

FAQ – Participation Definition:

***Q:** I have a troop of 12 registered girls. We want to do additional money earning events; what is considered 50% of registered girls?*

A: A troop of 12 registered girls at 50% participation is 6 girls who must earn the participation patch in both the Fall Product and Cookie Programs.

***Q:** We are a new troop and are reluctant to participate in the Fall or Cookie Programs because it seems complicated; what do you recommend for new troops?*

A: Both the Fall Product and Cookie Programs are excellent opportunities for the girls to build confidence, courage, and become exposed to the 5 core Leadership Skills: Goal Setting, Decision Making, Money Management, Business Ethics, and People Skills. Fall Product Program can be as simple as sending out **emails** from the online M2 Ordering System (M2OS) to family and friends; the girl can watch the purchases come in. This is a fun, friendly and safe environment for girls to make their own storefront. The advantage of using M2OS is the girls can track their progress and watch their sales grow. This also introduces the girls and troop to the GSGLA Product Sales arena.

Troop and girl participation in both the Fall Product and Cookie Programs is a hands-on life skill building program. It enhances the 5 Skills in a fun and rewarding manner. Fall Product and Cookie Programs also help the troop and girls become financially sustainable.

Girl Scout Cookies are a recognizable brand that is familiar to family, friends and customers; it is a marketable product and only available once a year. Troops can start out their first cookie season with an initial order and try a booth sale if desired. Cookie booting is a great opportunity where girls work as a team; they will use valuable tools and techniques as they interact with customers. The girls learn how to build their customer base and they will have repeat customers year after year.

***Q:** Only one of my Senior/Ambassador girls is interested in earning her Gold Award and will also need to put on additional money earning events to support this project. What is the required level of participation in product sales for her?*

A: GSGLA is a Troop oriented organization; therefore it is most desirable that the troop support the older girl by participating in both the Fall Product and Cookie Programs. However, in this case only the Senior/Ambassador earning her Gold Award must

participate in the Fall Product and Cookie Programs, and earn the participation patches for both programs.

***Q:** I have two Ambassadors remaining in my troop. Both girls are working on their Gold Award Project. They do not think that they will need to raise additional funds to complete their projects. What should they do?*

A: The Girl Scout Motto is “Be Prepared,” With that said, the girls should participate in both the Fall Product and Cookie Programs and earn the participation patches. It would be advantageous for the girls to have met the requirement, in the event that they need raise additional funds towards their Gold Award Project, than to be in a position where they need to raise additional funds and not have met the requirement.

***Q:** We have a multi-level troop, which includes Senior and Ambassador Girls working on Gold Awards. We want to raise funds for troop activities and Gold Award projects; what is the criteria for our troop?*

A: Since your troop would like to participate in additional money earning events, it would be required that 50% of the girls registered in your troop participate in both the Fall Product and Cookie Programs. 50% of your registered girls must earn the Fall and Cookie participation patches. This would require the Gold Award project girls’ participation in both Fall and Cookie Programs, and earning the participation patch in each. They would be required to be included in the 50% of the registered girls participating.

***Q:** My Senior/Ambassador girls feel burnt out after so many years of participating and just want to finish their projects. What would be your suggestion on encouraging their participation?*

A: While we appreciate the diligence and participation of your girls, we are certain that they have been rewarded for their efforts, and gained skills that will help them in the future. The girls can focus on giving back to Girl Scouts the program and rewards they have been provided. Troops and girls can use the money; if all the troop agrees for Girl Scout Lifetime Membership for Graduating Ambassadors, the funds may be used for that purpose. Participation in the Fall Product Program can be as simple as sending out **emails** from M2OS. This approved social media venue benefits older girls who have busy schedules and little time for selling.

***Q:** Our Senior and Ambassador Girls would like to use the funds they have earned from the Fall Product and Cookie Programs toward expenses for their Gold Award Project.*

How do we handle this since the Fall Product and Cookie Product Programs are meant to support troop activities?

A: The girls can put this up for a vote. If your troop votes to allow the girls to use their portion of funds toward the expenses incurred for their Gold Award Project, then this has become a girl decision.

Q: *Our troop is planning on applying for SEME events. Can the girls use their troop money earned from these events toward Silver or Gold Award Projects?*

A: Girls who participate in the Fall Product and Cookie Programs are encouraged to earn additional funds to help finance their Silver or Gold Award projects. However, there are some specific guidelines to which you must adhere. Money obtained from a troop money-earning event may be used for their Silver or Gold Award projects if it has been voted on and approved by the girls in the troop. Funds from troop money-earning events must only be used for troop events, projects, trips, or travel, and not for individual girl activities, except in the case of Silver and Gold Award projects. A girl may allocate her troop money-earning event funds directly towards her Gold Award project. This does not count as a private benefit as the funds support her project and not her directly (*Volunteer Essentials* pg. 107). All money-earning efforts, beyond the Fall Product and Cookie Programs, must be approved by the Special Events and Money Earning Go Team using the SEME e-form application (found at gsglavolunteerapps.org/specialevent-2/).

Q: *Our Senior and Ambassador girls are busy teens with full schedules; they are involved in sports, music, clubs, religious commitments, academia, and Girl Scouts. I am naming only a few activities they are members of or are participants in. How can a Gold Award applicant be expected to know, adhere to, and/or meet the participation requirement with her demanding schedule?*

A: We understand that older girls are busy and involved in many organizations. It is wonderful that they value Girl Scouts, the friendships they have made, and that they can take the life skills they learned and implement them throughout their lives. They are at a point where they are making more decisions that are applicable to their future and we respect their decisions and choices. Participating in the council sponsored product programs benefits all GSGLA girls, not just the girls participating. There are several resources available to Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts, their leaders, and parents. Information can be obtained on the GSGLA website and they can contact Customer Care at 213-213-0123 if they have questions. Fall Product and Cookie Programs are facilitated differently from each other. While we respect that many organizations have a fall fundraising component, the GSGLA Fall Product Program has elements that they do

not have. For Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts to meet the participation requirement in the Fall Product Program, it can be as easy as: setting up their own storefront in M2 Online System (M2OS), creating an avatar, adding a video if they choose, and then, through M2OS, sending out emails to family and friends. They can even post a link to their storefront in various social media platforms. All items their customers purchase – whether Gift of Caring, nuts/candies, or magazines – will earn the troop proceeds, no matter how large or small the customer’s order as well as assist in the meeting the unit requirement.

Q: *Why is GSGLA setting requirements for the Girl Scouts to participate in the Fall Product and Cookie Programs?*

A: Girl Scouts provides structured money earning activities for our troops and girls that teach critical leadership skills. The participation definition has always been and will continue to be **specific** to troops and girls who want or need to do additional money earning events to accomplish their goals and must be meaningful and tied to the 5 leadership skills. Therefore, the participation definition is not applicable to all troops and girls. As a reminder the participation definition is applicable to troops that want to participate in additional money earning activities.

Q: *My troop has one Senior/Ambassador girl who wants to earn her Gold Award, however our troop has not participated in GSGLA Fall Product and Cookie programs for a few years and will not be participating in GSGLA Product Programs. How can she participate if the troop does not support her?*

A: The troop leader or parent can volunteer as the Troop Fall or Cookie chair and submits the online agreement and ACH debit forms to support the girl’s product sales.

Q: *How does the definition of participation apply to Cadette Girl Scouts - who are working toward their Silver Award and wish to participate in additional money earning events?*

A: Cadette level girls who are working on their Silver Award projects and wish to do additional money earning events (besides the Fall Product and Cookie Programs) must earn the participation patch in both the Fall Product and Cookie Programs.

Q: *How does the participation definition apply to a Cadette working alone on a project that requires additional money earning?*

A: That single Cadette must have earned the participation patch in both product programs to do any additional money earning events.

Q: *How does this apply to a Silver Award team with multiple girls (up to 4 girls) working on their Silver Award project?*

A: If the girls need to participate in additional money earning events, all the girls in the team need to earn the participation patch for the Fall Product and Cookie Programs.

Q: *We want to make sure that we have 50% of our girls participate in Product Sales; how do I verify which and how many girls are registered in my troop?*

A: Go to the GSGLA website at www.girlscoutsla.org. Click on MyGS and log in to check your troop roster.