold a caregiver meeting and collect Annual Permission forms
- Attend your Service Unit meeting; learn about the Treats, Reads & More Program
- Complete the GSNYPENN fall troop survey
- September 30 - on-time renewal ends

Fall-Early Winter

October

- October 1 - Girl Scout membership year begins
- Treats, Reads & More Program begins
- October 31 - Girl Scouts' Founder Juliette Gordon Low's birthday (also called Founder's Day), Low was born in 1860 in Savannah, Georgia
- Attend a new leader enrichment

November

- Treats, Reads & More Program ends
- Evaluate your training needs
- Council service centers and stores closed for Thanksgiving holiday
- Attend a Badge Bash for leaders

December

- Prep for Girl Scout Cookie Program
- Council service centers and stores closed for winter holidays
- Share troop finances with caregivers
- Plan a community service project

July Troop Tip:
Drop a note in the mail to your girls while at camp!

August Troop Tip:
Connect with caregivers who may be interested in volunteering this year; it's a great time to see who can help in the Troop Cookie Manager or Troop Treasurer roles!

September Troop Tip:
Get the troop together with a fun back-to-school activity—like flying kites in the park or a family picnic!

October Troop Tip:
Share information about the Four Hours, For Her Promise with caregivers!

November Troop Tip:
Look for community engagement opportunities, including participating in service projects!

December Troop Tip:
Hold a meeting this month for girls and families all about the cookie program!

January Troop Tip:
Thinking about a campout? Book online up to six months in advance and sign up for Simply Successful Camping.

February Troop Tip:
Talk to your troop about who might be interested in overnight or day camps this summer; going with a buddy always makes the experience even more fun!

March Troop Tip:
Look for spring/summer community engagement opportunities, including participating in parades and service projects!

April Troop Tip:
Consider getting outdoors with your troop to work on badges aligned to interact with nature!

May Troop Tip:
Hold an end-of-year party to celebrate your troop's accomplishments and make plans for the summer and fall!

June Troop Tip:
Relax and enjoy your summer!

Winter

January

- Girl Scout Cookie Program begins

February

- Volunteer Recognition Award nominations due
- National Girl Scout Cookie Weekend
- February 22 - World Thinking Day
- Summer Camp registration opens
- Cookie delivery begins

March

- Cookie program continues with depots, pick-ups and booth sales
- March 12 - National Girl Scout Day or Girl Scouts' Birthday, the date in 1912 when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered our organization's first 18 girl members in Savannah, Georgia
- Girl Scout Week - celebrated every March starting with Girl Scout Sunday and ending with Girl Scout Sabbath on Saturday (gives girls opportunity to attend their places of worship and be recognized), also includes Girl Scouts' Birthday
- Share troop finances with caregivers

Spring-Summer

April

- Volunteer Appreciation Month
- April 1 - Early Bird Renewal begins
- April 22 - Girl Scout Leader's Day, honors all adult volunteers who work as leaders/mentors
- Attend a Simply Successful Camping or Outdoor Skills Day training
- Participate in GSUSA's Voices Count survey
- Plan your Bridging & Awards Ceremonies
- Final cookie program payments due

May

- GSNYPENN Annual Meeting
- Early Bird Bonanza - special renewal incentives all month long
- Complete VTK Finance Report and share finances with caregivers

June

- June 30 - Early Bird Renewal ends
- Visit Summer Camp Open Houses at our properties

For a complete list of council events, programs and activities, visit gsnypenn.org/events.
Activities and patches subject to change.



Keeping Girls Safe

While working with girls and learning new skills is fun and rewarding, assuming responsibility for other people's children means that some level of risk management and due diligence is involved. There are several resources we use to help you minimize risk and keep girls safe.

Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow the development of individual girls. Our volunteer-to-girl ratios show the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls.

Your group must have **at least two unrelated, approved volunteers present at all times**, plus additional volunteers as necessary depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Any adult supervising girls must be an approved volunteer. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and must be screened before volunteering. One Troop Leader in every group must be female. Please refer to the ratio chart below.

Volunteer-to-Girl Ratio Chart	Group Meetings		Events, Travel & Camping	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:
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

*Virtual meetings require a minimum of two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for all levels/sizes.

Physically & Emotionally Safe Activities

When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading our Safety Activity Checkpoints for the particular endeavor. You can find these on the Resources tab of the VTK. Each checkpoint offers required guidelines on where to hold the activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find any basic/specialized gear required, how to prepare and what steps to follow the day of the activity. The checkpoints will note if a First Aider is required.

If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, contact Customer Care at info@gsnypenn.org or 1.800.943.4414 before making any definite plans.

Emergency Incidents & Procedures

Although we all hope the worst never happens, it's important to know and follow our council's procedures for handling emergency incidents. At the scene of the incident, safety is your first priority. Provide care for the injured person or obtain medical assistance and then immediately report the emergency to GSNYPENN staff. Call our emergency line at 1.800.943.4414 and press 4.

Leaders Should Always Have These Items on Hand

Make sure a general First Aid kit is available at your meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity. You may need to provide the kit if one is not already available at your location. You must always have names and telephone numbers for our council and your support staff, girls' caregivers and local emergency services (police, fire department, hospital).

About My Troop

Log all vital information about your troop here for future reference.

Troop Number:

Program Grade Level:

Service Unit Number:

Meeting Day & Time:

Meeting Location:

Troop Dues: Per

Amount Frequency

Troop Leadership Team:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Troop Training Bonus Criteria

	Participant Name	Training Date	Training Location
New Leader Orientation			
Leadership Essentials			
First Aid/CPR/AED			
Simply Successful Overnights			
Simply Successful Camping			



Service Unit Support:

Place SU Support Sticker Here

My Girl Scout Credentials:

myGS

User ID:

Password:

eBudde

User ID:

Password:

M2

User ID:

Password:

We Are a Network

Girl Scouts of NYPENN Pathways (GSNYPENN) is chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA to administer the Girl Scout program in 24 counties of New York and two in Pennsylvania. We're an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit that fundraises to manage operations of programs, camps and other council-led activities.

Within GSNYPENN are Service Units, entities governed by council policies and managed by volunteers who support the day-to-day operations of troops. Troops are groups of girls led by adult volunteers who have been background checked by the council.

Girl Scouts is the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. We offer every girl a chance to practice a lifetime of leadership, adventure and success. We are dedicated to serving our council membership. Your support stays local and gives girls across our region the opportunity to experience the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.



Visit gsnypenn.org/locations for complete information on our service centers, stores and hours of operation.

Contact Us!

-  gsnypenn.org
-  info@gsnypenn.org
-  [instagram.com/gsnypenn](https://www.instagram.com/gsnypenn)
-  [facebook.com/gsnypenn](https://www.facebook.com/gsnypenn)
-  twitter.com/gsnypenn
-  1.800.943.4414 or 315.698.9400

