



Volunteer Essentials 2011-2013



# Contents

## **Quick-Start Guide**

[We Are Girl Scouts](#)  
[Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law](#)  
[Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How!](#)  
[Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure](#)  
[Getting Started with Journey Books](#)  
[Meeting with Girls for the First Time](#)  
[Using Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)

## **Chapter 1: Volunteer Support**

[Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer](#)  
[Your Responsibilities](#)  
[Your Support Team](#)  
[Evaluating Your Skills](#)  
[Taking Advantage of Volunteer Learning Opportunities](#)  
[Getting Feedback on a Job Well Done](#)

## **Chapter 2: Program—What Girl Scouts Do!**

[The Girl Scout Leadership Experience \(GSLE\)](#)  
[Three Keys to Leadership: The Activities Girls Do](#)  
[Girl Scout Processes: How Girls Go About Doing Those Activities](#)  
[The Journey Books!](#)  
[Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards](#)  
[Badges, Try-Its, Pins, and More!](#)  
[Other Initiatives and Opportunities](#)  
[Girl Scout Traditions: Pass it On!](#)  
[Girl Scout Calendar](#)  
[Time-Honored Ceremonies](#)  
[Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!](#)

## **Chapter 3: Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels**

[Arranging a Time and Space for Girl-Led Meetings](#)  
[Understanding Healthy Development in Girls](#)  
[Girl Scout Daisy Development](#)  
[Girl Scout Brownie Development](#)  
[Girl Scout Junior Development](#)  
[Girl Scout Cadette Development](#)  
[Girl Scout Senior Development](#)  
[Girl Scout Ambassador Development](#)  
[Creating a Safe Space for Girls](#)  
[Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl](#)  
[Promoting Fairness](#)  
[Building Trust](#)  
[Managing Conflict](#)  
[Inspiring Open Communication](#)  
[Working with Parents and Guardians](#)  
[Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion](#)

## **Chapter 4: Safety-Wise**

[Knowing Your Responsibilities](#)  
[Responsibilities of the Volunteer](#)  
[Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians](#)  
[Responsibilities of the Girls](#)  
[Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need](#)  
[Transporting Girls](#)  
[Hosting a Girl-Led Event](#)  
[Approaching Activities](#)  
[Health Histories \(Including Examinations and Immunizations\)](#)  
[Girl Scout Activity Insurance](#)  
[Providing Emergency Care](#)  
[First-Aid/CPR](#)  
[Procedure for Accidents](#)

## **Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances**

[Establishing an Account](#)

[Money-Earning Basics](#)

[Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals](#)

[Understanding Financial and Sales Abilities  
by Grade Level](#)

[Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program](#)

[Recognizing that Product Sales Are Part of the GSLE](#)

[Determining Who Can Participate](#)

[Knowing Where Proceeds Go](#)

[Using Online Resources to Market Cookies  
and Other Products](#)

[Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies and  
Other Products](#)

[Additional Group Money-Earning](#)

[Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations](#)

# Quick-Start Guide

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

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

That's because the rest of *Volunteer Essentials* is a reference for you to use only 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 there when you need it but, rest assured, there's no need for you to read the entire book today.

Ready to get started? Then read the following handy tips, and you'll be well on your way!

## GIRL SCOUTS OF WESTERN OHIO

Council Chair: Nancy C. Dawes

Council CEO: Barbara J. Bonifas

## Administrative Headquarters

4930 Cornell Road, Cincinnati, OH 45242-1804

1-800-537-6241 513-489-1025

FAX: 513-489-1417

## Council Facts:

Serves approximately 53,000 or 1 in 6 girls in our council geography

More than 14,000 adult volunteers

Covers a 13,559 square mile area.

Serves a 32 county area in western Ohio and southeastern Indiana.

Made up of 112 service units. The primary method of delivery of the Girl Scout program is the troop.

## Council Communication Information

**Council Website:** [www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org)

**Council General E-Mail Contact:** [council@girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](mailto:council@girlscoutsofwesternohio.org)

**Facebook:** <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Girl-Scouts-of-Western-Ohio/>

**Council Blog:** <http://gswo.blogspot.com/>

**Write Out Loud! A blog by Girls for Girls** <http://girlscoutsofwesternohiochatterbox.wordpress.com/>

## E-mailing the Girl Scout Center

Messages received in the general site will be forwarded to appropriate staff member each business day.

The sender may also forward electronic messages directly to council paid staff by using the person's first and last name (no spaces), then the @ symbol and [girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org). For example, if a person wanted to send an e-mail message to Roni Luckenbill, the address would be [roniluckenbill@girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](mailto:roniluckenbill@girlscoutsofwesternohio.org). A list of staff and their e-mail addresses are available on the website under "Contact Us".

## Calling the Girl Scout Service Centers

The Girl Scouts of Western Ohio's paid staff uses a voice mail system to quickly and efficiently handle calls by allowing callers to leave detailed voice messages when it is convenient, any time day or night.

During regular business hours (8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday), a customer service staff member will answer the phone and ask how they may direct the call. A partially-automated attendant is utilized in most regional offices to assist with peak calling time overflow. Because Girl Scouts of Western Ohio strives to give personal service, you can always talk to the receptionist during office hours.

After regular business hours (8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Monday - Friday), an automated attendant answers the phone. If the caller knows the mailbox number (phone system extension number) of the person for whom she/he would like to leave a message, she/he may dial that number. If the caller does not know the mailbox number, they have two options in leaving a message:

- The caller may use the company directory, prompted by the recording, to access a staff member's extension;
- The caller may leave a message in the general mailbox. Each morning the receptionist forwards these calls to the appropriate staff person.

## Regional Offices

### ADMINISTRATIVE CENTER

c/o CINCINNATI SERVICE CENTER  
4930 Cornell Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242  
513-489-1025 or  
1-800-537-6241  
Fax: 513-489-1417

### Cincinnati Office

4930 Cornell Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45242  
T: 800-537-6241  
T: 513-489-1025  
F: 513-489-1417

### Lima Office

1870 West Robb Avenue  
Lima, Ohio 45805  
T: 800-96-APPLE  
T: 419-229-7570  
F: 419-225-4085

### Dayton Office

BUCKEYE TRAILS SERVICE CENTER  
450 Shoup Mill Road  
Dayton, Ohio 45415  
T: 937-275-7601  
F: 937-275-1147

### Toledo Office,

2244 Collingwood Boulevard  
Toledo, OH  
Toledo, Ohio 43620  
T: 800-860-4516  
T: 419-243-8216  
F: 419-245-5357

## Emergency Phone

These pagers are for emergency use only. Use these numbers, after-hours and on weekends, to report a serious accident or emergency to a council representative.

Appleseed Ridge Region	419-225-4085*
Buckeye Trails Region	937-279-6599
Great Rivers Region	513-619-1398*
Maumee Valley Region	419-221-4541

\*this number forwards to a staff members cell phone

## Council Shops

For the convenience of volunteers, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio maintains four council stores which sell Girl Scout uniforms, equipment, badges, patches, pins, and other official Girl Scout insignia.

Mail, e-mail, fax and online ordering is available throughout the year. Orders will generally be processed and mailed within two working days of receipt; however, please allow up to two weeks during peak periods.

Use the store order form available from the service unit manager or online at [www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org). Make check or money order payable to Girl

Scouts of Western Ohio or charge to your Visa or MasterCard. Shipping charges will be applied to all orders.

**E-mail:** [store@girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](mailto:store@girlscoutsofwesternohio.org)

Our Girl Scout store tries to keep an adequate inventory of catalog items most commonly sold. We are limited in the amount of stock we can maintain. For customer convenience, all catalog items may be special ordered.

Visa, MasterCard, cash, check, or cookie dough are accepted for payment. No mail/phone/email or credit card orders under \$5.

### Girl Scout Catalog

The Girl Scout Catalog is mailed to all registered adults in mid-summer. It lists uniforms, publications, camping equipment, insignia, badges, patches, recognitions, gift ideas, and special items. The catalog is a good reference for placement of official pins and insignias.

### Shop Hours:

Monday - Friday: 9:00 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.

1st and 3rd Saturday of the month: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

NOTE: Not open on Saturdays, June 15th - September 15th.

**SHIPPING:** Charged, based on dollar amount spent.

**Insert COUNCIL MAP** (showing counties and council service centers)

# We Are Girl Scouts

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

## Our Mission

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

## Our Vision

Girl Scouts strives to be the premier leadership organization for girls and experts on their growth and development.

## The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

We have identified three keys to leadership: girls discover themselves and their values; connect with others; and take action to make the world a better place. At Girl Scouts, everything centers on the girl: activities are **girl-led**, which gives girls the opportunity to **learn by doing** in a **cooperative learning** environment.

## More than 3 Million Strong

We are urban, rural, and suburban. We are in schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes, and detention centers. We are in virtually every zip code and in 90 countries around the world.

- **2.3 million** girls 5 to 18 years of age
- **16,000** Girl Scouts overseas
- **880,000** adult volunteers
- **50 million** alumnae
- **112 councils** throughout the United States

At any given point in time, approximately 10 percent of girls are Girl Scouts, and

- 80 percent of women business owners were Girl Scouts.
- 69 percent of female U.S Senators were Girl Scouts.
- 67 percent of female members of the House of Representatives were Girl Scouts.
- Virtually every female astronaut who has flown in space was a Girl Scout. 100 Years Young

We are about to celebrate a century of trailblazing, of leadership, of fun and friendship—and we're just getting started. Find out more at [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org).

## Girl Scouts prepare girls for today and tomorrow

Times have changed since 1912, however the foundational pieces of the Girl Scout program, have not. "To be successful in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, children and youth need access to experiences... that will help them develop the skills to understand, interpret, and utilize knowledge in the `real world.'"<sup>1</sup> Girl Scouts prepare girls for today and tomorrow by providing this type of learning experience. Educators, government and private industry describe the most important skills, knowledge, and behaviors "students" will need to be successful in the work environment and life.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The Harvard Family Research Project Evaluation Exchange, "Supplementary Education: The Hidden Curriculum of High Academic Achievement", spring 2005.

<sup>2</sup> Ohio Department of Education, September 2008, Volume 2, Number 7 A (Updating U.S. Department of Commerce, *Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills*, "What Work Requires of Schools, 1991)

- Good communication skills
- Teamwork
- Building relationships
- Thinking creatively
- Strong ethics
- Thinking critically
- Problem-solving skills
- Application of knowledge
- Ability to innovate
- Positive attitude

These skills areas are congruent with 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills: *Ready by 21* identified by the Forum for Youth Development<sup>3</sup> and reflected by the efforts of the *Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills*.<sup>4</sup>

## **Girl Scouts: A National Example for 21st Century Learning**

Girl Scouts give girls life skills, primarily by engaging girls and teaching them to apply a learning and decision-making process, rather than by directing them to participate in any specified type of activity. All Girl Scout activities are designed so that girls will:

Decide what activities they want to learn or do (girl-driven).

Work in small groups and teams to discuss, debate, discover, practice, and teach (cooperative learning).

Reflect on their activities and use experience to guide further plans and actions (experiential learning).

Girl Scouting has a long history of partnering with parents, schools, and the community to prepare girls, both personally and as leaders, to succeed in school and in life. Grounded in the *Girl Scout Promise and Law*, Girl Scouts' non-formal, experiential, and cooperative learning program promotes girls' personal growth and leadership development.

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<sup>3</sup> Karen Pittman, *Ready by 21: The Big Picture*, the Forum of Youth Investment, 2008.

<sup>4</sup> *Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills*: U.S. Department of Education, AOL Time Warner Foundation, Apple Computer, Inc., Cable in the Classroom, Cisco Systems, Inc., Dell Computer Corporation, National Education Association, SAP, et.al., 2002



# Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law

## Code of Ethics

You belong to this powerful organization of—and *for*—girls. The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law speak to the vision we all share for girls and inspire each of us to work on behalf of tomorrow’s leaders. The Girl Scout Promise and Law express the enduring ethical values and spiritual force of the Girl Scout Movement.

## Girl Scout Mission

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

Every opportunity in Girl Scouting—from every group meeting to field trips to earning badges—encourages girls to become courageous, self-confident, and people of character who take action to make a difference in the world. Just think of what can happen when:

- Girl Scout Ambassadors advocate for girls around the world to have the opportunity to learn to read?
- Seniors launch a region-wide art show or online exhibit to display artwork that depicts what GIRLtopia looks like to them?
- Cadettes *amaze* every middle school in the county—or in the country—with Peace Kits?
- Juniors use storytelling to share the Power of One, Team, and Community with everyone in their classrooms?
- Brownies spread the news about the three leadership keys they learned about on their Quest?
- Daisies introduce everyone in town to their flower friends—and what they stand for?

## Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God and my country,

To help people at all times,

And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

## Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,

friendly and helpful,

considerate and caring,

courageous and strong,

and responsible for what I say and do,

And to

respect myself and others,

respect authority,

use resources wisely,

make the world a better place,

and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

## Religious Beliefs and Spiritual Motivation

Girls are encouraged and helped through the Girl Scout program to become better members of their own religious group, but every Girl Scout group must recognize that religious instruction is the responsibility of parents and religious leaders.

Every Girl Scout group shall respect the varying religious opinions and practices of its membership in planning and conducting activities.

# Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How?

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

What all members share, whether girls or adults, are acceptance of the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues of \$12 (or purchase a lifetime membership for \$300).

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

## Inclusion

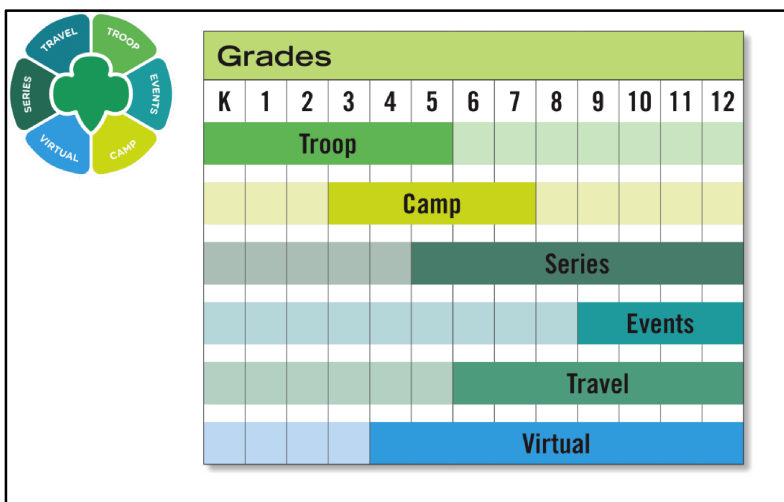
Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is inclusive. We respect, value, embrace and celebrate differences.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio welcomes girls from every ethnic, race, religious, and socioeconomic group, as well as those with mental and physical disabilities to participate in Girl Scouting.

## Flexible Ways to Participate

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

Girls can choose any one, all, or some of the options—camp, events, series, troop, travel, and virtual\*— within a single membership year. (\*Note that virtual is still in development.) have the option of partnering with girls throughout a membership year or committing to an opportunity for only a few weeks or months. Based on independent research and extensive surveys with thousands of council staff members from around the country, we have a good sense of which options will interest girls, based on their grade levels (see the chart at right).



# Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure

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

## National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), located in New York City, employs roughly 400 employees. (Visit [GSUSA online](#), where you'll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers.) GSUSA is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS).

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

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

## Your Council

Girl Scout councils are chartered by the national office to establish local responsibility for leadership, administration, and supervision of Girl Scout program, and to develop, manage, and maintain Girl Scouting in a geographic area. The national office provides support materials to all councils to ensure that the Girl Scout experience is nationally consistent.

## Your Support Team

A team of volunteers and staff 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. Never hesitate to contact them, because your support team is your expert in all things Girl Scouting. If you have questions about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, resources in the national program portfolio (leadership journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*), or selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products, go to your team for answers and ongoing support.

## Belonging to a Service Unit

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is divided into geographic sections known as service units. The service unit provides the setting within which the primary services of a council, such as organizing troops and providing direct services to girls and leaders, takes place.

Although not required, members of the service unit generally live within a service unit's boundaries. The needs of the members of the service unit determine the frequency, purpose and content of service unit meetings and other communication methods. Typical meeting activities include learning, planning, discussion of successes and challenges with girls, and circulation of information. All troops should strive to be represented at service unit meetings. In addition to service unit meetings, the council website ([www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org)) provides information on current council resources and program and training opportunities.

## Purpose of the Service Unit

The service unit is a dynamic support system that through diverse methods and the support of the local community provides the Girl Scout program to girls and adults. It is the embodiment of the Girl Scout movement within the local community. Within this role the service unit has the responsibility to:

Extend membership

Provide direct support to girls and adults

Educate the community about the benefits of Girl Scouting

Act as a communication center for Girl Scouts

## The Essential Functions of the Service Unit

The service unit fulfills its role by ensuring that:

- Messages and activities of the service unit reflect the Girl Scout mission and Council Goals.
- The service unit engages volunteers and the community in developing plans that meet their needs and interests through a variety of methods.
- An environment is created that cultivates a volunteer's personal alignment with the Girl Scout mission and goals. Volunteers will receive ongoing coaching and education that equip them to be successful in their role.
- Within each of the functions of the service unit supports will be consistent, flexible, and provide ease of access to the Girl Scout experience.
- Volunteers will receive ongoing coaching and education by designated paid staff that equips them to be successful in their role.

## Service Team Information

The volunteer service unit manager assumes the key administrative responsibility of Girl Scouting within the service unit. She/he works within policies, standards and procedures set by Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. The service team is a group of administrative volunteer staff appointed by paid staff and the volunteer service unit manager to support the delivery of services in the service unit. All appointments are for a one-year term; however based on the successful completion of the volunteer position those appointed may be eligible for reappointment. **All service team members are required to attend position training.**

*Insert Volunteer and Paid Staff Structure Chart and brief position descriptions.*

## DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

The democratic process has been part of the basic beliefs characterizing the Girl Scout movement since its inception. While this does not mean that every member of the council can vote on everything or make final decisions about policy, it does mean that members will be well informed about major issues affecting the council. The council's board of directors, which are elected by the voting members, makes the final decisions for the organization.

## COUNCIL

The "Council" is the corporation known as Girl Scouts of Western Ohio and is comprised of all girls ages 14 and up and all adults affiliated with Girl Scouts of Western Ohio and registered with Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

The purpose of the council is to further the development of the Girl Scout Movement in the United States; to establish local responsibility for leadership, administration, and supervision of the Girl Scout Movement; and to develop, manage, and maintain Girl Scouting in accordance with the terms of the council's charter.

## COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP

The members of the council shall be all active adult volunteers and all active girl members 14 years of age and older who are registered in the Girl Scout Movement through the council. An active adult volunteer is a member of Girl Scouts of the USA who has been appointed or elected, including board members, to serve in a specific volunteer position.

The voting members of the council shall be the members, determined as of the first day of the fiscal year in which a meeting is being held; The members shall comprise the majority of the voting members.

A delegate to the National Council shall be a voting member only for the term to which she or he has been elected as a delegate. Each voting member shall be entitled to one vote at meetings of the council, and no voting member may vote in more than one capacity at meetings of the council.

## COUNCIL RESPONSIBILITIES

In accordance with the procedures set forth in the Bylaws, the voting members of the council shall elect the officers of the council, the board of directors, the board development committee, and the delegates and alternate delegates to the National Council. Each voting member of Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is entitled to one vote.

## NATIONAL COUNCIL DELEGATES

National delegates whom the council is entitled to elect to the National Council shall be elected for a term of three years or until their successors are elected. Alternates may be asked to fill possible vacancies among the National Delegates to the National Council and are elected at the same time and in the same manner as the National Delegates to the National Council.

National Council Delegates influence policy by holding elections, amending the Constitution, establishing requirements for credentials, and determining the general lines of policy of the Girl Scout Movement. In addition, they consider and act upon proposals directed toward the fostering and improvement of Girl Scouting, receive and act upon reports of the National Board of Directors, and give guidance to the national Board upon general lines of direction of the Movement and program.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The board of directors is elected to ensure that the council continues to operate effectively over the long term. Specific responsibilities include policy-making, planning, review, funding, community relations and, assuring that the chief executive officer's performance is effective. The board must ensure that the council is operated in compliance with Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. charter requirements and state and federal laws.

The board governs with an emphasis on outward vision rather than internal focus, strategic leadership more than

administrative detail, clear distinction of board and CEO roles, collective rather than individual decisions, future rather than past or present, and proactivity rather than reactivity. On any issue, the board must ensure that all divergent views are considered in making decisions, yet must resolve into a single organizational position.

Go to <http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org/WhoWeAre/Board.htm> for a list of current board members.

## GIVING INPUT TO GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Volunteers have the opportunity and responsibility to provide input within the council's governance and management system. Our democratic values hold that members should have a voice in influencing major decisions. Individuals should be well informed on the council's mission, vision, and goals in order to identify and/or discuss issues and needs that exist, and to be able to give sound input to the governance and management of the council. Providing input and influencing decisions is not limited to voting. While this does not mean that every member of the council can vote on everything or make final decisions about policy, it does mean that members will be well informed about major issues affecting the council.

<p><b>GOVERNANCE IS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring the mission and values of Girl Scouting.</li> <li>Providing strategic direction and leadership for the council.</li> <li>The care, custody, and oversight of Girl Scouting within the council's jurisdiction.</li> <li>Governance is the responsibility of the board of directors.</li> </ul>	<p><b>MANAGEMENT IS:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The day-to-day management/ operations of the council.</li> <li>Developing and implementing systems and processes to carry out the strategic direction as set by the board.</li> <li>Management is the responsibility of the chief executive officer.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Girl Scouts of Western Ohio's governance process:</b></p> <p>Provides a structure for communication between the membership and the board of directors to influence policy regarding the council goals, issues affecting girls, and issues affecting the business of the organization.</p>	<p><b>Girl Scouts of Western Ohio's management process:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides a structure for communication between leaders/volunteer staff, administrative volunteers, and paid staff</li> <li>Provides a process for volunteer staff to support and give input to the day-to-day management and operations of our council as we work toward providing girls with a program that achieves our mission and goals.</li> <li>Includes several means by which volunteers can provide input to the management of the council.</li> </ul>

## CRITERIA FOR COMMUNICATION OF ISSUES

In a continuing effort to improve communication, the following criteria has been developed to be used by the membership in determining how to bring issues forward for discussion and/or action.

GOVERNANCE ISSUES	MANAGEMENT ISSUES
<p>A governance issue should reflect the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It impacts the Council Strategic Plan/Council Goals (for example, a request to strengthen the wording on the goal that addresses girls' understanding themselves and their values).</li> <li>It is a documented trend broadly affecting girls (for example, national and local data about increased bullying among girls).</li> <li>It can be positive, negative, or neutral.</li> <li>It significantly affects the business of the organization (for example, merging with another council).</li> <li>The board is the primary group responsible for identification of governance issues to be discussed. Such issues are generally related to the development or evaluation of progress</li> </ul>	<p>There are times when volunteers wish to give input, make a recommendation, or change an operating policy or procedure. This could include input on areas such as training curriculum, training policies, program opportunities, camp maintenance, or safety standards. Giving input on management issues includes the following considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What is the issue to be addressed? Why does it need to be addressed? What is the desired outcome? Will the issue affect the overall council – all girls? Is this a safety issue? Is it an issue that we have the authority to change?</li> <li>What methods are available for providing input? Vehicles for communication may include roundtable meetings, evaluations and surveys, voice mail, e-mail, council web</li> </ul>

toward the Council Goals/Council Strategic Plan.

A governance issue may be presented in written form at any time, or oral form through established forums at the Annual Meeting. Governance issues may not be addressed by phone.

At all times, bylaw requirements will be followed.

site, letter writing, and phone calls.

Who can best respond to the issue? For example, a training issue would first be addressed with the adult development manager; input for a camp issue would go to the program services manager; and service unit issues should be discussed with the service unit manager.

What type of response can I expect? If an issue is addressed by phone, a call back can be expected within 24 hours (excluding office closure dates). If the issue is addressed by written correspondence, you will receive a written response within seven working days.

If you believe that you have not been given an appropriate response, your issue or recommendation may be directed to the regional director.



# Getting Started with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience

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

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

1. **Check out the journey maps** at [www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys/maps](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/journeys/maps). These maps show you how all the fun and meaningful traditions of Girl Scouting fit right into any national leadership journey. There, you can also find information about the topics that each journey covers, which you can share with girls. And you'll find even more fun traditions to complement your journey in the forthcoming *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*, a resource for each grade level of Girl Scouting.
2. **Choose a journey.** Because Girl Scouting is girl-led, it's important to give girls the chance to pick the journey they want to do. Talk to them about what each journey for their grade level is about and let them choose one.
3. **Get to know the journey.** Pick up a girls' book and adult guide. Read the girls' book for the pleasure of it, just to get an overview of the journey's theme and content.
4. **Review the sample session plans in the adult guide.** These sample session plans give you ideas about how to bring the journey to life with girls, but leave plenty of room for creativity and customization.
5. **Invite girls (and their parents/guardians) to use their imaginations** to make the journey come to life in ways that excite them. Remember that you and the girls don't have to do everything exactly as laid out in the sample sessions.
6. **Step back and watch** how the girls, with your knowledge, support, and guidance, have enormous fun and a rewarding experience. Celebrate with them as they earn their national leadership journey awards—and perhaps some Girl Scout badges, too!

## Meeting with Girls for the First Time

When you first get together with girls (and this may also be a meeting with parents/guardians, or you may decide to hold a separate meeting for the adults), you'll likely want to accomplish some or all of the following, depending on how much time you have and on the grade level of the girls:

- **Get to know the girls, and give them a chance to get to know each other.** Ice-breaker games—in which girls share simple details about each other, or are charged with finding out about another girl with whom they are paired—are a simple way to start off your first meeting. Check your council resources or search the Internet on “ice-breakers for kids,” and a wide variety of options will open for you.
- **Introduce the journey books and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.** You can start with something as simple as asking the girls to raise hands or shout out what “leadership” means to them, and then compiling a list that you tie to the GSLE—especially the three keys (discover, connect, and take action). Or you can do something more complex, like having the girls create masks of the characters in their journey book, and each choosing a character to play for the evening. The journey adult guide gives you additional ideas for having conversations about the GSLE and journey books with girls and their parents/guardians.

- **Talk about the three processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) in a grade-level-appropriate way.** Consider dividing the girls into small groups or two-person teams to recall the activities they've led in the past, the times when they've learned by doing, and the ways in which they've learned cooperatively in groups. What was beneficial about those experiences? What was difficult about them?
- **Find out what interests the group, including other adult volunteers.** Do they want to dig deeper about the journey or a related theme? 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 or other barriers were no object. Build off the ideas shared, but also ask direct questions of the girls who seem shy or unsure about answering, so that no one is left out.
- **Talk about how they want to schedule their time together, starting with the draft schedule you bring.** (See the planning in a girl-led environment section below for more information about drafting a rough schedule for the year(s). Can they organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular 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 e-mail or social media? Can they invite a local guest speaker to answer specific questions or demonstrate particular skills? Which badges can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area? Are they interested in pursuing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards?

## Planning in a Girl-Led Environment

To start planning your time with girls, first draw up a simple calendar.

If your group will be meeting for less than a year (such as resident camp or a series), 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. Then consider the following questions:

- How many meetings will you have each month? 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? Can these also be tied to the journey theme? For more ideas, see the online [journey maps](#), and then choose the grade level of the girls you're working with.

Make sure to include all of these in your calendar as a starting point. Girls will fill in the details as they guide their own journey.

Once you've drafted a loose framework, it's time to ask the girls what they think. Remember: You want girls to lead, but younger girls will need more guidance, while older girls will require far less. Seniors and Ambassadors may not want you to draft any sort of calendar in advance, so if they balk at the work you've done, simply put it away and let them take the reins. Daisies and Brownies, on the other hand, may only be able to fill in a few ideas here and there, as you uncover their personalities and interests.

Before your group even opens a journey book, ask the girls what the journey and related theme mean to them. Maybe the theme ignites a discussion (or even debate!) that helps the girls chart their course for the year. In your discussions, probe to find out what the girls are most interested in accomplishing during their time together, and then help them connect those interests to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

# Using Safety Activity Checkpoints

When preparing for any activity with girls, always begin with the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints written about that particular activity, which you can find on your council's Web site.

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint includes the same format:

- Title of the checkpoint, a photo, and introductory text
- Information on where to do this activity and how to include girls with disabilities
- Basic and specialized gear required for the activity
- How you and the girls need to prepare yourselves in advance of the activity
- What specific steps to follow on the day of the activity
- Web links to help you and the girls learn more, plus ways to increase your know-how
- Activity-specific jargon
- 

In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can also e-mail 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 go through and check off that each step has been followed.

In keeping with the three processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, be sure that all activities are girl-led, taking into account the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities, while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.

Also give the girls the chance to learn cooperatively, by having girls teach each other new skills they may need for activities, rather than hearing all that from you. And let girls learn by doing: If research or special equipment is needed, they'll learn better 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. And 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, be sure to check with your council *before* making any definite plans with the girls in your group. 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 (driving or riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes is never allowed); take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable (Class V and higher watercraft trips are never allowed), or fly in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot-air balloons, and blimps (hang gliding, parachuting, and parasailing are never allowed).
- **Warning:** The following activities are never allowed for any girl: shooting a projectile at another person (such as paintball), potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing, and 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, riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes, and taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher whitewater.

# Chapter 1: Volunteer Support

## 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 partner directly with girls; an invitation to play a critical role in their lives; a chance to watch them blossom under your direction! You also want to be someone who enjoys the activities you'll be embarking on with the girls—whether you're a camp volunteer, working with girls who are traveling, or partnering with girls on a short-term series that interests you.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you serve as a partner and role model to girls. You'll also work closely with a co-volunteer, because two adults must be present at all times when working with girls, and at least one of those volunteers must be female and *not* related to the other adult. This is an important distinction that bears repeating: Men can serve as troop volunteers, but an adult female who is not related to the other volunteer must be present at all times, and at no time is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer. Remember to also check the adult-to-girl ratios in the "Safety-Wise" chapter.

## Your Responsibilities

Your responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- 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 e-mail, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, or 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 troop
- Overseeing any funds the girls raise with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl
- 
- Use *the Evaluating Your Skills* check list found on the council website to determine your strengths.

## Volunteer Management

Volunteer management is a system designed to create a welcoming and inclusive environment for diverse adults in which their needs and interests can be matched to specific Girl Scout volunteer positions. In addition, a volunteer development system values the contributions of each individual volunteer while helping her/him to realize the extent of her/his interests, skills, competencies, and knowledge. We recognize that by enriching our volunteers' experience in Girl Scouting, we enrich girls' experience. A consistent, efficient volunteer development system will strengthen our continuing efforts in making this happen.

## Components of Volunteer Management

The comprehensive Girl Scout volunteer management system ensures that you are matched with the right opportunities, are provided efficient and effective learning and support, and are recognized for the valuable service you provide on behalf of girls. Below are the eight components of this volunteer support system:

## Volunteer Position Descriptions

Girl Scout volunteers have widely varying schedules, interests and backgrounds. The volunteer work design must have clearly-defined options for positions that enable volunteers to use their time effectively to contribute to the Girl Scout mission.

## Volunteer Recruitment

Recruitment is the process of educating the public about the benefits of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and encouraging people to give their time and energy to the organization as volunteers. The volunteer is provided with basic information about Girl Scouting and instructions for completing the volunteer application and screening process.

## Placement: Screening, Selection, and Appointment Notification

Effective screening of prospective volunteers allows candidates to be matched with the position that best meets their skills, interests, and schedule. The screening process begins with the submission of a completed application, reference check, criminal background check, application assessment, volunteer placement decision and volunteer appointment notification. Position appointments are generally for one year or less.

## Training

Adult learning opportunities should provide all adult volunteers with consistent information about the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, with training for her/his specific volunteer position, using flexible and convenient adult learning opportunities including online learning.

## Volunteer Support, Management, and Coaching

It is the responsibility of the council to ensure that volunteers have access to a network of support and learning experiences that enable them to deliver the Girl Scout program with girls. This support is provided using a variety of methods including through administrative volunteers and paid staff, volunteer mentors and/or trainers, service unit activities, council electronic and written communication, and program or customer service tools.

## Recognition

Recognition is a form of appreciation for volunteer efforts. It includes providing annual formal recognition through council and service unit awards and annual recognition events, but equally important are daily support and informal expressions of appreciation.

## Volunteer Input

Volunteer feedback is solicited through input on plans, supports, and services provided within the service unit and throughout the council. Having the opportunity to participate in planning encourages greater ownership and ensures that the services provided are the most meaningful. Volunteers, parents, and girls also have the opportunity to "have voice" within the council through participation in service delivery and program evaluation.

## Evaluation and Re-Appointment

Volunteers have the opportunity to evaluate their performance through various troop or self assessment tools or through evaluation discussions with their manager. The decision to reappoint a volunteer is made after reviewing the volunteer's interests, skills, training, and performance. The decision is provided in writing and documented in volunteers file. Reappointments are generally for a one year period.

## Volunteer Position Descriptions

Each appointed volunteer position will have a written position description that defines the specific responsibilities, states period of appointment, and clarifies expectations. The position description is also used as a support and evaluation tool for volunteers. Go to the website to see a brief summary of all appointed volunteer position descriptions.

## Volunteer Recruitment

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio makes every effort to ensure the Girl Scout Movement continues to move forward; that all members have an equal opportunity to participate and to assure appropriate adult leadership is available for the girl members. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio focuses on recruiting and retaining membership that is reflective of the diversity of the communities it serves from a variety of sources and through different participation pathways.

## Diversity/Inclusion

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is inclusive. We respect, value, embrace, and celebrate differences.

## Equal Opportunity Volunteer Policy

Each volunteer is selected on the basis of ability to perform the volunteer position, volunteer and council need, ability and willingness to attend training, and qualifications for membership in the Girl Scout Movement. There shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer by reason of disability, age, race, color, ethnicity, sex, creed, national origin, religion, citizenship, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, socioeconomic status, or other characteristics protected by federal, state, or local law.

Upon placement, volunteers will be provided with information on training, volunteer support through the community and council.

## Volunteer Placement: Screening, Selection, Appointment

Effective screening of prospective volunteers allows candidates to be matched with the position that best meets their skills, interests, and schedule. The screening process begins with the submission of a completed application, reference check, criminal background check, application assessment, volunteer placement decision and volunteer appointment notification. Operational volunteers are appointed for a term not to exceed one year. Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet their needs, the needs of the community and the needs of the council.

In instances where appointment is not possible, the judgment of the council will take precedence. Individuals not placed in a position for which they applied may be considered for other positions at their request. The council reserves the right to decline appointment approval if information received through the screening process indicates qualifications are not suitable for the position.

## Appointment/Re-appointment Criteria:

- Girl Scout Membership Registration (\$12)
- Volunteer Application
- Two Positive References
- Approved Criminal Background Check
- Submission of a Troop/Group Financial Report and matching bank statement

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio requests this information from volunteers because of our dedication and commitment to the girls that we serve. The safety of the girls is of the utmost importance to our organization so we must take reasonable precautions when appointing adults who work directly with children. This information is confidential and for internal use only.

## **Required Trainings:**

Girl Scouts Fundamentals

Appropriate Grade-Level Leadership Essentials/Position Training

## **Appointment Process**

Volunteer discusses position with administrative volunteer staff or paid staff to determine if it is the best match

Volunteer submits an online Volunteer Application, including providing the names and contact information of four, non-related references

Criminal background check is submitted online at [www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org)

Volunteer application information is reviewed

Volunteer receives official notification of appointment (Welcome Letter) from the regional Girl Scout center that includes information about administrative volunteer support in their community.

Administrative volunteer or paid staff follow-up.

## **Reappointment Policy**

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio may reappoint a volunteer based on the successful completion of position accountabilities, established goals and meeting the overall criteria for appointment/ reappointment.

## **Reappointment Process**

Volunteers will participate in ongoing feedback with her/his manager throughout the appointment period based on agreed upon accountabilities and goals.

At the end of the appointment period, the volunteer and manager will evaluate together job performance, expectations and suggested changes to the position.

Should the volunteer meet the criteria for reappointment and desire to continue in her/his volunteer position she/he will receive written documentation of her reappointment.

Paid staff will evaluate position performance and reappoint administrative volunteers. Service unit managers will ensure evaluation of the troop leader. Once confirmation has been received from the field team manager, that the troop leader meets the criteria for reappointment, the volunteer will receive a letter notifying them of their reappointment.

The council reserves the right to decline to reappoint a volunteer if in judgment of the Director of Regional Services the volunteer is not suitable for the position.

## **Girl Scout Membership Registration**

All appointed volunteers must become Girl Scout members and agree to accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law. The registration fee for national dues is currently \$12 per participant. The \$12 registration fee covers membership in Girl Scouts of the USA for the year of October 1 through September 30. All membership fees received locally are transferred to Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. The membership fee provides national level program information, various mailings and secondary insurance coverage for the program year. Membership dues are not refundable or transferable to another person.

## Criminal Background Checks

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is committed to providing a safe and quality program for girls in the community as they participate in the program. In order to continue safeguarding all girls in our care, our council will conduct criminal background checks for all appointed volunteers.

The criminal background check is a component of Girl Scouts of Western Ohio's volunteer placement procedure. The background check conducted by IntelliCorp Records Inc., includes social security number verification, address verification, criminal record searches of convictions, arrests, court records, inmate records, and nationwide sex offender registries.

In accordance to FCRA (Federal Credit Reporting Agency) guidelines, the applicant must be provided with notification that the organization that has requested this action has received their results, if they are any criminal records found during the search. Our provider, IntelliCorp Records Inc., will send this notification directly to the applicant if this situation applies.

## Girl Scout Leadership Requirements

Adult volunteers in leadership positions must be at least 18 years of age. Each group must have at least one adult leader and one or more co-leaders. Because the female role model is essential to fulfilling the purpose of Girl Scouting, at least one member of the leadership team must be an adult female. During all troop meetings and related small-group activities, the leader, the co-leader or other responsible, approved, adult designated by the leader or Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is present, and at least one of these must be an adult female not related to the other adults.

## Volunteer Support, Management and Coaching Overview

Volunteers are provided with mentoring and coaching through a variety of flexible methods:

- Service Unit Orientation
- New Volunteer Mentor
- Training and Program Consultants
- Service Unit Buzz (Discussion) Groups
- Service Unit Team and paid staff support for problem solving
- Paid staff will provide coaching and support to service unit team members

## Training Policy

Volunteer learning is offered in Girl Scouting to support and enable adults to respond effectively to the needs of today's girls. It also supports the achievement of the Girl Scout Mission and Council Goals. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio has a training policy that affects all appointed volunteers. This policy ensures that volunteers know and understand the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and details of their volunteer role.

### Training Policy:

All appointed volunteers in Girl Scouts of Western Ohio are required to complete two required trainings for the position accepted within six months of appointment to meet eligibility requirements. It is highly recommended to complete training within the first three months of appointment.

Girl Scout Fundamentals



Position Training for the appropriate volunteer position (Grade Level Leadership Essentials for leaders, position training for service team volunteers, etc...)

The council will assume financial obligations as budgeted for the event, when a volunteer(s) is selected to represent the council at training seminars, conferences, or conventions beyond those routinely required.

#### Recommended Training Sequence

Gil Scouts of Western Ohio recommends the following training sequence to volunteers to best prepare for their work with girls.

- Girl Scout Fundamentals
- Position Training
- **First Aid & CPR Training**  
Troops are required to be accompanied by someone currently certified in First Aid and CPR for any activity that is physically demanding and other activities involving a potential for injury. A Girl Scout First Aider is any adult (18 years of age or older) who has taken Girl Scout –approved first-aid and CPR training.

A first-aider must be currently certified and maintain their certification as required by the sponsoring organization. The following individuals may serve as the first-aiders if they are currently in their license/certification: physicians, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic, emergency medical technician and dentists.

The following are organizations that provide First Aid and CPR courses:  
American Red Cross, American Safety and Health Institute, EMP America, National Safety Council, Stonehearth Open Learning Opportunity (SOLO) and American Heart Association.

## Troop Camp Training

Any time a troop goes camping, the troop must be accompanied by an adult who has completed the Troop Camp Training course (for lodge or tent camping) or Lodge Camp Training (for lodge camping only). The troop camp process should also be guided by a camp trained adult.

For a listing of both required and enrichment training opportunities, please go to the council website (or [click here](#))

## Your Support Team

In your role as a Girl Scout volunteer, you may team up with co-volunteer(s), parents/guardians, members of the community, council staff members, and others who have expressed interest in working alongside you.

Your support team may help by:

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

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

- When important milestones will happen (when Girl Scout Cookie sales will happen, when a troop will take field trips, when a travel group will make its trip, when an event will happen, what the starting and ending dates for a series or for camp will be) and how long the planning process will take
- When and where to meet as a group, 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, which 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.

## Volunteer Recognition

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio recognizes its volunteers as its most valuable asset. The purpose of recognition is to facilitate, acknowledge, credit or celebrate the achievements of volunteers. Awards are available to recognize an individual's contributions to Girl Scouts both from Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. and Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.

Although each region has its own formal recognition event and nominations process, all regions follow the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. adult recognition awards procedures. It is also encouraged that each service unit to implement a form of volunteer recognition, ensuring that both leaders, service team volunteers and administrative volunteers are appropriately thanked for their contribution to the organization.

(Provide links to Recognition Page)

### **Volunteer Appreciation Weeks**

Volunteer Appreciation Week—the third 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), 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.

Girl Scouts also celebrates Volunteers Make a Difference Week, in conjunction with Make a Difference Day, which is the weekend we set our clocks back in the fall.

## Volunteer Input

Girl Scouts is committed to involving volunteers in the council and service unit planning and improvement process. Volunteers have opportunities to provide feedback or input through a variety of sources including:

Evaluations and Surveys

Service Unit Planning

Direct Communication with service team members or paid staff

Use of council website or social media vehicles

## Volunteer Evaluation

Volunteers have the opportunity to evaluate their performance through self-assessment tools and/or discussions with their manager. The paid staff will provide coaching, tools, and resources as support for volunteer assessment. Service Unit Managers will ensure reappointment of qualified Girl Scout Leaders in part through discussion and self-evaluation by the Girl Scout Leader. Utilizing these various support methods is also considered part of the agreement for volunteer appointment/re-appointment. The decision to re-appoint is based on this assessment, volunteer interest, and a joint assessment of suitability for the position in the future.

The council reserves the right to decline to reappoint a volunteer if in the judgment of the Director of Regional Services the volunteer is not suitable for the position

## **Getting Feedback on a Job Well Done**

Serving as a Girl Scout volunteer affords you exceptional opportunities, both in the skills you'll gain and in the difference you'll make in the lives of girls. Everyone involved with Girl Scouts wants to ensure that you're effectively mentoring girls to become world-changing leaders, and your council staff helps you do that by measuring outcomes,

evaluating your performance, continuing to give you opportunities to build new skills, and recognizing you for the tremendous work you do.

We want you to have such an incredible time working with girls that you want to stay in Girl Scouting! So, after you complete your current role, your council staff will go through a reappointment process, in which you'll talk about the positive parts of your experience as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return in this position or try something new. During this process, council staff will also (of course!) want to lavish you with praise, rewards, recognition, and thanks for all the hard work you do!

# General Volunteer Personnel Policies and Procedures

## Guidelines for Appropriate Conduct

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio hopes that volunteer staff will act in an appropriate manner at all times while participating in a Girl Scout capacity. However, at times it is necessary to use corrective action in order to maintain a positive, safe environment for girls and to protect the assets of girls, Girl Scout groups and the council.

Objectionable or unsatisfactory conduct will not be permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination, depending on the severity of the violation. When possible, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio will work with the volunteer to establish actions to correct the situation. Serious violations may involve immediate suspension or release from the volunteer position.

Some types of serious offenses that can result in immediate suspension and/or termination include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Indecency of speech or action such as fighting, destruction of property, or willfully or repeatedly disregarding Girl Scouts of Western Ohio or Girl Scouts of the USA's policies or procedures.
- Dishonesty, including but not limited to, reporting such things as quality or quantity of production, falsification of time schedules, expense reports or any other council records.
- Possession or use of illegal drugs or other controlled substances.
- Possession of weapons or other dangerous objects on council premises or while performing council activities.
- The unauthorized possession or use of alcohol on council premises or while performing council activities or other use of alcohol that the council determines is inconsistent with its policies or otherwise inappropriate.
- Refusal to permit council management to examine any council property or personal property while on council premises.
- Failure to maintain proper quantity and quality standard of work performance.
- Theft, destruction or unauthorized use of troop, service unit or council property.
- Misuse or misconduct of Girl Scout funds (troop, service unit, product sale, etc.)
- Child abuse or failure to report suspected child abuse incidents immediately.
- Negligence or failure to maintain a safe **environment for girls.**

## Smoking

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is a smoke-free environment. The use of tobacco products where girls are present is not permitted.

There will be no smoking in any council buildings or vehicles; including all sites and vehicles, owned, leased and/or operated by Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. There will be designated smoking areas at all council properties.

## Alcohol and Drug Use

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is committed to maintaining an environment free from alcohol and drugs. The use of alcohol is not permitted on Girl Scout property, or at any Girl Scout function involving girls, except specific, pre-approved occasions.

Persons under the influence of controlled substances or alcohol, or in possession of same, are prohibited from participation in any Girl Scout activity or event.

## Problem Solving & Conflict Resolution

It is Girl Scouts of Western Ohio's policy to resolve volunteer conflicts in an equitable manner consistent with the council policies and practices. It is further the policy to encourage problem-solving by the parties most directly involved in a situation whenever possible.

When a disagreement arises, the volunteer is responsible for meeting with the parent, volunteer or staff member involved in the situation to resolve the problem.

- Start with a focus on how the situation affects the volunteers' work with girls.
- Each person states their concern and asks the other person if she/he understands the concern or has a different perspective.
- Both parties will try to reach an understanding of the other's perspective.
- Identify options for a middle ground.
- Discuss ideas for resolving the situation, so that both parties' needs are met.
- Agree on a solution.
- Set a time period for testing the solution and touch base at the end of that time to discuss effectiveness of solution.

If the volunteers are not able to reach a satisfactory solution, the following steps should be taken:

- Meet with the next level manager, often the service unit manager or program consultant to resolve the problem.
- If the problem is still not resolved, the service unit manager will involve the field team manager and/or other designated staff member.
- If the problem still remains, it will be discussed with the director of regional services or their designee.
- Issues that cannot be resolved at the regional level may be forwarded to the CEO or her designee for additional guidance. The decision of the CEO is final.

## Harassment

The council is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, and equitable treatment. It is the policy of the organization to provide all volunteers and paid staff with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment, including implied or expressed forms of sexual harassment.

It is against the organization's policies for any volunteer, male or female, to sexually harass another volunteer, or paid staff, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex.

Any volunteer, who feels that she/he has been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, council staff member, or any agent of the organization, should promptly report the incident to the staff member responsible for the volunteer's position appointment. Upon receiving such a complaint, this staff member must report the matter to the service delivery manager of the appropriate region. The service delivery manager will take appropriate measures to resolve or correct the situation in an expeditious manner.

### Volunteer Resignation & Release

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio or the volunteer may initiate the termination of appointment. A volunteer may be released from an appointed position because of the inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, including training and background check, failure to abide by GSUSA or Girl Scouts of Western Ohio policies or standards, misuse or mis-management of Girl Scout funds, or failure to accept and foster the mission and goals of the organization.

Volunteers may still be a registered member of Girl Scout of the United States of America regardless of voluntary resignation or council termination.

No individual who owes the council or a troop or group money may serve in any appointed position.

Volunteers must provide written or verbal notification of her/his resignation to a paid staff member. If a volunteer has been released by the council, the volunteer will be notified in writing.

## Chapter 2: Program—What Girls Do!

The Girl Scout program—that is, what girls do in Girl Scouting—offers incredible opportunities for girls to grow in their leadership skills, develop lifelong friendships, and earn awards along each step of their leadership journeys, no matter what their grade levels, experiences with Girl Scouting, or background.

The Girl Scout program is centered around the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), and the best way to deliver the GSLE to girls is through journeys—powerful, fun, and exciting books and awards that are the core of the Girl Scout program. Each journey offers opportunities to earn awards, and at the Junior grade level and above, girls then have an opportunity to earn the highest awards in Girl Scouting: the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. Of course, earning and collecting a variety of badges, patches, and pins is also an important Girl Scout tradition that lives on, because doing so encourages girls to learn and demonstrate important skills. A variety of badge activities allow girls to focus on particular interest areas, like financial literacy, healthy living, science and technology, and outdoors and the environment. And Girl Scout ceremonies and songs continue to link girls with not only with their Girl Scout peers today but also with the many Girl Scouts who came before them. This chapter shares details on each of these exciting elements of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

### The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

Today's effective leaders stress collaboration, inclusion, and a commitment to improving the world around them. Girls themselves tell us that a leader is defined not only by the qualities and skills she hones but also by how she uses those skills and qualities to make a difference in the world—to achieve transformational change! For this reason, the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)—the framework for defining *what* girls do in Girl Scouting, *how* they do it, and *who* will benefit that was borne out of years of research and development—engages girls in three key activities: discovering who they are and what they value; connecting with others; and taking action to make the world a better place.

### Three Keys to Leadership: The Activities Girls Do

In Girl Scouting, girls discover, connect, and take action as they become leaders. The entire Girl Scout program, regardless of the exact topic, is designed to lead to the 15 leadership outcomes (or benefits) that stem from these three keys.

#### Discover Key

Girls understand themselves and their values\* and use their knowledge and skills to explore the world\*. The benefits intended for girls from the discover key include:

- Developing a strong sense of self
- Developing positive values
- Gaining practical life skills and practicing healthy living
- Seeking challenges in the world
- Developing critical thinking skills

#### Connect Key

Girls care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally\*. Benefits for girls include:

- Developing healthy relationships
- Promoting cooperation and team-building
- Resolving conflicts
- Advancing diversity in a multicultural world
- Feeling connected to their local and global communities

#### Take Action Key

Girls act to make the world a better place\*. Benefits intended for girls include:

- Identifying community needs
- Working as resourceful problem-solvers

- Educating and inspiring others to act
- Advocating for themselves and others, at home and around the world
- Feeling empowered to make a difference

The most powerful component of the take action key is, not only do Girl Scouts themselves benefit as they grow in their leadership skills, but communities, the nation, and the world benefit as well. Taking action translates to making the world a better place.

## Council Goals:

Success in Girl Scouting is based on the achievement of the Council Goals. The greatest measure of success in Girl Scouting is the degree to which individual members benefit or demonstrate personal and social development toward the four Council Goals. The \* above note the four Council Goals.

## Girl Scout Processes: How Girls Go About Doing Those Activities

It's not just what girls do, but how they are engaged that creates a high-quality experience. All Girl Scout activities are designed to use three processes that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities. When used together, these processes (girl-led, learning-by-doing, and cooperative-learning) ensure the quality and promote the fun and friendship that's so integral to Girl Scouting. Below you'll find brief descriptions of each process. For more information, refer the Girl Scout Fundamentals and Girl Scout Grade Level training at [www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org).

### Activities Are Girl-Led

Girls of every grade level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why, and how they'll structure activities. As part of the adult-girl partnership fostered by Girl Scouts, you use this process to strengthen and support girls' empowerment and decision-making roles in activities. This **non-formal education** technique enables the learner to actively participate in directing her own learning. Your role is to provide grade-level-appropriate guidance while ensuring that girls lead as much as possible in the planning, organization, set-up, and evaluation of their activities. The older the girl, the more you step back and serve as a resource and support.

### Girls Learn by Doing

Girls use hands-on learning to engage in an ongoing cycle of action and reflection, deepening their understanding of concepts and mastering practical skills. As girls take part in meaningful activities—instead of simply watching them—and then later evaluate what they have learned, learning is far more meaningful, memorable, and long-lasting. You assist girls in this process by facilitating grade-level-appropriate experiences through which girls can learn, and also by leading discussions that reflect on those experiences. When girls learn by doing, they can better connect their experiences to their own lives, both in and out of Girl Scouting.

### Girls Engage in Cooperative Learning

Girls share knowledge, skills, and experiences in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation, working together on a common goal that engages each individual girl's diverse talents. In cooperative learning environments, people learn faster, process information more efficiently, and are better able to retain the information learned. This idea, also known as "positive interdependence," engages girls in meaningful ways, encourages and appreciates differences in outlook and skills, and creates a sense of belonging. In your role as a volunteer, you want to structure cooperative-learning activities that will nurture healthy, diverse relationships, and also give continuous feedback to girls on those learning experiences.

These three processes promote the fun and friendship that, for nearly 100 years, have been integral to Girl Scouting. But they do even more: When girls lead, when they learn by doing, and when they engage in cooperative learning, the 15 leadership outcomes (or benefits) discussed in the preceding section are far more likely to be understood and achieved. The key to achieving these results using the program processes is to ensure **progression** takes place as girls transition from one Girl Scout Grade Level to another. For example, Girl Scout Daisies will be guided by the adult leadership through the Learning by Doing process but when they become Girl Scout Seniors, they may be guiding themselves through that process or asking much deeper questions.



## Journeys

The best way to deliver the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is through leadership journeys. These powerful, fun, and multidisciplinary experiences, each spread over a set of gatherings, are the core of the Girl Scout program. Journeys immerse Girl Scouts in specific themes, which are detailed in each journey's resources: the girls' book and the adult guide. The adult guide for each journey also features sample session plans with enriching activities, discussions, and reflections for a group of girls, along with corresponding coaching tips. You can customize these sample session plans to fit the needs of your group, whether you guide a troop, volunteer at a Girl Scout camp, mentor girls on a travel adventure, or engage with girls in a series or at an event.

Leadership journeys ensure that every Girl Scout in every pathway receives a consistent, high-quality experience that engages girls in realizing specific leadership benefits. Each journey also offers opportunities to enjoy the longstanding traditions of Girl Scouting, from ceremonies and song to earning awards and related skill badges. Here are a few tips for enjoying a great journey with your group of girls:

- **Customize!** Your journey's adult guide offers step-by-step activities, discussions, ceremonies, and reflections. But no journey is meant to provide hard-and-fast, unchangeable, lockstep sessions. Along with the girls, make the most of resources in your region to add trips, activities, guest speakers, and the other special items to the journey. You'll find plenty of tips for doing so in your adult guide, and the journey will be so much more fun and relevant as girls make it their own!
- **Take your time or speed things up.** Sample sessions in the journeys have been created to show how it is possible to have a Girl Scout Leadership Experience in a set number of gatherings. Many girls and adults quickly find there is more they want to do, which is why your adult guide is filled with tips for how to stretch out the experience. As their imaginations take hold, girls will have many more ideas about how to extend the journey. Conversely, you and the girls may decide you want to complete a journey in only four or five group gatherings. Do whatever works for you and the girls.
- **Harness the power of stories.** All Girl Scout leadership journeys engage girls in stories—real and fictional—of girls and women taking action in the world. Make use of these stories and expand upon them whenever you can—in any way that you and girls will enjoy. Stories, after all, capture the imagination and motivate. Ultimately, girls will create their own stories on the journey, meeting new people and taking action in the world. What other stories are going on in your region, and how can girls connect to them?
- **Connect to the three keys.** As a volunteer in Girl Scouts, your experiences—and your view of leadership—will influence and inspire girls. Use the reflection exercises in the adult guide to think about the three keys to leadership (discover, connect, take action) and how you can best apply them as you team up with Girl Scouts on their leadership journey.

### It's Your World—Change It!

This journey series invites girls to develop a deep understanding of themselves, understand how powerfully they can act when they team with others who share a vision, and make a difference in their communities by inspiring, educating, and advocating. Grade-level journeys in this series are:

- Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden
- Brownie Quest
- *Agent of Change* (for Juniors)
- *aMAZE!* (for Cadettes)
- *GIRLtopia* (for Seniors)
- Your Voice Your World—The Power of Advocacy (for Ambassadors)

### It's Your Planet—Love It!

This journey series invites girls to make sense of the wealth of environmental information available so that they can act for the betterment of Earth and its inhabitants. In this series, girls tackle issues like conservation, pollution, and renewable and reusable resources—all while focusing on leadership development. Grade level journeys in this series are:

- Between Earth and Sky (for Daisies)
- WOW! Wonders of Water (for Brownies)
- *GET MOVING!* (for Juniors)

- *BREATHE* (for Cadettes)
- *SOW WHAT?* (for Seniors)
- *JUSTICE* (for Ambassadors)

## **It's Your Story—Tell It!**

This series of leadership journeys, made possible in part by a generous grant from Dove, is designed to strengthen a girl's sense of herself and boost her capacity to seek and meet challenges in the world—all by giving her the opportunity to hear, create, and tell stories in a range of creative mediums.

- 5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals! (for Daisies)
- A World of Girls (for Brownies):
- *aMUSE* (for Juniors)
- *MEdia* (for Cadettes)
- MISSION: SISTERHOOD! (for Seniors)
- BLISS: Live It! Give It! (for Ambassadors)
- 

For a description of each book for each grade level, check out the six following tables.

## Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden

Girl Scout Daisies meet Amazing Daisy and the Flower Friends to explore the fun and curiosity of making things grow. The result is a storybook world of flowers and little girls who, together, do great things. Girl Scout Daisies especially enjoy meeting the colorful, global characters of the Flower Friends, who teach them to live the Girl Scout Law.



## Between Earth and Sky

On this journey, Girl Scout Daisies join the Flower Friends for a cross-country trip in their special flower-powered car. As the Flower Friends travel the country living the values of the Girl Scout Law, Daisies join them in exploring the natural world, learning what's local and why that's important. Along the way, Daisies get to explore shapes in nature, learn the wisdom of women working to protect the planet, and gain an understanding of what it takes to protect the environment.



## 5 Flowers, 4 Stories, 3 Cheers for Animals!

As Daisies enjoy a fictional story about the Flower Friends, they learn just how much they can care for animals and for themselves—and just how confident that makes them feel.



Daisies

## Brownie Quest

What are the most important keys for a Girl Scout to own? This quest answers that question in a very special way. It has Girl Scout Brownies traveling along two colorful trails—one they can enjoy on their own and one they explore with their Girl Scout group. Along the Quest, Brownies meet three new friends and a bright and shining elf—in a brand-new Brownie story meant to inspire their own take-action projects.



## WOW! Wonders of Water

Girl Scout Brownies join the Brownie friends and Brownie Elf as they enjoy some wonder-filled adventures. As they dive in, the Brownies try out new ways of working as a team, learn about the water cycle, and enjoy making their own rainbows. As Brownies learn how precious water is, they can pledge to protect it and team up to advocate for water conservation.



## A World of Girls

In *A World of Girls*, Brownies have fun learning that stories contain clues and that they can use those clues to make the world better. *A flip book, A World of Girls* devotes one side to fictional stories that take the Brownie girl characters to diverse places in the world. The other side has the real-life Brownies exploring themselves and their world closer to home. Through the journey's many adventures, anecdotes, and activities, the Brownies follow through on clues and enjoy a fun and challenging Girl Scout experience that strengthens their confidence and gives them a chance to better the world.



Brownies

## Agent of Change

A fashion-savvy spider named Dez shows Juniors how they can combine their own power into team power and use it to spark community power. When Juniors learn how the “power of one,” “power of team,” and “power of community,” work together they not only make their own communities better but have impact around the globe.



## GET MOVING!

This journey invites Juniors to engage their minds and hearts as they explore the many forms, uses, and misuses of energy. From paper-making experiments to making beads from newspapers and magazines to forming a “perpetual human motion machine,” Juniors will find that *GET MOVING!* is crammed full of energizing stuff to make and do! *GET MOVING!* challenges girls to safeguard Earth’s precious energy resources by using their leadership skills—their ability to energize themselves and others, and their ability to investigate and innovate.



## aMUSE

In *aMUSE*, Juniors gain an understanding of just how limitless their potential can be as they fuse storytelling with the many roles—real and creative—that the world offers. They’ll have fun trying on roles and learning about people and the power of real-life action and leadership.



Juniors

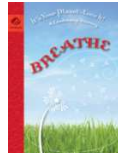
## aMAZE!

Life is a maze of relationships and this journey has Girl Scout Cadettes maneuvering through all its twists and turns to find true friendships, plenty of confidence, and maybe even peace. Girls can make “peacemaker kits,” learn about bullying behavior, and complete a take-action project that thrives on these relationship skills.



## BREATHE

Air is everywhere in *BREATHE*. And as Cadettes explore the air they’ll learn to assess air quality inside and out as they gain an aerial view of everything from cigarette smoking to noise to deforestation. Along the way, they’ll try some scientific experiments and meet scientists, engineers, writers, and artists—all of them working for Earth’s air. Above all, *BREATHE* inspires Cadettes to create “breathing room” to be leaders who use their flair to make a difference in the world.



## MEdia

Cadettes put the “me” in *MEdia* as this journey encourages them to explore the great, big multimedia world around them and then remake media to better match the reality they know. Along the way, Cadettes become aware of the value of media, its limitations and effect, and the power they have to lead and inspire others.



Cadettes

## GIRLtopia

Girl Scout Seniors know the world is not ideal. This journey is their chance to imagine a perfect world—for girls. Seniors are invited to create their vision—in any medium they choose. Then they'll take action to make their vision a reality. Leaders, after all, are visionaries! As Seniors learn to define the ideal environment, they learn a lot about their own values, attitudes, actions, and leadership.



## SOW WHAT?

In Sow What?, Seniors get the opportunity to ponder land use around the world (corn's a big issue!) and get down to the science and roots of complex and global food issues. Girls plan and conduct a local "food forage" to scope out their "food print" choices, and talk to scientists, local growers, and business owners—and even global hunger experts. Using what they learn, girls consider their "leader prints" as they decide who and what they can cultivate en route to a take-action project that positively impacts their food network. Along the way, Seniors take time to enjoy a "truly happy meal" together, experiment with new recipes, and try out being "locavores" who know how to savor local bounty.



## MISSION: SISTERHOOD

In *MISSION: SISTERHOOD*, Seniors harness the magic of stories to widen their networks and ignite the energy of sisterhood to create real change in the world. As Seniors expand their friendship borders, they boost their own confidence and make the most of their leadership skills.



Seniors

## Your Voice Your World—The Power of Advocacy

How often have you seen something that really needed to be changed and wondered, "Why isn't someone doing something about that?" This journey gives Girl Scout Ambassadors a way to be that someone—an advocate with the power to start the first flutter of real and lasting change. While creating their own "butterfly effect," they'll gain an array of skills—such as networking, planning, and learning to speak up for what they believe—that will benefit them as they prepare for life beyond high school.



## JUSTICE

Justice—for Earth and all its inhabitants—we all know what it is. Why is it so hard to achieve? Ambassadors realize that maybe justice needs a brand-new equation—their equation. By "doing the math" with even the simplest of acts, deciphering how decisions get made, and exploring how to use scientific evidence, Ambassadors create and then present their own unique equation for what justice asks of us. Along the way, Ambassadors find they are also networking and gathering ideas for college and careers. When they conclude this journey, Ambassadors may recognize themselves as the wise and healing leaders Earth yearns for!



## BLISS: Live It! Give It!

In *BLISS: Live It! Give It!*, Ambassadors dream big, now and for the future, and assist others in dreaming big, too. They explore their values, strengths, and passions as a way to open doors to wonderful, new adventures. Designed as a *flip book*, *Bliss: Live It! Give It!* inspires girls to pursue their dreams while *Bliss: Give It!* encourages girls to assist others in pursuing theirs.



Ambassadors

## The Girls Guide to Girl Scouting

In addition to the resources created for leadership journeys (the girl's book and the adult guide), girls at every grade-level have a *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. Through fun activities, girls can earn a variety of badges to build the skills and gain the confidence they'll use to change the world. They can even develop and complete activities to make their own badge—a great way to explore a topic of personal interest. (In addition, girls who make their own badge will learn *how* to learn, which is an important skill to have in school, on the job, and in life!)

### Inside a Girl's Guide

The *Girl's Guide* is a binder that's designed to keep everything organized. Using a binder allows for maximum flexibility: outdated badges can be removed, while new badges based on girls' changing interests or funded opportunities can be added. All badges are called National Proficiency Badges and are grouped in following categories: Legacy, Financial Literacy, Cookie Business, Skill-Building, and Make Your Own. (Daisies continue to earn Petals, as well as four new Leaves.)

For Daisies, the *Girl's Guide* includes:

- **Handbook:** The handbook offers information about Girl Scout traditions and history, as well as the requirements for bridging to Brownies.
- **Awards:** Daisies earn ten Petals, one for each line of the Girl Scout Law, so this section includes ten short stories starring the Flower Friends, plus related activities that help girls learn the Law. This section also includes a chart of all Girl Scout earned awards for that grade level, and a chart showing all badges for all grade levels. Here, Daisies can also find the requirements for four new awards that they can now earn in addition to their petals. These awards, called Leaves, focus on skills related to financial literacy and the cookie business.
- **My Girl Scouts:** Scrapbook and journal pages allow each girl to customize her binder and keep a record of her Girl Scout experiences. Daisies have coloring pages, stickers, and pages for photos, friends' autographs, and other mementos.

For Brownies through Ambassadors, the *Girl's Guide* includes:

- **Handbook:** The handbook includes Girl Scout history and traditions, a chart of all Girl Scout earned awards for that grade level, and a chart showing all badges for all grade levels. This section also includes a girl-friendly explanation of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, requirements for bridging to the next grade level and, at the appropriate grade level, the requirements for earning the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.
- **Badges:** This section includes badge requires for the Legacy, Financial Literacy, Cookie Business, Skill-Building, and Make Your Own badges. The requirements for Skill-Building Badges are sold separately, giving each girl the ability to customize her *Girl's Guide* by adding badges that interest her.
- **My Girl Scouts:** Scrapbook and journal pages allow each girl to customize her binder and keep a record of her Girl Scout experiences. In addition to pages for photos, friends' autographs, and other mementos at all levels, Brownies and Juniors also have sticker pages.

*The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* is designed to complement the journeys at each grade level. This means that each Skill-Building Badge Set (there are currently three; each is sold separately from the *Girl's Guide*) is tied to one of the three journeys (as you can see in the following chart). You'll find that doing a journey and the related badge set at the same time will make it easy to offer the entire National Program Portfolio—journeys and badges—in a seamless way.

# How the National Girl Scout Program Portfolio Works

## The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

- ▶ Handbook Section
  - ▶ My Girl Scouts Section
  - ▶ Awards Section
  - ▶ Legacy Badge: Topic Areas
    - Artist
    - The Girl Scout Way
    - Citizen
    - Cook
    - First Aid
    - Athlete
    - Naturalist
  - ▶ Financial Literacy Badges  
Girls can earn a different Financial Literacy Badge each year. (Daisies earn Financial Literacy "leaves.")
  - ▶ Cookie Business Badges  
Girls can earn a different Cookie Business Badge each year. (Daisies earn Cookie Business "leaves.")
  - ▶ Make Your Own
- PLUS**
- ▶ My Promise, My Faith Pin
  - ▶ Journey Summit Pin
- For Designated Levels**
- P.A., CIT, VIT
  - Bronze, Silver, Gold Awards

February 23rd, 2011

## National Leadership Journeys

"Leadership Awards" for Girls

**It's Your World—Change It!**

**It's Your Planet—Love it!**

**It's Your Story—Tell It!**

## Skill Building Badge Sets

Girls choose a set to add into their Girl's Guide and enjoy along their Journey!

▶ Skill-Building Badge Set: Topic Areas

- Performance
- Healthy Living
- Digital Arts
- Storytelling
- Science & Technology

▶ Skill-Building Badge Set: Topic Areas

- Outdoors
- Practical Life Skills
- Do It Yourself
- Craft
- Investigation

▶ Skill-Building Badge Set: Topic Areas

- Animals
- Manners
- Adventure
- Creative Play
- Innovation

- Brownies through Seniors will all have their own specific Badge in each of these topic areas.
- Initial Badge Sets—More can be added based on major funders or great ideas from girls or the field.

## Anatomy of a Badge

Each badge begins by stating the badge's **purpose**; that is, the skill girls will have learned when they've completed the badge. This program-with-a-purpose approach was tested with girls—and they loved it! Girls complete **five steps** to earn each badge. There are three choices for completing each step (girls have to choose only one to complete the step).

As you begin exploring the journeys and the badges, you'll see that many steps to earn a badge can be worked naturally into activities that girls are doing on their journey. To help you and the girls see some of these connections, each badge also includes a tip for tying the badge into a specific journey. Each badge ends with a few ideas about how girls can use their new skill to help others, plus a space for girls to jot down their own ideas. Although girls aren't required to help others to earn the badge; these ideas were offered to honor the standard that Juliette Gordon Low set for badge work 100 ago: "A badge is a symbol that you have done the thing it stands for often enough, thoroughly enough, and well enough to *be prepared* to give service in it."

# Anatomy of a Badge

**Five Steps:** Each badge has five steps. Girls complete all five to earn the badge.



**Purpose:** This opening statement tells girls what they'll be able to do once they've earned the badge.

From the Brownie Badge: Senses



**Three Choices:** There are three choices for completing each step. Girls only need to do ONE.

**Journey Tie-In:** Each badge includes a tip for tying the badge activities to a journey.



**Giving Service:** This closing statement offers three ideas about how a girl can use her new skill to give service, plus room for girls to write or draw their own ideas.

February 23rd, 2011

## Emblems and Patches

In addition to journey awards and badges in the *Girl's Guide*, girls can commemorate their Girl Scout adventures with emblems and patches, which can be worn on their vests or sashes.

- **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** are developed at the national or council level with a focus on participation. Some come with companion activity booklets, while others are given out at events. These are worn on the back of the sash or vest, since they are not emblems or earned awards.

You can purchase emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at your council's Girl Scout shop or by visiting the [GSUSA online shop](#). There, you not only find a cool list of the earned awards for each grade level but also can click on a link that shows you exactly *where* girls can place all their emblems, awards, badges pins, and patches on their vests and sashes!

Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award



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 Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This is why, to earn each of these awards, girls first complete a grade-level journey (two journeys for the Gold Award). 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 on a journey to develop and execute excellent projects for their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.

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.

All this, of course, starts with you—a Girl Scout volunteer! Encourage girls to go after Girl Scouting's highest awards—information is available [online](#). Visit [www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org) to learn more about your council's process.

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

### 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, 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 and remains today.

## Other Initiatives and Opportunities

Other exciting initiatives and opportunities exist to support the GSLE. A few examples are listed here, and you can find out how to engage your group in opportunities like these by contacting your local council or by visiting [www.girlscouts.org/program/program\\_opportunities](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/program_opportunities).

- **uniquely ME!** A joint venture between Girl Scouts and Dove/Unilever, this is the Girl Scout/Dove Self-Esteem Program, which helps girls discover the importance of challenging themselves, develop healthy coping skills, evaluate media influences, know what to look for in a friend, and find ways to make a difference in the lives of others. You can find more information about uniquely Me! at [www.gsusa.org](http://www.gsusa.org).
- **Religious Recognitions:** The Girl Scouts of the U.S.A has approved these religious recognitions and allows the recognition to be worn on the official uniform. Each religious organization develops and administers its own awards. Visit [www.praypub.org](http://www.praypub.org) for more information. The Girls Guide to Girl Scouting also features the My Promise, My Faith Pin at each Girl Scout grade level. For more information about religious recognitions, visit [www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org).

## Girl Scout Traditions: Pass it On!

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important, and are still practiced today. This section describes annual celebrations in the Girl Scout year, as well as other revered Girl Scout traditions.

## Girl Scout Calendar

Girl Scouts celebrate three special birthdays each year, which you're encouraged to include in your group planning.

- **February 22:** World Thinking Day (the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the originators of Boy Scouts and the Scouting Movement worldwide).
- **March 12:** The birthday of Girl Scouting in the USA. The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912. Note that Girl Scout Week begins the Sunday before March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sunday”) and extends through the Saturday following March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sabbath”).
- **Third week in 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).

## 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 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 journey, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create!

Girls use ceremonies for all sorts of reasons: to open or close meetings, give out awards, welcome new members, renew memberships, and honor special Girl Scout accomplishments. A brief list, in alphabetical order, follows, 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** ceremony honors 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 is usually held for a group or combined with the 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 Girl Scout Promise and Law) using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or adults, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, or Daisy Girl Scout pin at this time.
- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and adults to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

For more about ceremonies, visit [www.girlscouts.org/program/gs\\_central/ceremonies](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/ceremonies).

## Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

Over the course of 98 years, 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. Examples are listed in the following sections.

### 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 yourself, 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 in 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. To do the handshake, 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—teach this to girls during your first meeting! The sign is made by raising 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 lifting a chorus of voices on the Mall in Washington, D.C., Girl Scouts have always enjoyed the fun and fellowship that music creates. In fact, the first *Girl Scout Song Book*, a collection of songs put together by girl members, was published in 1925. Since then, the organization’s love of music has grown along with the girls it has empowered. Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or just share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to [http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs\\_central/activity\\_ideas/songleading.asp](http://www.girlscouts.org/program/gs_central/activity_ideas/songleading.asp). A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out your council’s shop by visiting [www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org) or visit the [GSUSA online shop](#).

## Chapter 3: Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll be working with girls of all backgrounds, behaviors, skills, and abilities. No matter what a girl's grade level or background, you have the opportunity to engage her in meaningful ways and 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 Space for Girl-Led Meetings

When to meet is at your and your co-volunteers' discretion: It may just be one time for this particular group of girls. Or, if you meet regularly, what day and times work best for the girls, for you, for your co-volunteer(s), and for other adults who will be presenting or mentoring? Once per week, twice a month, or 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? If so, which day of the week? At what time?

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.

Perhaps the following tips go without saying, but in case you're looking for some guidance on choosing a space, consider the following:

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

If this is your first time asking for a Girl Scout meeting place, here are a few speaking points to get you started: "I'm a Girl Scout volunteer, with a group of \_\_\_\_\_ girls. We're doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. We're all about leadership—the kind that girls use in their daily lives and the kind that makes our community better. We'd love to hold our meetings here because \_\_\_\_\_."

### Understanding Healthy Development in Girls

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

As you listen and learn along with girls, you may find it useful to review the highlights of their development. What follows are the developmental abilities and needs of girls at various grade levels. You'll also find these listed in the adult guide of each leadership journey, along with tips for how to make the most of them as you guide and partner with girls. Of course, each girl is an individual, so these are only guidelines that help you get to know the girls.

### Creating a Safe Environment

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, therefore, is 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. Refer to the Leadership Essentials for more information about setting of a safe environment with girls.

## Working with Parents and Guardians

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

### 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

A parent/guardian meeting is a chance for you to get to know the families of the girls in your group. It's a good idea to have a parent meeting at the beginning of the year or when planning large trips or group projects. Before the meeting, be sure you and/or your co-volunteers have done the following:

- For younger girls, arranged for a parent, another volunteer, or a group of older girls to do activities with the girls in your group while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too).
- Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law; benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters, including how the GSLE is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have; expectations for girls and their parents/guardians; and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters' Girl Scout experiences.
- Determined when product sales (including Girl Scout Cookie sales) will happen in your council; parents/guardians will absolutely want to know!
- Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting.
- Created a one-page information sheet (your contact information, contact information of 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 books 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!

### Registering the Girls in Girl Scouting

Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). GSUSA membership dues are valid for one year. Membership dues (currently \$12) 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 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.

## Implementing Your Parent Meeting

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

- As the girls and adults arrive, ask them to sign in. Hand out registration forms and any other paperwork, including a one-page information sheet.
- 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 usual meeting place and the importance of completing and returning it as indicated
- How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (e-mail, text messaging, a phone tree, fliers the girls take home, posting on an invitation-only group you create on Facebook are just some ideas)
- The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law
- The Girl Scout program, especially what the GSLE is and what the program does for their daughters
- When Girl Scout Cookies (and other products) will go on sale and how participation in product sales teaches life skills and helps fund group activities
- The cost of membership, which includes annual GSUSA dues, any group payments (ask your local council), optional uniforms, and any resources parents/guardians will need to buy (such as a journey book)
- The availability of financial assistance and how the Girl Scout Cookie sale and other product sales generate funds for the group treasury and create a unique learning opportunity for girls.
- Family Partnership Campaign-That families can also make donations to the council that support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- That you may be looking for additional volunteers, and in which areas you are looking (be as specific as possible!)
- Collect the completed registration forms.
- Remind the group of the next meeting 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 e-mail, 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.

## Reengaging Girls

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

- Some girls may want other options besides troops. That's okay—Girl Scouts offers many ways to participate. Talk to girls about day and resident camp, travel opportunities, series offerings, and events your council may offer. Older girls, especially, enjoy these shorter-term, flexible ways to be Girl Scouts.
- Some girls will be excited to bridge to the next grade-level in Girl Scouting, and will look to you for guidance on how to hold a bridging ceremony. Even if you're not sure of your continued participation with Girl Scouts, be sure to capture their excitement and work with them as a plan a meaningful bridging ceremony.
- Talk to girls about earning their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards, which are opportunities for them to make a dramatic difference in their communities...and to have plenty to brag about with college admissions officers, too!
- And what about you? If you want to stay with this troop, start working with them to plan their group activities next year. And if you're a little worn out but are interested in staying with Girl Scouts in other, flexible ways, be sure to let your council know how you'd like to be a part of girls' lives in the future. Are you ready to volunteer at camp? Help organize a series or event? Take a trip? The possibilities are endless.

## Chapter 4: Safety-Wise

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

### Knowing Your Responsibilities

You, the parents/guardians of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. The next three sections flesh out who's responsible for what.

### Responsibilities of the Volunteer: Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

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

- **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.
- **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, 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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls' families.
- **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
- **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.



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

## 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, involve overnight travel, involve the use of special equipment, and/or cover 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 the parent or guardian will drop off or pick up the 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.
- Be aware of appropriate behavior expected of their daughters, as determined by the council and you.
- Assist volunteers if their daughters have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.

## Responsibilities of Girls

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

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

## Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scouts adult-to-girl ratios show the *minimum* number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. 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	
	<b>Two</b> unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus <b>one</b> additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:	<b>Two</b> unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus <b>one</b> additional adult for each additional number of this many girls:

Girl Scout Daisies (K–grade 1)	12	6	6	4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)	20	8	12	6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)	25	10	16	8
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)	25	12	20	10
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)	30	15	24	12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)	30	15	24	12

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

In addition to the adult-to-girl ratio chart, 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).

## Health Histories (Including Examinations and Immunizations)

Health histories must be complete or updated annually. Troop leaders are responsible for maintaining these records throughout the year and should always have health histories with them when working with girls. This includes meetings, trips, etc. Please keep in mind that information from a health examination is confidential and may be shared only with people who must know this information (such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian, and a health practitioner). **HIPPA laws require that confidentiality be maintained at all times.**

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 also be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have.

- **Medication**, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's custodial parent or guardian. (Your council can provide this form.) Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen, or diabetes medication.
- **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! Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with their parents/guardians is always a good idea.
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## Knowing Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Guidelines and Policies

### Behavior Management Guidelines

The Girl Scout philosophy of behavior management builds on a child's need to develop a sense of self-worth. In order to promote this, the program has been carefully planned to foster positive behavior. To accomplish this:

Children are involved in rule setting and help determine the consequences of misbehavior. Whenever possible, the site and activities are set up to promote positive interaction among children. Volunteers encourage children to learn how to solve problems and settle differences among themselves. All disciplinary efforts are based on this philosophy. When a child's behavior creates a risk for the emotional or physical health and safety of another child or a volunteer, the following procedures shall be followed: The child is separated from the problem activity or situation.

A volunteer listens to the child and discusses the consequences of further misbehavior. Repeated misbehavior will be handled by a telephone conversation or conference with the child's parents/guardians.

The parent, child and a volunteer agree to a plan that will improve behavior or face the possibility of termination from the program.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio will assist in the proper handling of behavior management if it can not be resolved through the actions taken above. It is our goal to ensure all girls have the opportunity to participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

## Physical Guidelines

When touching a child for any reason, ensure that another adult is in clear view. Under no circumstances may an adult hit a child. When touching children, contact should generally be limited to the hand, shoulder, or upper back. Children should never be touched in a place normally covered by a bathing suit, unless for a clear medical necessity, and then only in the presence of another adult.

A hug should be given only in response to a request by a child or after asking permission. (For example, "You look like you could use a hug. Would you like one?")

An adult should never touch a child against her or his will, unless in the case of clear and present danger to the child. An adult should never touch a child against her or his discomfort, whether expressed verbally or non verbally.

The physical right to privacy of a child should be respected to the greatest extent possible, especially in activities and situations such as sleeping, changing of clothing, showering/bathing, and other bathroom activities

## Verbal Guidelines

Adults may not use abusive or derogatory language with a child. Adults should exercise good judgment in choosing the topics and language used with children. Under no circumstances, should the romantic/sexual life of an adult be shared with children. When an activity is planned on a topic of a sensitive or controversial nature, parents and the council paid staff are informed and (written) permission is received before proceeding.

## Corporal Punishment Statement

Girl Scouting meets the mental health and educational needs of girls. Under no circumstances may an adult hit a child or cause a child physical discomfort as a form of discipline. It is completely impermissible to use any form of corporal punishment when acting in one's capacity as a Girl Scout volunteer or paid staff member. Research indicates that a variety of positive and effective alternatives are available to maintain discipline, and that children can learn appropriate problem-solving behavior when provided with the necessary models.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio provides training for all Girl Scout volunteer and paid staff members to learn the techniques for providing positive discipline measures for all children in their care.

## Girl Release to Authorized Person

Girl Scout leaders and their designees shall release girls only to persons authorized by the parent or guardian. The troop/group leaders or co-leader will maintain the Girl Scout release information and will update information annually.

## Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Risk Management

Some activities can carry a greater risk than others which create a greater potential for serious injury to the participant. Therefore, it is important that these activities be conducted with companies or organizations that offer such activities in a safe manner. Horseback riding, hayrides, and canoeing are examples of hazardous activities with the potential for serious injury to the participants.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio will only do business with those organizations that operate within government and Girl Scout safety guidelines and that carry insurance to protect themselves for the legal liability of their operations. Coverage provided by the program provider must be the primary payer in the event of a loss.

### Contracts and Agreements

In order to protect the legal and safety interests of girls, volunteers and the council, written agreements contracts etc. may only be signed by the director of regional services or other designated paid staff members.

### Hold Harmless Agreements

If a program provider or other organization requires the signing of a Hold Harmless Agreement, a copy of it will be requested and reviewed by one or more of the following: program services manager, director of regional services, or director of program services.

### Fire Arms

No person will use or possess firearms or fireworks on council-owned or operated properties (including vehicles) while involved in Girl Scout related activities, except law enforcement officers acting in an official capacity.

Although the Girl Scouts of Western Ohio respects individual's right to carry a concealed weapon pursuant to Ohio's Carry and Conceal Law, it is the policy of the council that no member, participant, guest, or any other individual shall have the right to carry, conceal, or possess any gun, knife, or any other kind of weaponry while involved in or present at any Girl Scout activity.

### Communicable Diseases

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is committed to providing a safe, secure, environment in which girls and adults can interact. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is further committed to protecting the girl or adult suffering from chronic illness or communicable disease, as well as protecting the other girls with whom they interact.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio shall not restrict services to those with communicable diseases unless specifically recommended by the county health department or the individual displays behavior that puts others at risk.

### Head Lice

Head lice are one health and safety issue that is more prominent in the spring and summer. Head lice are tiny insects that live on the heads of humans; they are hard to see, lay eggs (called nits) and feed on human blood. Head Lice **CAN** transfer from one person to another. Because of that, any girl or adult with head lice **SHOULD NOT** attend any Girl Scout events until the issue has been resolved.

#### Prevention:

In order to prevent the transferring of head lice; teach your troop that they should not share items such as:

- Hair brushes and combs
- Hair clips and hair bands
- Hats and clothes
- Pillows

## Screening and Treatment:

If lice are present in the school district, troop leaders may want to conduct head checks before troop trips and overnights. Leaders can also work with parents to educate them on how to screen for lice before sending their girls to a Girl Scout activity. If leaders or other troop volunteers are doing the screening they should screen all girls. Please assure privacy on the issue making sure to, above all else, the girls' health and wellbeing are being protected. Visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) for more information about lice screening and treatment.

## Action Steps if Lice Are Found

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio uses the same broad standards that school districts use when girls attend Girl Scout events or activities including:

- If a girl has active lice, they will be sent home and treated before returning to the troop meeting.
- If a girl has nits only, the child is allowed to stay for the remainder of the troop meeting but the girls must be treated for lice and lice free before attending another session.
- During overnight events, girls will be sent home with nits and eggs and cannot return until treated.

## Parent Notification

All parents of girls in the troop should receive notification letting them know that nits or lice were found on a member of the troop and action taken by the troop leader. Care should be taken not to single out any girl.

Parents of girls found carrying lice or nits should be notified about what was found and recommended action. Refer parents to the CDC or other local health department for support. They should also be notified that if nits or lice are found at the next troop meeting, their daughter will be sent home.

## Sleeping Arrangements

On trips where male volunteers are part of the group, it is not appropriate for them to sleep in the same space as girl members. Men may participate only if separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms are available for their use. In some circumstances, such as a museum or mall overnight with hundreds of girls, this type of accommodation may not be possible. If this is the case, men do not supervise girls in sleeping area of the event, and the adult-volunteer-to-girl ratio is adjusted accordingly. Always avoid having men sleep in the same area as girls and women, but during family or parent-daughter overnights, on family unit may sleep in the same quarters in program areas.

Always ensure the following:

Each participant has her own bed. Parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed.

Girls and adults do not share a bed.

It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area (tent, cabin, or designated area) with the girls, but if an adult female does share the sleeping area, there should always be two unrelated adult females present.

## Council Right to Search

The council reserves the right to:

Search any person, vehicle or object that enters or leaves council property.

Search anything on council property including lockers, desks, purses, briefcases, baggage, lunch sacks, clothing, and any other item in which firearms, weapons, illegal drugs, and alcohol have the potential to be hidden.

Search company vehicles owned or leased by the council.

## Child Abuse

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio expects all staff (volunteer and paid) to adhere to the following standards regarding reporting suspected child abuse and conduct when in contact with girls.

Paid and volunteer staff members are expected to recognize the signs and symptoms of child abuse or neglect and report incidents immediately to the local county children's agency. Once an incident has been reported to the appropriate agency, it is the staff member's responsibility to also inform his/her manager.

Paid and volunteer staff members are prohibited from harassing or threatening harm to a child's health or well-being which occurs through sexual abuse or exploitation, non-accidental physical touching, mental harassment, injury or maltreatment in any form.

## Guidelines for Reporting Child Abuse and Neglect

### Definitions

**What is child abuse?** Non-accidental injuries by a parent, caretaker or other adult (often by an adult known to the child) which cause or create substantial risk of harm to the child.

**Physical abuse:** abuse represents an act against the child; health or safety is at risk.

**Sexual abuse:** any act of a sexual nature upon or with a child, which may be for the sexual gratification of the perpetrator or a third party.

**Emotional abuse:** chronic attitude or acts that interfere with psychological or social development of a child.

**What is neglect?** Failure to provide basic needs (physical care/supervision, safety, education, love) which places the child in a dangerous situation and which usually occurs over a period of time.

### Physical Abuse

**Appearance:** bruises, welts, lacerations and abrasions; clustered marks, burns; skeletal injuries; head injuries. (Consider the number, location and stages of healing, or an explanation not consistent with injury.)

**Behavior:** fearful of physical contact; poor relationships; reports injury by parents or caretaker.

### Sexual Abuse

**Appearance:** usually there is no outward sign; may have torn, stained or bloody underclothing; sexually transmitted diseases; pregnancy.

**Behavior:** child relates incidents of touching or other behavior that makes the child feel embarrassed, confused or unsafe; behaves in an abnormally seductive manner with friends or adults; fire-setting; abuse to animals; bedwetting; nightmares; poor peer relationships; eating disorders; fear or reluctance towards a caretaker, family member or friend; difficulty walking or sitting.

### Emotional Abuse

**Appearance:** few visible clues; obesity or anorexia; hives; rashes.

**Behavior:** bed-wetting; poor peer relations/withdrawal; cruel behavior; fire setting; substance abuse; excessive risk taking; behavioral extremes.

### Neglect

**Appearance:** chronic uncleanliness or poor hygiene (lice, scabies); body odor; squinting; unsuitable clothing or missing key articles of clothing; untreated injury; left alone.

**Behavior:** excessive sleepiness; begging; stealing or delinquency; chronic hunger; substance abuse; assumes role of parent, reports no caretaker in home; excessive school tardiness or absence.

## Action By Volunteer Leader or Paid Staff

You are required to report any suspicion of abuse or neglect of any child under 18 years of age, or any physically or mentally handicapped child under 21.

Physical proof or other forms of validation are not required. It is the responsibility of the local (county) children's services agency, through its investigation, to determine if abuse or neglect is in fact occurring.

What if I am unsure?

If (as a volunteer or paid staff member) you are unsure, contact the local children's services agency to describe the situation.

## How do I report?

Reports can be made by telephone or in person, and the individual making the report can do so anonymously. Any report is confidential. A report can be made immediately by telephone to the local children's services intake phone numbers for the 32 counties served by Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.

## What information should I give?

Reports should include:

- The names and addresses of the child and her/his parents/guardians or person(s) having custody of such child, if known.
- The child's age and the nature and extent of the child's injuries, abuse or neglect, including any evidence of previous injuries, abuse or neglect.
- Other information that might help in establishing the cause of the injury, abuse or neglect.
- Record the name of the intake worker who takes the report and note the date that the report is made.

Is this confidential?

Yes. Do not share this information with anyone other than the local children's services agency, your manager, or regional director of your region within Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Inc. or her designate.

What happens next?

Any volunteer or paid staff member participating in good faith in the making of the report, or any volunteer leader or paid staff participating in a judicial proceeding resulting from the report, by statute is immune from civil or criminal liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed as a result of such actions. Any report made under this section of the statute is confidential, and any volunteer or paid staff member who permits or encourages the unauthorized dissemination of the report's contents is guilty of a misdemeanor in the fourth degree.

Does someone at the Girl Scout Center need to know?

Although reports may be made anonymously, immediately advise Girl Scouts of Western Ohio of any reports of suspected abuse or neglect involving either adults or youth in Girl Scouting made to the local children's services agency intake office by using the following procedure:

Providing a written report to the director of regional services or her designate no later than 24 hours after making a report to the local children's services.

This report should include your name, address and telephone number (as the person who made the report to the local children's services agency), the date of the report, and to whom the report was made at children's services.

Action by the local children's services agency:

The local (county) children's services agency will make a decision regarding the need for immediate investigation of each report referred to it and determines the circumstances surrounding the injury, abuse or neglect, the cause thereof and the person or persons responsible.

#### LEGAL REFERENCE:

O.R.C. 2151.421 and I.C. 31-6-4-3(a)(1) through 31-6-4-3(a)(5)

#### Children's Services Intake Phone Numbers

##### Ohio Counties

Allen County 419-227-8590	419-227-8590
Auglaize County 419-738-4311	419-738-4311
Brown County 937-378-6104	937-378-6104
Butler County 513-868-0888	513-868-0888
Clark County 937-327-1700	937-327-1700
Clermont County 513-732-7173	513-732-7173
Clinton County 937-382-5935	937-382-5935
Darke County 937-548-3840	937-548-3840
Defiance County 419-782-3881	419-782-3881
Fulton County 419-337-0010	419-337-0010
Greene County 937-562-6600	937-562-6600
Hamilton County 513-241-KIDS (5437)	
Hancock County 419-424-7022	419-424-7022
Hardin County 419-673-1101	419-673-1101
Henry County 419-592-0946	419-592-0946
Logan County 937-599-7290	937-599-7290
Lucas County 419-213-3200	419-213-3200
Mercer County 419-586-5106	419-586-5106
Miami County 937-335-4103	937-335-4103
Montgomery County 937-276-1698	937-276-1698
Ottawa County 419-898-3688	419-898-3688

Preble County 937-456-1135	937-456-1135
Paulding County 419-399-3756	419-399-3756
Putnam County 419-523-3893	419-523-3893
Shelby County 937-498-7213	937-498-7213
Van Wert County 419-228-5430	419-228-5430
Warren County 513-925-1600	513-925-1600
Williams County 419-636-6725	419-636-6725
Wood County 419-352-7566	419-352-7566

##### Indiana Counties

State-wide toll-free number 1-800-800-5556 1-800-800-5556

Dearborn County 812-537-5131	812-537-5131
Ohio County 1-800-800-5556	1-800-800-5556

Parent Resource Line 1- 800-244-5373 1- 800-244-5373

## Protection from Sex Offenders

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio seeks to provide girls with a safe environment in which they can learn and grow. In keeping with this standard, the following guidelines have been established to help protect girls from the threat of sexual predators.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio property (camps and service centers) will be monitored for the presence of registered sexual predators on a regular basis. If a sexual predator (who meets the guidelines described below) is identified within a one mile radius of the property, all campers / facility users will be notified in writing and provided with a "Girl Safety Sheet" and a sample parent notification letter.

All Girl Scout volunteers are encouraged to:

Provide girls with information and activities that will prepare them to "stay safe."

- Use the Sexual Offender Registries to monitor the potential presence of sexual offenders near their troop/group meeting sites and to notify parents should a sexual predator be identified within one mile of the meeting site.

## Guidelines for Monitoring Sexual Offenders

### Ohio Legal Guidelines and Classifications of Sexually Oriented Offenses:

The state of Ohio has classified sexual offenders into 3 tiers. Each tier includes potentially serious sexual offenses but the Tier II and Tier III offenses increase in seriousness, including reflecting convictions for other sexual offenses and/or violent crimes. Only Tier II and Tier III offenders are subject to community notification, although all three tiers of sex offenders are listed on the sex offender registry.



(Based on Ohio Revised Code 2950.01 <http://codes.Ohio.gov/orc/2950.01>)

### Ohio Notification Guidelines

The Girl Scouts of Western Ohio follow state of Ohio guidelines for the type of information that a youth serving agency may share with parents or the organization's staff and volunteers. This specifically includes notifying parents and volunteers, "that they have received notice that a person subject to community notification is residing, employed, or attending a school or institution of higher education within the specified geographical notification area and that certain information concerning the registrant is a public record and is open to inspection...at the office of the sheriff with whom the registrant has registered, and on the state and local internet databases established by the attorney general..."

(Based on Ohio Administrative Code 109:5-2-04 <http://codes.ohio.gov/oac/109%3A5-2-04>)

## Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Monitoring and Notification Guidelines

### Council Properties

Monitoring – Girl Scouts of Western Ohio property (camps and service centers) will be monitored for the presence of registered sexual offenders on a regular basis.

If a sexual offender is identified within a one mile radius of the property, the following procedure will be implemented:

The local sheriff's department will be contacted to verify the registration and collect information to better assess the risk to Girl Scouts. Based on the specific crime and the recommendation of the county sheriff, a decision will be made on notification.

If there is a recommendation to notify volunteers and/or parents, they will be notified in writing and provided with all available information on the registered sexual offender, along with a "Girl Safety Sheet" and sample parent notification letter, which can be found on the council website.

A copy of the notification letter will be posted at a designated site at affected council properties.

### Troop/Group Meeting Sites

Troop leaders are encouraged to use the Sexual Offender Registry to monitor the potential presence of sexual offenders near their troop/group meeting sites. Should a sexual offender be identified within one mile of the meeting site, please contact the county sheriff, following steps a and b above.

If a parent letter is sent out, a copy of the letter should also be sent to the Girl Scout of Western Ohio to your regional office, ATTN: Service Delivery Manager.

### Prevention

All Girl Scout volunteers are encouraged to provide girls with information and activities that will prepare them to "stay safe." This includes:

Following *Safety-Wise* guidelines such as maintaining proper adult ratios, ensuring that girls stay with their buddies and monitoring where girls are at all times.

Review safety lessons with girls such as what girls should do if they are approached by a stranger. (See the *Girl Scout Brownie Handbook*, pg. 62-65 or the *Girl Scout Junior Handbook*, pg. 92-93).

Distributing and discussing the "Girl Safety Sheet", which can be found on the council website.

### Sex Offender Registry

The registry is available on-line. The website information is listed below. If you do not have access to a computer, you can call the county sheriff office for more information.

### Website E-Mail Alert?

#### Ohio Counties

Allen County [www.acso-oh.us](http://www.acso-oh.us) YES  
Auglaize County [www.auglaizecounty.org](http://www.auglaizecounty.org)  
Brown County <http://www.esorn.ag.state.oh.us> NO  
Butler County <http://butlersheriff.org> NO  
Champaign County [www.countysheriff.tripod.com](http://www.countysheriff.tripod.com) NO  
Clark County [www.clarkcountysheriff.com](http://www.clarkcountysheriff.com) YES  
Clermont County <http://clermontsheriff.org> YES  
Clinton County [www.clintonsheriff.com](http://www.clintonsheriff.com) YES  
Darke County [www.darkecountysheriff.org](http://www.darkecountysheriff.org) YES  
Defiance County [www.defiance-county.com/dcso](http://www.defiance-county.com/dcso) YES  
Fulton County [www.fultoncountyoh.com/fcso](http://www.fultoncountyoh.com/fcso) YES  
Greene County [www.co.greene.oh.us/sheriff](http://www.co.greene.oh.us/sheriff) YES  
Hancock County [www.hancocksheriff.org](http://www.hancocksheriff.org) YES  
Hardin County [www.hardinsheriff.com](http://www.hardinsheriff.com) YES  
Henry County [www.henrycountysheriff.com](http://www.henrycountysheriff.com) YES  
Hamilton County <http://www.hcso.org> YES  
Logan County [www.login.oh.us/sheriff](http://www.login.oh.us/sheriff) YES

Lucas County [www.lucascountysheriff.org](http://www.lucascountysheriff.org) YES  
Mercer County [www.mercercountysheriff.com](http://www.mercercountysheriff.com) YES  
Miami County [www.co.miami.oh.us/sheriff](http://www.co.miami.oh.us/sheriff) YES  
Montgomery County [www.montgomery.oh.us/sheriff](http://www.montgomery.oh.us/sheriff) YES  
Paulding County [www.pauldingohsheriff.com](http://www.pauldingohsheriff.com) YES  
Preble County [www.preblecountysheriff.org](http://www.preblecountysheriff.org) YES  
Putnam County [www.sheriffoff.com](http://www.sheriffoff.com) YES  
Ottawa County [www.ottawacountysheriff.org](http://www.ottawacountysheriff.org) YES  
Shelby County [www.shelbycountysheriff.com](http://www.shelbycountysheriff.com) NO  
VanWert County [www.vanwertcountysheriff.com](http://www.vanwertcountysheriff.com) YES  
Warren County <http://www.wcsooh.org> YES  
Williams County [www.williamscosheriff.com](http://www.williamscosheriff.com) NO  
Wood County [www.woodcountysheriff.com](http://www.woodcountysheriff.com) YES

#### Indiana Counties

State-wide registry <http://indianasheriffs.org> NO  
(Includes Dearborn County & Ohio County)

### Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q.** What should you tell your children?

**A.** DON'T accept a ride from this person; DON'T go into their home or yard. TELL your parents if this person offers you toys, money or gifts. Avoid scary details. Include general information when speaking to children. You know more than your child needs to know. Use language that is honest and age-appropriate (e.g. "there are people who do bad things to children").

### Other safety tips to discuss with your children:

Teach your children to dial 911 and to use a pay phone without money.

Teach your children to trust their feelings and say NO and run away from a situation that doesn't feel right.

Encourage your children to tell you if the sex offender (or anyone who makes them feel uncomfortable) initiates contact with them.

Review the safety tips with your children.

DO RUN, SCREAM and GET AWAY if someone is bothering them; DON'T keep secrets; DON'T assist strangers; DON'T go places alone; DO ask questions and DO talk about any uncomfortable feelings or interactions.

Make it a habit to LISTEN to your children and to believe them. If a child feels listened to and believed about small everyday things, they are more likely to share the big scary things with you. Be sensitive to changes in your child's behavior. Pay attention to your child's feelings.

**Q.** There is a sex offender living next to me, why wasn't I notified?

**A.** Not all offenders are subject to community notification. The State of Ohio mandates that the notification of neighbors be done on selected Tier II and Tier III offenders. Sexual Offender Registry Notifications will inform you of any offender regardless of the classification.

## Sex Offender Myths and Facts

**Myth:** "Most sexual assaults are committed by strangers."

**Fact:** Most sexual assaults are committed by someone known to the victim or the victim's family, regardless of whether the victim is a child or an adult. Six out of every 10 sexual assaults occur in the homes of victims, family members, or friends (Greenfeld, 1997)

**Myth:** "The majority of sexual offenders are caught, convicted, and in prison."

**Fact:** Only a fraction of those who commit sexual assault are apprehended and convicted for their crimes. Most convicted sex offenders eventually are released to the community under probation or parole supervision.

**Myth:** "Most sex offenders reoffend."

**Fact:** Reconviction data suggest that this is not the case. Further, re-offense rates vary among different types of sex offenders. Child molesters had a 13% reconviction rate for sexual offenses and a 37% reconviction rate for new, non-sex offenses over a five year period. (Hanson and Bussiere, 1998) (*From US Justice Department, Center for Sex Offender Management*)

Did you know that:

- 45% of sexual assault victims are under 12 years of age?
- 75% of victims know their attacker?
- 50% of sex offenders re-offend?
- More than half of all sexual assaults occur within a mile of the victim's home?
- Sex offenders cross socio-economic boundaries, living in both the riches and the poorest of neighborhoods?
- 80% of all addresses have at least one offender within a mile?

### **Approaching Activities**

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What is 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. Err on the side of caution and make the safety of girls your most important consideration. Prior to any activity, read the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints (available on your council's Web site or from your support team in some other format) related to any activity you plan to do with girls.

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.

### **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? 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 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 journey adult guides!

## Transporting Girls

Transportation decisions are an important aspect to any off-site Girl Scout activity, and your greatest concern is *always* safety. If you or the girls are arranging group transportation, whether for a day trip or for a much longer travel event, consider the basics of both private and public transit (which is preferred).

### Public Transportation

Public transportation includes trains, subways, buses, ferries, and airlines. Public transportation is regulated, which makes it preferable to chartered vehicles, but this mode of transportation is not without challenges. The biggest challenge with any public transportation is staying together as a group, so be sure everyone has directions and a map, and always designate a meet-up area if anyone gets separated. Girls also need to be vigilant for criminals, both those who might do them bodily harm and those who are interested in stealing their money, jewelry, and electronic devices. As long as you prepare them for their exciting journeys on public transportation, they'll have an adventure they'll remember for years!

### Private Transportation

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—state laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here. Anyone who is driving a vehicle with more than 12 passengers 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:

- When renting, leasing or borrowing vehicles (including buses) the council should enter into a written agreement with the leasing company, which sets forth their respective obligations. Even though written agreements are always required when renting or chartering, you are *not* authorized to sign an agreement or contract—even if there is no cost associated with the rental. Such an agreement must instead be signed by the director of regional services and be leased on behalf of Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.
- Check with your council to make sure 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. Note the minimum age of drivers (often 25), as well as the maximum age (often

under 70). Be sure the car is adequately insured, knowing who is responsible for damage to or the loss of the vehicle itself. Also, ensure you have a good paper trail, with evidence that the vehicle rental is Girl Scout–related.

- Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.
- When leasing a bus, the driver must be an employee of the bus company.
- The bus company must provide a certificate of insurance. The minimum limits of liability on any leased bus/van must be at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage. If interstate highway travel is planned, there must be \$5,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage.
- The certificate of insurance and leasing agreement must be submitted to the regional director or her designee for review and approval.

### Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Transportation Policy

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is committed to providing a safe and quality program for girls in the community at all times. While Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. provides the principles and standards for health and safety, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is responsible for developing local guidelines and procedures. In addition to Safety Activity Checkpoints, the following policy has been established to encourage the safe operation of vehicles and to address insurance issues when personal and/or leased vehicles are used for Girl Scout activities:

All drivers must have a valid state driver’s license and be covered by auto insurance, in compliance with state law. Leaders should look at, but do not need to copy, the insurance card and driver’s license for all drivers for each troop trip.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is authorized to conduct a motor vehicle records check at their discretion. By serving as a volunteer driver, each individual agrees that he/she will fully cooperate in providing all information and sign all documents necessary to conduct such a check.

If a driver’s record contains one of the following violations within the past three (3) years, he/she is ineligible to serve as a troop driver:

- Driving under the influence of alcohol/drugs
- Failure to stop/report an accident
- Reckless driving/speeding contest
- Driving while impaired
- Making a false accident report
- Homicide, manslaughter, or assault arising out of the use of a vehicle
- Driving while license is suspended/revoked
- Careless driving
- Attempting to elude a police officer

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio’s insurance carrier has provided the following chart to determine whether an individual is eligible to serve as a troop driver. Should a driver’s record fall outside of the acceptable number of accidents or violations, according to the chart below, that individual is required to personally and privately decline any requests to drive for a Girl Scout activity.

# of violations within past 3 years	# of at-fault accidents within past 3 years			
	0	1	2	3
0	yes	yes	no	no
1	yes	yes	no	no
2	yes	no	no	no
3	no	no	no	no
4	no	no	no	no

### Checklist for Drivers

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

- Ensure all drivers are adults—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 check them periodically on long trips.
- Keep all necessary papers up to date, such as your driver’s license, vehicle registration, any state or local inspections, insurance coverage, and the like.

- Wear your seat belt at all times, and insist that all passengers do the same; keep girls under 12 in the back seats.
- Follow all the established rules of the road in your state (following the speed limit, keeping a two-car-length between you and the car ahead of you, not talking or texting on a cell phone or other personal electronic device, not using earbuds or headphones, driving with your headlights on, and so on).
- Avoid driving for extended periods at night, when tired, or taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- Plan rest stops every few hours; if driving with others, prearrange stopping places along the way. When planning longer trips, arrange for relief drivers.

Remember that every time a group meets at a time and location different from the regular group meeting, you must use a permission form—even if the girls are responsible for getting to that location on their own. Permission forms give parents the “who, what, when, where, and why,” so that they can decide whether their daughter can participate in an event or go on a trip. A signed permission form permits you to include the girl in the activity and also provides you with up-to-date emergency contact information.

## If in an Accident:

In the event of an accident, leaders:

Take necessary steps to protect the lives of everyone involved.

Report the accident.

Comply with the instructions of the police and any other emergency personnel.

Do not assume or admit fault. Liability should only be determined after a thorough investigation.

The owner’s vehicle insurance is the primary applicable insurance payer.

The minimum state liability insurance coverage must be in effect and evidence of such provided and carried in the vehicle. NOTE: Minimum requirements may not be adequate under all circumstances; each driver should consult his/her insurance company to be sure that the coverage is sufficient for Girl Scout activities.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio is not responsible for the physical damage to a personal vehicle.

In case of injury or death, please refer to policy [on Emergency, Serious Injury or Illness, or Death](#)

## Traveling with Girls

Girls love trips. And Girl Scouts is a great place for them to learn how to plan and take trips, because travel is built on a progression of activities—that is, one activity leads to the next. Girl Scout Daisies, for example, can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and experience and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips. Here are some examples of the progression of events and trips:

- **Short trips to points of interest in the neighborhood (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.
- **Day trip (Brownies and older):** An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home.
- **Overnight trips (Brownies and older):** One (or possibly two) nights away to a state or national park, historic city, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground. These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not so long as to generate homesickness.
- **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three or four nights camping or a stay in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls’ home region (for example, New England, the Upper Midwest, the Southeast, the Pacific Northwest, and so on). Planning a trip to a large museum—and many offer unique opportunities for girls to actually spend the night on museum grounds—makes for an exciting experience for girls.
- **National trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component—this often means no Disney and no cruises, but can incorporate some incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country.
- **International trips (Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors):** Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation; when girls show an interest in traveling abroad, contact your council to get permission to plan the trip and download the [Global Travel Toolkit](#). Visiting one of the four World Centers is a great place to start, but also consider traveling with worldwide service organizations. Recently, girls have traveled to rural Costa Rica to volunteer at an elementary school, to Mexico to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, and to India to witness the devastation of poverty in urban slums.

Taking trips is an ideal way to offer girls leadership opportunities. The three processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) work beautifully as girls lead their own trip-planning, cooperatively plan every aspect of the trip,

and learn through their travels what works and what doesn't. In the same way, the three leadership keys (discover, connect, and take action) stretch girls as they spend weeks, months, or even years group-planning a trip, which includes an extensive take-action component.

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

### 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 girls 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. These 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. Visit [www.wagggsworld.org](http://www.wagggsworld.org) for more information.

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 which you're working.

To ensure that any travel you do with girls infuses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) 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!

### Seeking Council Permission

Before most trips, you and the girls will need to obtain council permission.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Troop Trip Procedures

Encourage girls, depending on their grade level, to submit most of this information themselves. This is a great learning opportunity for them.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio has instituted a Volunteer Driver Policy (refer to the Policies Section) that must be followed by all drivers that will be driving children on troop trips. The troop leader is the person responsible for making sure all drivers are in accordance with this policy.

Your troop must have completed and turned in a *Troop/Group Financial Report* form for the previous year to be approved to go on a troop trip. If you have any questions whether or not you have turned one in please call your service delivery manager at the Girl Scout Center.

Complete a "*Troop Activity/ Trip Notification Form*" for all activities (over 60 miles from your meeting location) and trips. Note: A "*Troop Activity/ Trip Notification Form*" must be completed for ALL high-risk activities regardless of the distance traveled.

Type/Length of Activity/Trip	Turn in form no later than	Complete additional sections
High Risk Activity (Horse back riding, water activities other than swimming)	1 month prior to date of activity	Section 2, 3
Day activity – over 60 miles-100miles (outside of normal meeting space)	1 month prior to date of activity	Section 2, 3
Overnight trips-	1 month prior to date of activity	Section 2,3,4,5,6

less than 100 miles		
Day/Overnight over 100 miles	3 month prior to date of activity	Section 2, 3,4,5,6
Trip budget per person exceeds \$200	6 month prior to date of activity	Section 2,3,4,5,6
Trips three nights or more	3 months prior to date of activity	Sections 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
International Trip	Contact your program services specialist	

1. Mail to your program services specialist at the regional office. Forms are available on the council website and in the Program Opportunities Book.
2. Troops do not need to submit forms when the troop trip is to a council property.
3. Check the chart (taken from the "*Troop Activity/ Trip Notification Form*") to see which sections you must complete based on the type of activity you will be participating in.
4. File a "*Request for Purchase of Additional Insurance Form*" to purchase activity accident insurance for trips longer than two nights, or for non-Girl Scout members. Minimum purchase amount of \$5.00.
5. Contact your program services specialist to discuss program facility liability insurance.

### Tips for Girls Traveling Alone

If a Girl Scout Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador will be traveling alone at 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, also discuss the possibility of booking a nonstop flight to make her trip that much less stressful, and ask parents to contact the airline, which will make special arrangements for any unaccompanied minor. With the girl herself, develop a trip plan, discuss hotel security and safety, and talk about avoiding excess communication with strangers, *not* wearing a nametag, and avoiding exposing money or other items (such as high-end cell phones and iPods) that are attractive to pickpockets.

## 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 and 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

## Letting Girls Lead

Whether the trip is a day hike or a cross-country trek, 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 you 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 begin to make specific arrangements, attend to a myriad of details, create a budget and handle money, and accept responsibility for their personal conduct and safety. And later, after they've returned from a successful event or trip, girls also have the chance to evaluate their experiences and share them with others.

### Travel Progression Checklist for You

If your group is thinking about travel, consider first whether the girls are mature enough to handle the trip. In determining a group's readiness for travel, assess the group's:

- Ability to be away from their parents and their home
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations
- Ability to make decisions 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 and interests
- Language skills (where applicable)

### Staying Safe During the Trip

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

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

### Travel Security and Safety Tips

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

- Always lock the door behind you, using the deadbolt and the chain or anchor.
- Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff is at the door, call the front desk to confirm.

- Don't shout out 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, for that matter, in an airport or train 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 without stopping 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.
- Also contact the front desk to clear out any minibars or refrigerators in girls' rooms, to ensure that inappropriate movies are not accessible through TVs, and to disallow any long-distance calls from being placed from girls' rooms. Alert the hotel management that underage girls are staying in the hotel, and ask them to contact you if any girls are out of their rooms after bedtime.

## Girl Scout Activity Insurance

A portion of the individual annual membership dues pays for supplementary insurance for the member only. This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity, after the individual's primary insurance pays out. Non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons are not covered by basic coverage. This is one reason all adults and girls should be registered members.

This insurance coverage is *not* intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. And it does not duplicate medical-expense benefits collected under other programs, so after approximately \$100 in benefits have been paid under this plan, the family's medical insurance takes over. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available.

An optional plan of activity insurance is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These plans are secondary insurance that individuals are entitled to receive while participating in any approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. Optional insurance coverage is available for any Girl Scout activity that involves non-Girl Scouts or lasts longer than three days and two nights.

### Requesting Additional Insurance

A *Request for Additional Insurance Form* must be completed and submitted to the Administrative office in Cincinnati at least 4 weeks prior to the event date. This form must be accompanied by a check payable to United of Omaha for the amount owed for the additional insurance. There is a \$5 minimum. Incomplete forms, forms without checks attached, and checks less than \$5.00 will not be accepted.

### Summary of Girl Scout Insurance

A printed brochure from United of Omaha with a complete description of all the features of each insurance option is available from the Girl Scout Center. The information provided below is designed to be a summary of highlights only.

Plan	Description	Premium
Plan 1	<p>Girl Scout Activity Accident Insurance Basic Coverage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided to every registered girl and adult.</li> <li>• Effective when registration materials are received at the Girl Scout Center.</li> <li>• Covers Girl Scout activities lasting two (2) nights or less or not more than three (3) nights if over an official federal holiday, or three days.</li> <li>• Pays the first \$130 of medical bills related to an accident, then becomes secondary to any other insurance coverage the individual may have.</li> <li>• Pays up to \$15,000 of bills incurred over a 52-week period after the accident that are</li> </ul>	<p>No charge - included as part of your Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. \$12.00 registration fee</p>

	not covered by any other insurance the individual may have.	
Plan 2	<p>Accident Insurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Same features as Plan 1.</li> <li>•Used for registered girls and adults when activity length exceeds two (2) nights (three nights over a federal holiday), or three days.</li> <li>•Used for non-registered participants in a Girl Scout activity.</li> </ul>	\$ .11/day /participant
Plan 3E	<p>Accident &amp; Sickness Insurance for Extended Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Adds \$10,000 of Sickness Medical Expense Benefit and \$1,500 of Returned Transportation Benefit to Plan 1.</li> <li>•Will not pay more than 100% of total medical expenses incurred in conjunction with any other insurance the participant may have (Non-Duplication Provision).</li> </ul>	\$ .29/day/
Plan 3P	<p>Accident &amp; Sickness Insurance for Extended Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Same as Plan 3E without the non-duplication provision.</li> <li>•Therefore, the insurance pays without regard to what other insurance might be paying.</li> </ul>	\$ .67/day/participant

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

## Certificate of Insurance

When obtaining a location for a meeting place, service unit event or troop event, some sites will request a certificate of insurance. This is just a copy of our council insurance coverage and can be provided by the Girl Scout office. A Certificate of Insurance can be requested through the Girl Scout Administrative Office. Please allow two weeks to process this request.

To obtain a certificate, visit [www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](http://www.girlscoutsofwesternohio.org) to submit online, email to [insurance@girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](mailto:insurance@girlscoutsofwesternohio.org), or call the Girl Scout Administrative Office with the following information:

Name of Facility  
 Physical and mailing address (if different)  
 Date and type of activity  
 Facility e-mail address, phone # & fax #  
 Contact information of person requesting the certificate.

Certificates of insurance can be mailed out directly to the location within two weeks of your call or request.

## Providing Emergency Care

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

- **Know what to report.** See the “Procedures for Accidents” section later in this chapter.
- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.** Certain extreme-weather conditions may occur in your area. Please consult with your council for the most relevant information for you to share with girls.
- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost persons, and building-security responses.** Every girl and adult must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.

- **Assemble a well-stocked first-aid kit that is always accessible.** First-aid administered in the first few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911.

## First-Aid/CPR

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. For many activities, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer be first-aid/CPR-certified. For that reason, if you have the opportunity to get trained in council-approved first-aid/CPR, do it! 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 your council. Try to take age-specific CPR training, too—that is, take child CPR if you’re working with younger girls and adult CPR when working with older girls and adults.

## First-Aider

A first-aider is defined on page 5, along with the training requirements and a list of organizations where volunteers can be trained. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio provides American Red Cross First Aid and CPR trainings for volunteers at a reduced cost.

## First-Aid Kit

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its [Anatomy of a First Aid Kit](#). 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 (which you can get from your council contact). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms, and health histories may be included, as well.

## Procedures for Accidents

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

After receiving a report of an accident, council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance, if needed, at the scene, and will notify parents/guardians, as appropriate. If a child needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, let council-designated staff discuss the incident with these representatives.

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

### Emergency Phone

These pagers are for emergency use only. Use these numbers, after-hours and on weekends, to report a serious accident or emergency to a council representative.

Appleseed Ridge Region	419-225-4085*
Buckeye Trails Region	937-279-6599
Great Rivers Region	513-619-1398*
Maumee Valley Region	419-221-4541

\*this number forwards to a staff members cell phone

The following action should be taken in the event of an incident, accident or emergency during any Girl Scout activity, not just on council-owned sites.

### **Volunteer's Responsibilities**

Secure services of trained medical professional or first-aider on site and give priority to providing all possible care to victim(s).

Permit no disturbance to victim(s) or surroundings.

Retain a responsible adult at the scene.

Secure doctor, ambulance, and/or police. (You are responsible until police assume responsibility.)

Parent/guardian notification: report nature of emergency, condition of victim, secure parent/guardian wishes regarding:

- medical treatment
- hospitalization transportation
- personal attendance

Council notification. After notifying parents/guardians and emergency authorities, council staff must be notified of any serious accident or injury. Please use the emergency pager to contact your regional director. If no response is received, please contact the regional director of an adjacent region using the pager numbers listed above.

Exercise care that any statement made orally or in writing reflects only the facts of the incident.

Statements should only be made to the family, the authorities, medical personnel and the appropriate paid staff members. (The communication manager handles all media releases.)

Only designated paid staff or council representatives may speak for the council.

File An Incident/Accident Report Form Within 24 Hours of an Injury

Please send copies of all reports and records to Girl Scouts of Western Ohio in care of the regional director.

- APPLESEED RIDGE - 1870 West Robb Ave., Lima, OH 45805
- BUCKEYE TRAILS - 450 Shoup Mill Rd., Dayton, OH 45415
- GREAT RIVERS - 4930 Cornell Rd., Cincinnati, OH 45242
- MAUMEE VALLEY - 2244 Collingwood Blvd., Toledo, OH 43620

### **Council Representative Responsibilities after Emergency Notification**

After emergency notification, a council representative will provide a written, detailed description of the circumstances of the emergency, including names and contact information of persons involved and personal insurance information if applicable.

Information for report and follow-up (exact descriptions and records):

Insurance representative

Attorney or other appropriate officials

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

Records need to be retained seven (7) years or until person involved has reached legal age.

## Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances

Helping girls earn and manage money is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Your Girl Scout group is responsible for planning and financing its own activities, with your guidance. This puts girls in charge, giving them the opportunity (with your oversight) to cooperatively set goals, manage a budget, spend responsibly, maintain records, earn social skills, and develop good marketing, entrepreneurial, math, and financial skills.

Girl Scout groups are funded by a share of money earned through council-sponsored product sale activities (such as Girl Scout Cookie sales), group money-earning activities (council-approved, of course!), and any dues your group may charge. (This is in addition to the \$12 annual membership dues that goes to the national organization.) Girl Scouting should not be expensive for girls. As girls participate in money earning activities they learn key skills including **goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics**. This chapter gives you the ins and outs of establishing a group account, helping girls manage their group finances, practice successful product-sales techniques, review the safety requirements around product sales, and understand how to collaborate with sponsors and causes.

### What Does It Cost to Support a Girl in Girl Scouting?

The cost of supporting a girl in Girl Scouting is the shared responsibility of the troop/group, parents, and the council<sup>1</sup>. While the troop is at the center in delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to girls, the Girl Scout council has the responsibility for providing program opportunities and other supports that strengthen the troop experience. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio also provides many core services needed to support girls in achieving the program goals.

Some examples of the expenses that each group might incur are: Parents often pay for items like Membership dues, troop dues, uniform (optional) and individual activities such as resident camp (optional). Troops generally pay for troop related items such as earned recognitions, troop meeting activities, field trips, events, and troop trips.

<sup>1</sup> The Girl Scout council includes all members, including troops and service units that are involved in delivering Girl Scouting to our geographic region.

### Council Finances

To carry out its jurisdictional responsibility for providing and administering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio shall adhere to Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.'s policies, criteria, and standards for an effective Girl Scout council as found in the *Blue Book of Basic Documents* or *Leaders' Digest*. The Girl Scout mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. The council's responsibilities in carrying out the mission fall into three main categories:

An effective Girl Scout council provides an educationally sound program consistent with the principles of non-formal education, cooperative learning, and experiential learning, based on the Girl Scout Promise and Law, the interest and needs of girls and the council goals for girls.

An effective Girl Scout council maintains a volunteer program management system that supports delivery of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to all populations throughout its jurisdiction.

An effective Girl Scout council manages its operations in a sound and responsible manner.

One area of sound planning and management is responsible financial procedures and practices. Girl Scouting helps girls learn money management skills as they plan, implement, and evaluate activities. Adults working in partnership with girls are role models in all aspects of planning and management, including the development and practice of money management skills.

The council budget includes:

- A significant subsidy of council-sponsored program activities, such as troop camping, resident camp, older girl opportunities, and high & low ropes challenge courses
- Financial assistance to girls for membership dues, program activities and troop resources
- Girl Scout leader recruitment, placement and training, including increasing costs in areas such as background checks and specialized training for issues such as behavior management and conflict resolution
- Communication resources like the council website, *Volunteer Essentials*, *Girl Scouts of Western Ohio News*, monthly leader packets, and the cost of service unit printing and postage
- Maintenance of council camps, and regional Girl Scout centers

## Annual Campaign

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio relies on the generosity of the community to provide the support and opportunities that will help girls develop the skills they need to make healthy life choices, take on challenges and make ethical decisions. It takes many strong adult partners to provide the financial resources that ensure the Girl Scout Leadership Experience will continue to impact girls now and in the future.

The *Annual Campaign* consists of the following partnerships:

1. Family Partnership
2. Community Partnership
3. Corporate Partnership
4. Leadership Partnership – staff and board donations

Gifts to the *Annual Campaign* are unrestricted and used as needed to support Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.

### Family Partnership

The *Family Partnership Campaign* ensures that all girls have access to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and provides girl and adult resources and support services.

Not only does financial investments ensure our activities are discounted and membership subsidies are available, but it also provides adults with the necessary training and support they need to be great Girl Scout leaders and volunteers.

When a donation is made to the *Family Partnership Campaign*, parents, volunteers, corporations and businesses are joined in helping build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Why should I contribute to the *Family Partnership Campaign*?

The estimated cost of keeping a girl in Girl Scouts for one year is between \$300 and \$400. Contributions are vital to provide the core services needed to support girls in achieving the council goals.

How Girl Scout leaders, Administrative Volunteers and all others can participate in the *Family Partnership Campaign*

Because the *Family Partnership Campaign* is run by volunteers at the service unit (community) level, service units create and carry out their own fund raising plan that best suits their needs, what the community will respond to and their own fund raising goal. Planning for each Service Unit Family Partnership Campaign can begin as early as the service unit prefers, keeping in mind local United Way requirements. Please remember, the *Family Partnership Campaign* is a year round campaign.

Girl Scout Leaders and other volunteers can be an example for others to follow by:

Making their gift to the campaign first

Becoming a positive voice for their Service Unit Family Partnership Campaign

Ensuring all campaign information is passed on to the Girl Scout families and the community

Giving Options for the Family Partnership Campaign

There are several ways to make a financial contribution to the *Family Partnership Campaign*:

- Donate on your Girl Scout member registration form
- Donate at a Girl Scout event
- Contact the development department at your regional Girl Scout center

### Planned Gifts

Planned gifts include deferred gifts, bequests, life insurance, charitable trusts, pooled income funds, and charitable gift annuities. Planned gifts ensure that the values of Girl Scouting, as identified in the Girl Scout Promise and Law, are available to future generations of girls, so that they develop the skills needed to reach their full potential. In addition to extending the donor's own values to future generations, a planned gift can offer significant tax benefits to the donor. The *Juliette Gordon Low Society of Girl Scouts of Western Ohio* recognizes donors who have identified themselves as planned givers.

## Memorial & Tribute Fund

- *Memorial Remembrances* are monetary gifts in memory of a friend or relative.

- *Tribute Gifts* honor an important event or person in your life. They are appropriate for a birthday, anniversary, graduation, the Girl Scout Gold Award, recognition of a Girl Scout leader or volunteer, holiday gift, or other special occasion.

Please include a note to the development manager specifying the type of gift you wish to make and the name and address of the recipient or family. An attractive card, that does not mention the amount of the contribution, will be sent in your name.

Questions regarding charitable support for Girl Scouts of Western Ohio should be directed to the council's fund development department.

## Troop/Group Finances

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

- Keep group funds in the bank before an activity or trip, paying for as many items 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.

\*Debit cards can only be used if the troop account is held at one of Girl Scouts of Western Ohio preferred banks.

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio has established a process with several area banks, to provide troops and service units with checking accounts having no or minimal monthly service charges and to simplify the document requirements resulting from the Patriot Act\*. Outlined below are the procedures to open, change and close a troop or service unit checking account.

\*Please note: Some banks may have a minimum balance to open the account or charge a small monthly service charge for the mailing of monthly statements. Please check with your bank when opening a Girl Scout account to see if they have an "opt out" option for mailed statements with the free option for online banking access.

## Opening a New Checking Account

When a new Girl Scout troop is established, the Girl Scout leader and at least one other approved adult volunteer must complete the two forms required to open a new checking account – one signer will hold the check book, while the other receives the statements or has access to the account through online services (this procedure safeguards girls' monies). Both signers must be approved, actively registered members of Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. (This includes the successful completion and approval through volunteer application and background check process.)

The checking account forms are available from the regional offices or can be printed from the website. These forms are submitted to the bank you have chosen for your account. **Banks require original signatures and will request to see a copy of the volunteer's appointment/welcome letter from Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.**

## Completion of a Troop/Group Financial Report

All Girl Scout troops are required to submit information regarding the troop's finances annually as part of the appointment and reappointment process. All new troops must complete a Troop/Group Financial Report and submit a copy of their bank statement within 30 days of opening their new Girl Scout account. In addition, all troops including new troops must complete a final Troop/Group Financial Report and submit a copy of their bank statement by June 30<sup>th</sup> each year. Girl Scout troops that do not complete this process will not be eligible the following year if there is not a current report on file with Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. The Troop/Group Financial Report can be accessed and submitted online at the council website. The bank statement should be emailed to [council@girlscoutsofwesternohio.org](mailto:council@girlscoutsofwesternohio.org) or mailed to the regional Girl Scout center.

When changes need to be made to existing accounts the procedure is much the same – both forms must be completed, including the account number and any changed information, i.e., address, signer information, etc. Changes can be made directly with your bank.



## Closing a Checking Account

Before closing an 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. If a troop makes the decision to disband, the troop's treasury should follow the girls that remain Girl Scouts to their new troops. The funds should be distributed appropriately if the girls do not move to the same troop. If none of the girls chose to remain active in the Girl Scouting, **the remaining funds must be returned to the Girl Scout council for use in the Financial Assistance Fund**. The service team will work with paid staff to ensure that troop funds are handled appropriately and in a timely manner. A final Troop/Group Financial Report must be completed along with a Troop Bank Account Request Form marked "closed account" with the top portion of the form completed. (Be sure to include account number.) Girl Scout money left in accounts when groups disband become the property of the council.

## LEADERSHIP CHANGES

Since records and other property belong to the troop, not an individual, they should be passed along to the next leader within 30 days from a change in leadership. If a disbanding troop's girls are placed in multiple troops, the disbanding troop's treasury may be pro-rated to each new troop based on the number of transferring girls and the financial decisions made by troop members.

## Disbanding A Troop

Troops that are not reregistering for the upcoming membership year must complete the Disbanding Troop Report Form and follow the procedures below:

If a troop is disbanded and the girls are not placed in one or more new troops:

- Complete a Disbanding Troop Report Form.
- Give supplies to service team personnel.
- Give the bank account checkbook/debit cards and records to the service unit manager or service unit financial consultant.
- Money may not be given to the individual girls or adults.\*\*
- Disbanding troop funds contribute to financial assistance, which are available to assist girls with financial need to participate in Girl Scout activities.
- The individual girl's record should be given to the girl for her future reference and use.

### **Girl Scouts of Western Ohio Preferred Banks**

Girl Scouts of Western Ohio has established standard procedures with the following banks. By opening a Girl Scout checking account at one of the preferred banks, the troop will have the option of obtaining a debit card for the account. The use of debit cards is not acceptable if the account is opened at a bank that is NOT a preferred bank with Girl Scouts of Western Ohio.\*

Charter One Bank – Contact Denise Fitch, 419-242-6131

Fifth Third Bank – Contact Ashley Born, 513-534-5179 or Christine Sichak, 513-534-8892

PNC Bank – Contact Johnda Keuffer, 513-563-0395, ext. 21773

Mutual Federal Savings Bank – Contact Lynn Williams 937-773-9900

\* If you would like to request a bank in your community become a preferred bank of Girl Scouts of Western Ohio, please contact your regional Girl Scout center.

## Troop Dues

Troop dues are an option for activities the girls plan to participate in and for costs of snacks, supplies, and other materials used by the girls at regular meetings. Troop dues are meant to supplement cookie and fall product activities. NO girl shall be denied membership in a troop, or have her participation restricted based on her lack of ability to pay troop dues. When setting the amount of troop dues, the fees should be decided on by all members and consideration given to the income levels of all of the girls in the group.

## Money-Earning Basics

Girls earn money in two distinct ways:

- “Council-sponsored product sales” are council-wide sales of Girl Scout–authorized products (such as Girl Scout Cookies, calendars, magazines, or nuts and candy), in which members participate as part of the Girl Scout program.
- “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 adults) and that earn money for the group. These activities must be approved by the council in writing.

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
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

In addition, consider the following reminders or cautions

- 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; most councils ask that you submit a request for approval of a group money-earning event form.
- Girl Scouts forbids use of games of chance, the direct solicitation of cash, and product-demonstration parties.
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Money raised 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.

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

## Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals

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 sale proceeds, and so on).
3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.
4. **Make a plan.** The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans. Will cookie and other product sales—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the group’s goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference in

anticipated expense and anticipated income? Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group's financial goals? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.

5. **Write it out.** Once the group has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out an application for approval from 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 sale, to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals as part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. 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!

## Understanding 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

At the Daisy level (kindergarten and 1st grade),

- 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 sales and other council-sponsored product sales.
- Daisies are always paired with an adult when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but adults handle the money and keep the girls secure.

### Girl Scout Brownies

At the Brownie level (2nd and 3rd grades),

- The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and shares some of the group-budgeting responsibilities.
- Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on).
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.
- Girls may decide to pay dues.

### Girl Scout Juniors

At the Junior level (4th and 5th grades),

- The group volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record-keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.
- Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer (selected by the girls).
- Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group, on the basis of plans and income from the group dues.
- Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.
- Girls budget for take-action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.

### Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

At the Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador levels (6th through 12th grades),

- Girls estimate costs based on plans.
- Girls determine the amount of group dues (if any) and the scope of money-earning projects.
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.
- Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning projects.

- Girls budget for extended travel, take-action projects, and leadership projects.
- 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.

One critical task for each group, no matter what age, is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the group volunteer, you're in charge of making sure money is spent wisely and that excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and tracking all income, too. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as *they* learn to keep impeccable records.

## Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program

Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored products are an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, built around financial literacy. In fact, the Girl Scout Cookie sale is the leading entrepreneurial program for girls: No university has produced as many female business owners as has the Girl Scout Cookie Program.

With every season of Girl Scout cookies, another generation of girls learns to set goals, make a plan, and manage money. And most of all, girls gain a tremendous amount of confidence—it's not easy to ask a stranger to buy something. You have to speak up, look them in the eye, and believe in what you're doing.

### A Sweet Tradition

It has been more than 90 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!

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

## Product Sales: Financial Literacy and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products gives girls a chance to run a business and practice leadership skills they can use in their lives. Girls will enjoy all the benefits this important component of the GSLE has to offer: They'll engage in planning and goal-setting (aiming to achieve their personal best), teamwork, marketing, money management (including the importance of saving for future needs), and the enduring skill of customer service. As girls grow, they will get to know their product (ingredients and calories, for example) and design innovative and creative marketing strategies and tools. Girls will also be encouraged to share with customers how product sales help their council and their community. Volunteers can help girls develop leadership skills while they engage in Girl Scout Cookie activities by using the Girl Scout processes of girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning. And as they participate in product sales, girls will:

- **Discover** a strong sense of self and gain practical life skills when they create personal goals, deliver presentations, and find ways to customize a marketing plan, for example. A girl can discover a lot about herself and her values as she makes decisions about money-earning, customer-management, and so on.
- **Connect** with their group members as they set group goals and develop a list of positions related to cookie activities such as accounting manager, event planner, public relations specialist, and graphic designer. Girls can learn about their communities as they meet families, mentors, and business owners who have worked in these roles. Girls can also use the Girl Scout Cookie Program as an opportunity to talk to customers about ways to improve the community or to solicit ideas for a local take-action idea bank.
- **Take action** as they learn to map neighborhood business and other resources that can help them consider community service needs. Girls use product sale money to make a difference in their communities, whether through a take-action project or a philanthropic donation. And don't forget: Money that goes to the council from product sales allows councils to take action by serving all Girl Scouts!

## Determining Who Can Participate

All girl members (including Daisies)—taking part in any number of ways (travel, camp, series, events, or troop)—are eligible to participate in council-sponsored product sales activities, under volunteer supervision. Your council provides learning opportunities (through a cascading staff and volunteer effort) 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 recognition system will be managed.

## Knowing Where Proceeds Go

Your council will provide a breakdown of “how the cookie crumbles” in your council. Share this information with girls and their parents/guardians! Proceeds resulting from product sales support program activities—in fact, council-sponsored product sales are a primary way in which your council funds itself. The percentage of money to be allocated to participating groups (like yours) is determined by the council and explained to girls and adults as part of the product sale activity orientation.

The income from product sales does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for incentives and credits that they put toward Girl Scout activities, such as camp, travel, and Girl Scout membership dues for the next year.

Girls may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate awards related to product sale activities, and each council may choose to provide items such as participation patches, incentives, 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 recognition applies equally to all girls participating in the product sale activity. Whenever possible, councils try to involve girls in the selection of awards and administration of money given to girls from product sales.

## Using Online Resources to Market Cookies and Other Products

Girls are texting, calling, e-mailing, Tweeting, and Facebooking—and those are all effective ways that girls 13 and older can promote cookie and other product sales! The following sections detail how girls can use electronic marketing, social networking, and group Web sites 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](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org). Family members are the exception to this rule.
- **Cannot have customers pay online** (such as through a shopping cart function on a Web site the girls create). Girl Scout magazine sales are the exception to this rule.
- **Must sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge** (available at [www.gsusa.org](http://www.gsusa.org)) before doing any online activities, and all online activities must be under the supervision of adults.
- **Cannot expose a girl’s e-mail 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.

For girls in fifth grade and above, have your group visit [Let Me Know](http://LetMeKnow.com), a site addressing Internet safety for teens and tweens. Girls can even earn an online award for completing activities on this site!

### Daisies: Stay Especially Safe!

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

## Contacting Prospects Electronically

Girls may use phone calls, text messages, IMs, and e-mails as online marketing tools to let family, friends, and former customers know about the sale and collect indications of interest. Product-related e-mail is not intended to be spam (unwanted texts or e-mails), however, so remind girls to be sure that their messages will be welcomed by the receiver.

When girls are marketing cookies online, remind them to always use a group e-mail address (such as troop457@yahoo.com), an adult's personal e-mail address, or a blind address (one that does not reveal the address to the recipient). In addition, be sure to discuss with girls the need to treat customer e-mail addresses from current and past years—as well as phone numbers, IM addresses, Facebook accounts, and mail addresses—with respect; they are private and must be kept so.

## Utilizing Social Networks

A girl (or group of girls) over the age of 13 may work in partnership with an adult to market cookies and other products online, using the social networking site (such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, or LinkedIn) of the adult. Social networking sites are fun, fast ways to get out an urgent message, such as, "It's Girl Scout Cookie time!" Posting or tweeting such a message will get the attention of friends and family.

Before girls use social networks as a marketing tool, keep the following in mind:

- Girls must have parental permission to use social networks.
- Girls must meet age limits set by the provider, which is 13 and above in most cases, as per the United States Child Online Privacy and Protection Act and the Child Online Protection Act.
- Any use of photos requires a photo-release form signed by parents/guardians of the girls pictured and the signature of any adults pictured.
- Any use of online video sharing sites (such as YouTube), where the video is representing Girl Scouts or Girl Scout products, must follow specific requirements for that site, as well as council guidelines. Girl Scout photo release forms must also be signed by parents/guardians and any adults pictured. (In other words, this is not an easy venture, but if you and the girls are willing, it's worth the investment.)

## Setting Up a Group Web Site

Groups whose girls meet age criteria (13 years or older) and have parental permission may set up a group Web site or social networking site. 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.

Before you and the girls design a Web site, do remember that the Web is an open forum for anyone, including potential predators. Documented instances of cyberstalkers make it imperative that any information that could jeopardize the safety and security of girls and adults is not disclosed on a Web site. To ensure the girls' safety:

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

## Safely Selling Girl Scout Cookies and Other Products

A few other considerations will help keep girls safe:

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

- Parents and guardians must grant permission for girls to participate and are informed about the girls' whereabouts when they are engaged in product sale activities. Specific permission must be obtained when a girl intends to use the Internet for product marketing. A parent, guardian, or other adult must know each girl's whereabouts when she is engaged in product sales, and if and when she is involved on the Internet.
- Girl should be identifiable as Girl Scouts by wearing a Membership Pin, official uniform, tunic, sash or vest, or other Girl Scout clothing.
- Adult volunteers must monitor, supervise, and guide the sale activities of all age levels.
- Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors must be accompanied by an adult at all times. Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who participate in door-to-door sales must be supervised by (but do not need to be directly accompanied by) an adult. Girls must *always* use the buddy system.
- Money due for sold products is collected when the products are delivered to the customer (or as directed by your council). Girls will need to know whether they can accept checks and to whom customers should write checks—find out from your council staff.
- 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.
- Girls can participate in no more than two council-sponsored product sale activities each year, and only one of these may be a cookie sale.
- A girl's physical address, social networking page address, IM name, Skype name or number, 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!
- Before beginning any cookies or other product sales with your group, refer to the cookies section of [Girl Scout Central](#) and [www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org).

## Additional Group Money-Earning

Product sales are a great way to earn the funds necessary for girls to travel. If income from the product sale isn't enough, however, girls have more options available to them. Building upon the following list of ideas, facilitate a group brainstorming session to determine how your group will earn money:

The following examples from councils and overseas committees give girls a way to build public speaking, financial literacy, marketing, and other skills. (Note that not all these ideas will be appropriate in all regions/states or councils.)

### Entertainment:

- Talent show
- Flock of flamingos traveling yard décor
- Famous mom, dad, or friend puts on a concert
- Food/Meal Events:
  - Spaghetti dinner or pancake breakfast
  - Lunch box auction (prepared lunch or meal auctioned off)
  - Multicultural meals for younger girls
  - Bake sales
  - Meals at volunteers' meetings
  - Themed meals, like high tea, Indian meal, Mexican dinner (depending on girls' destination)

### Services:

Car wash

Babysitting for holiday (New Year's Eve), special or council events

Holiday activity/supervised crafts so parents can shop

Services like shoveling snow, raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, pet walking, gift-wrapping

Cold or hot beverages at an event

Take photos and/or create greeting cards or calendars

Council program event or badge workshop focused on a theme (i.e. culture)

Collections/Drives:

Recycling/newspapers

Bottle and can recycling

Used ink cartridges turned in for money

**Specialty Products** (creating a personalized note, ribbon, or creative packaging customized by girls adds value to a product):

Crafts (crochet, needlepoint, jewelry, ornaments)

Yard or garage sale

Books for resale

## Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is provided to individual applicants, based on specific financial need and the applicant's compliance with the financial assistance philosophy.

### Philosophy:

Girl Scout events and activities will result from realistic girl-adult planning that allows Girl Scouts adequate time to prepare troop or group money-earning projects that will support the girls' choice of activities.

Financial assistance is granted to individual applicants who have a specific and distinct financial need.

All applicants are to contribute some portion to the activity cost.

## Financial Assistance Guidelines

1. Applicant must be currently registered with Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.
2. Requests are to be on current forms.
3. Financial assistance is available on an individual basis. **Troops/groups are not eligible for financial assistance.**
4. Individual girls may request financial assistance for the following opportunities: council-sponsored opportunities, summer camp opportunities, Destinations/getaways, troop trips.
5. Financial assistance applications should indicate that the request is based on the financial need of the individual applicant.
6. Requests should indicate that the applicant has participated in realistic event planning and money-earning with other troop/group members over a period of time based on the guidelines found in the Girl Scout grade level handbooks.
7. Adults are eligible to apply for financial assistance for troop activities and council sponsored adult education opportunities **ONLY** when the participation of **that adult is required** to ensure that Safety-Wise guidelines are fulfilled.
8. If most or all members of a troop must request financial assistance to participate in a troop activity, it may be an indication that further troop planning is needed. If a troop does not meet its financial goals, adjustments should be made to the activities themselves or the projected timetable.
9. Forms must have complete information in order to be reviewed. Incomplete forms will be returned.

Girl Scout leaders must review financial assistance philosophy and guidelines with parents/guardians and encourage parents/guardians to submit the request form directly to the regional Girl Scout center or online.

## Financial Assistance Procedures

### Girl Scout leader Instructions:

- If individual girls within a troop wish to apply for financial assistance for a program opportunity, the leader will:
- Ensure that the financial assistance philosophy and guidelines are followed.
- Ensure that parent/guardian and troop sections are filled out entirely, including parent/guardian signature.
- Turn in completed application form to the appropriate regional Girl Scout center. Forms must be received one month prior to the date of the event/activity except for activities with a budget over \$200/person which must be turned in three months prior to the event.



## Parent/Guardian Instructions:

- Review financial assistance philosophy and guidelines.

For a troop/group activity, complete the required sections and return to the Girl Scout leader; the leader must complete the Girl Scout leader section of the [Financial Assistance Request Form](#).

For girls who are either registered as individual members or requesting assistance for a non-troop activity, the parent/guardian must complete the parent/guardian sections of the form including a parent signature and mail the form directly to the regional Girl Scout center.

## Notification of Financial Assistance Status: Notification of Financial Assistance Status:

Girl Scout leaders and/or parent/guardians will be notified of the financial assistance amount received or any questions or concerns within three weeks of their receipt at the regional Girl Scout center.

### Notification letters will indicate:

- Problems/concerns that must be addressed before further action can be taken.
- Action taken regarding financial assistance.
- Other individuals receiving a copy of the letter.

### Checks will be mailed as follows:

- To the Girl Scout leader for all troop activities.
- Directly to the appropriate department for all Girl Scouts of the U.S.A., Destinations, or Girl Scouts of Western Ohio activities.
- To the parent/guardian for specifically arranged, individual Girl Scout opportunities.

## 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, 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.

Your council may already have relationships with certain organizations, or may know of some reasons *not* to collaborate with certain organizations.

## Troop Sponsorship/Grant/Donation Guidelines

Girls may not directly solicit funds (i.e. donations, sponsorships, or grants) and should follow all [Safety-Wise](#) standards pertaining to money-earning. Girl Scout troops are an extension of the Girl Scout council, including the council IRS not-for-profit status. All grants and donations must be carefully monitored to ensure that the council complies with all IRS guidelines.

### Grants

**Girl Scout troops may not in most situations, solicit grants or financial donations from foundations or corporations.** An exception to this guideline is made if Girl Scout volunteers work for companies offering small grants (up to \$1000) for special projects and not-for-profit groups supported by their employees. These grants may be requested for special service projects conducted by the service unit, day camp, or troop (such as a large service project), **with prior permission** of the Girl Scout council. Please submit a [Project Funding Approval Form](#) to your director of regional services staff member if you are considering submission of a grant to your company.

### Donations

**Prior permission** must be obtained from your director of regional services staff member before adults are allowed to solicit donations on the behalf of a Girl Scout troop/ group. Such donations may only be solicited for community

service projects or to address significant financial need for troop members participating in Girl Scout activities. The Girl Scout group must submit a [\*Project Funding Approval Form\*](#) along with a budget plan for the proposed project.

Written acknowledgement of donated money and in-kind donations must come from the regional Girl Scout center. In order to ensure compliance with IRS guidelines for donations and donor recognition, all donors requesting a letter of acknowledgement must submit the contribution to the regional Girl Scout center using a [\*Girl Scout Donor Form\*](#) attached to the check. Girl Scouts of Western Ohio will then send the donor a letter and reissue the money to the troop/group.

- If a donation is received without a [\*Girl Scout Donor Form\*](#) attached, it is assumed that this donation is to the Girl Scout general operational budget.
- If the donation amount is \$250 or above, the donation must be turned into the regional Girl Scout center along with a project budget and plan for its use. Once the project has been approved by the director of regional services, a check will be re-issued to the Girl Scout troop/group.
- Troops/Groups receiving sponsorships or donations from businesses, organizations, or individuals must report monetary gifts on their annual [\*Troop/Group Financial Report\*](#).

## Sponsorships

Community organizations, businesses, or individuals can be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer time, activity materials, equipment, or financial support for Girl Scout groups.

Volunteers must obtain permission from their program services specialist before seeking sponsorship to prevent duplicate solicitations. See donation section for more information.

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

- **Avoiding fundraising for other organizations:** Girl Scouts are not allowed, when identifying ourselves as Girl Scouts (such as wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on), to solicit money on behalf of another organization. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. You and your group can, however, support another organization through take-action projects or by making a donation from your group's account. And Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose, so long as they're not wearing anything that officially identifies them as "Girl Scouts."
- **Steering clear of political fundraisers:** When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your group may not participate (directly or indirectly) in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Letter-writing campaigns are not allowed, nor is participating in a political rally, circulating a petition, or carrying a political banner.
- **Being respectful when collaborating with religious organizations:** Girl Scout groups must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice of the sponsoring group.
- **Avoiding selling or endorsing commercial products:** "Commercial products" is any product sold at retail. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell such products.