girl scouts
greater los angeles

2023-2024
Volunteer Essentials
Website Compendium

Table of Contents

About Girl Scouts	**3**
Girl Scout Volunteers	**5**
Girl Scout Grade Levels	**5**
The Girl Scout Leadership Experience	**5**
Reflection	**7**
Progression	**8**
Inclusion	**8**
The Girl Scout Program: National Program Pillars & More	**9**
Important Differences: Journeys and Badges	**9**
Important Differences: Community Service and Take Action Projects	**10**
Traditions, Ceremonies, and Special Girl Scout Days	**10**
Highest Awards	**11**
Girl Scout Travel and Destinations	**12**
Troop Management	**14**
Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer	**14**
Your Responsibilities as a Girl Scout Volunteer	**15**
Planning for Your First Troop Meeting	**15**
Choosing a Meeting Place	**16**
Virtual Meetings	**17**
Girl Scout Troop Size	**17**
Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need	**18**
Safety in Girl Scouting	**18**
Registering Girls and Adults in Girl Scouting	**19**
Adding New Girls to Your Troop	**20**
Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion	**20**
Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities	**21**
Getting Support for Your Troop	**21**
Troop Management Tools and Resources	**22**
Take Advantage of Learning Opportunities	**23**
Know How Much You are Appreciated	**23**
Girl Scout Participation in Activities with Other Scouting Organizations	**24**

Troop Finances	**25**
Establishing a Troop Account	**25**
Disbanding Troops and Unused Troop Funds	**26**
Closing the Troop Account	**26**
Year-End Financial Report	**27**
Money-Earning Basics for Troops	**27**
Help Your Troop Reach its Financial Goals	**29**
Working with Sponsors and Other Organizations	**31**
Engaging Families	**33**
Understanding Healthy Development in Girls	**33**
What Is a Parent and Caregiver Meeting?	**35**
How to Keep Parents and Caregivers Engaged	**36**
Creating a Safe Space	**38**
Recognize and Support Each Girl	**38**
Promote Fairness	**38**
Build Trust	**38**
Inspire Open Communication	**39**
Managing Conflict	**39**
Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age	**40**
Addressing the Needs of Older Girls	**41**
When Sensitive Topics Come Up	**41**
Report Concerns	**42**
Reporting Child Abuse	**43**
Product Program	**44**
Five Essential Skills	**44**
Girl Scout Cookie History	**45**
Where Cookie Proceeds Go	**45**
Your Council's Role	**46**
Your Role	**46**
Product Program Safety	**47**
Preparing for your Girl Scout Cookie Booth	**48**
Cookie Donation Program	**49**
Handling Product Complaints	**49**
Recognizing Cookie Sellers in the Media	**50**

Standards and Procedures	51
Inclusiveness Statement	51
Being an Appropriate Role Model	51
Membership Conditions	52
Recruitment	52
Becoming a Volunteer	52
Disqualification	56
Placement	58
Appointment	59
Reappointment	60
Benefits and Services	60
Training	61
Recognitions	62
Confidentiality	62
Dismissal	63
Resignation	67
Dispute Resolution	68
Conflict of Interest	71
Uniforms	72
Contracts and Agreements	73
Troop Treasury	73
Private Inurnment/Private Benefit	74
Debt Collection	74
Social Media	75
Accident/Incident Management	76
Troop Transfers	78
Smoke-Free/Tobacco-Free Environment	78
Alcohol and Substance Abuse	79
Harassment	79
Child Abuse	80
Sex Offenders	83
Weapons and Fireworks	84
Legal Action Against or by GSGLA	84
Additional Resources and Support	**85**

ABOUT GIRL SCOUTS

At Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSGLA), girls' dreams are our dreams and Girl Scouts is where girls see the limitless possibilities ahead, because they are encouraged to aim for the stars and reach them! Whether she's making a new friend on the playground, raising her hand in class, starting her own nonprofit, or advocating for climate change or social justice, a Girl Scout builds a better world—just as Girl Scouts have been doing for over a century. With programs in every zip code, coast-to-coast and around the globe, every girl can find her place in Girl Scouts and start creating the world she wants to see.

Girl Scout Volunteers

Girl Scout volunteers are a dynamic and diverse group. Whether you're a recent college graduate, parent, retiree, or really, anyone with a sense of curiosity and adventure (of any gender, who is 18 years or older and is an approved volunteer), your unique skills and experiences have the power to change girls' lives. With you as their mentor, girls will grow and thrive.

Girl Scout members and volunteers are united by the values in the Girl Scout Promise and Law and their shared commitment to embrace leadership in all forms. Each member agrees to follow Girl Scouts safety guidelines and pay annual membership dues of $25. Volunteers and adults also have the option to purchase a Lifetime membership.

Girl Scout Grade Levels

Girls can join the fun at any point from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Girl Scouts six grade levels are:

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)

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience provides the foundation for all we do. It is the core of our program and encompasses everything from our Promise and Law to our badges, activities, and Journeys. And at the center of it all are the girls. At Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl, it's what makes Girl Scouts truly unique. Our program is designed by, with, and for girls. With a focus on girl-led programing and activities, girls have the opportunity to take on leadership roles and learn-by-doing in a safe, fun, and cooperative environment.

Although girls may start building their leadership skills in school and on sports teams, research shows that the courage, confidence, and character girls develop as Girl Scouts stay with them throughout their lives. Our program and outcomes are based in research and our studies show that Girl Scouting has a measurable positive impact on girls. In fact, we can proudly say Girl Scouts are almost 10% more likely than non-Girl Scouts, to have positive expectations about their future based on our studies. We encourage you to learn more about our program and outcomes as you check out our studies and in-depth research for insights and information.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience has been purposefully designed to include a variety of fun and challenging activities to help girls learn, grow, and thrive. And at the base of it all are three keys and three processes.

What girls do in Girl Scouting all fit within our three keys: Discover, Connect, and Take Action.

- **Discover.** When Girl Scouts take part in fun and exciting badge activities, earn a Girl Scout Journey award, go camping, or attend an amazing Girl Scout program or event, you are helping them discover who they are, what they care about, and where their talents lie.
- **Connect.** When Girl Scouts collaborate with others—including the members and leaders of their troop, Girl Scouts from their local community, or community partners and experts—they connect and expand their horizons. This helps them care about, support, inspire, and team up with others both locally and globally.
- **Take Action**. When girls deepen their relationship with the world around them, they're eager to take action to improve the local community and the greater global community and make the world a better place.

So how do we do it? The Girl Scout Leadership Experience draws on three unique processes— Girl-led, Learning by Doing, and Cooperative Learning—that encourage girls to try new things, write their own stories, and develop the skills and confidence to say, "I know I can do this!"

- **Girl-Led.** Girl Scouts take the lead, no matter their age. From selecting the badges they'll pursue to how they'll organize an activity; Girl Scouts have the chance to follow their dreams and grow their skills—and gain the confidence that comes with that.
- **Learning-by-Doing**. Hands-on activities are fun for Girl Scouts of any age, but they also help them feel empowered to shape their own experience. Girl Scouts unlock their "I got this" attitude as they discover they can always dust themselves off and try again when things don't go according to plan.
- **Cooperative Learning**. There's power in having a tight-knit group of friends who will learn with you, grow with you, and always cheer you on. Girl Scouts see firsthand that teamwork, respect, and collaboration can fuel them through any challenge that comes their way.

As a volunteer, you'll draw on these three processes as you lead girls of any age. And naturally, girl-led at the Daisy level will look very different from girl-led at the Ambassador level. What is most important is that your Girl Scouts make decisions about the activities they will do together and make choices as they're doing the activities together.

As girls learn from their successful, and not so successful tries, they gain confidence. All girls should have the opportunity to lead within their peer group. By the time girls are Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, they will be using the leadership skills they've developed to take on more ownership of their activities, mentor younger Girl Scouts, and take action to make the world a better place.

One last tip about following these processes. Girl Scouting isn't a to-do list, so please don't feel that checking activities off a list is more important than tuning in to what interests' girls and sparks their imaginations. Projects don't have to come out perfectly—in fact, it's a valuable learning experience when they don't—Girl Scouts don't have to fill their vests and sashes with badges. What matters most is the fun and learning that takes place as they make experiences their own, so don't be afraid to step back and let your girls take the lead.

Reflection

Was a badge-earning activity a resounding success? Or was it derailed by something your troop hadn't factored in? No matter the activity's outcome, you can amplify its impact by encouraging your girls to reflect on their latest endeavor.

Reflection is the necessary debrief that reinforces what girls learned. As your Girl Scouts explore the what's and why's, they'll make meaningful connections between the activity at hand and future challenges that come their way. In other words, reflection gives girls the confidence boost they need to pick themselves up, try again, and succeed.
Keep in mind that reflection does not need to be a formal process, but you can kick-start the conversation with three simple questions: What? So what? and Now what?

What? Go over the "what" of the activity. For example, ask:

- What did we do today?
- What part was your favorite?
- If we did it again, what would you want to do differently and what would you want to repeat?

So what? Next, move to the "so what." You might ask:

- So, what did you learn by doing this activity?
- So, what did you learn about yourself?
- So, what did you learn about your community (or environment, school, or others) that you didn't know before?

Last, review the now what. Say something like:

- Now that we've done this, what would you like to do next?
- Now that you know this about yourselves, what would you like to try next?
- Now that we've completed this Take Action™ project, what do you think we should do next to make sure it continues?

This form of reflection, or whatever style of reflection you choose to use with your girls, is a powerful component of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience that helps girls to carry these lessons with them for the rest of their lives.

Progression

Although program elements—like outdoor expeditions or entrepreneurial ventures—align across all grade levels, Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors won't be doing the same activities as Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors. But with your support, they will get there!

Girl Scout programming is designed to be progressive and it's what makes Girl Scouting fun and effective! By building on the knowledge and skills they gain year after year, your girls' confidence will grow exponentially, and they'll be eager to try new things and take on new challenges. As a volunteer, you will cultivate a supportive, nonjudgmental space where your Girl Scouts can test their skills and be unafraid to fail.

Keep in mind that progression drives success for your troop. In the following links, we've outlined some suggestions that will help you determine when your girls are ready for their next outdoor challenge, their next troop trip, or their next cookie-selling challenge.

Inclusion

Girl Scouts has a strong commitment to diversity and inclusion, and we welcome and embrace girls of all abilities and backgrounds into our wonderful sisterhood.

Inclusion is at the core of who we are; it's about being a sister to every Girl Scout and celebrating our unique strengths. Part of the important work you will do includes modeling friendship and kindness for your girls and showing them what it means to practice empathy. Through equal treatment, you can nurture an inclusive troop environment.

When scheduling, planning, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

The Girl Scout Program: National Program Pillars & More

Girl Scouts four Program Pillars—STEM, Life Skills, Outdoors, and Entrepreneurship—form the foundation of the Girl Scout program and work together to build girls' curiosity, kindness, and can-do spirit. In fact, every aspect of our program, and every Girl Scout adventure, can be traced back to one of our four program pillars.

STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math). Girls are naturally curious and have a strong desire to help others. Whether they're building a robot, developing a video game, or studying the stars, Girl Scouts become better problem-solvers and critical thinkers through STEM and gain the confidence to turn their ideas into breakthrough inventions to help others.

Life Skills. Girl Scouts life skills programming includes a mix of practical skills, tools, and activities that foster positive values in girls like financial literacy, civic engagement, and community service. Skills that help them discover that they have what it takes to raise their voices as community advocates, make smart decisions about their finances, and form strong, healthy relationships—skills that inspire them to accept challenges and overcome obstacles, now and always.

Outdoors. Girl Scouts has been building girls' outdoor confidence and skills for over one hundred years through a variety of outdoor adventures like camping and nature focused badges that inspire them to spend time outdoors and develop a lifelong appreciation of nature. An appreciation that sparks girls' desire to take action as environmental stewards in their community and across the globe.

Entrepreneurship. Starting with Girl Scouts iconic Girl Scout Cookie Program and growing to include the fall product program and a series of entrepreneurship badges, this pillar instills and nurtures an entrepreneurial mindset and fuels girls' curiosity and confidence as they learn the essentials of running their own businesses and how to think like entrepreneurs.

Important Differences: Journeys and Badges

Journeys and badges are designed to give girls different leadership-building experiences, all while having fun!

- Journeys are multi-session leadership experiences through which girls explore topics such as bullying, media literacy, or environmental stewardship. They'll do hands-on activities, connect with experts, and take the reins on age-appropriate Take Action projects. Because of their leadership focus, Journeys are also a prerequisite for Girl Scouts highest awards, the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.
- Badges are about skill building. When a Girl Scout earns a badge, it shows that she's learned a new skill, such as how to make a healthy snack, build and test a toy race car, or take great digital photos. Badges may even spark an interest at school or plant the seed for a future career.

If they choose, your Girl Scouts can pursue badges and Journey awards in the same year. If they do choose to take this approach, encourage them to find the connections between the two to magnify their Girl Scout experience. While you're having fun, keep in mind that the quality of a girl's experience and the skills and pride she gains from earning Journey awards and skill-building badges far outweigh the quantity of badges she earns.

As a volunteer, you don't have to be the expert in any badge or Journey topic. In fact, when you show that you're not afraid to fail and willing to try something new, you are modeling what it is to be a Girl Scout. Our badge and Journey requirements are structured so your girls can learn new skills without you having to be an expert in all the assorted topics, including STEM.

Important Differences: Community Service and Take Action Projects

As your Girl Scouts look for meaningful ways to give back to their community, you can help sharpen their problem-solving skills and expand their definition of doing good by discussing community service and Take Action projects. Both projects serve essential needs, but at different levels.

When a Girl Scout performs community service, she is responding to an immediate need in a one-off, "doing for" capacity. In other words, she is making an impact right now. Through Take Action/service learning, girls explore the root causes of a community need and address it in a lasting way; they truly make the world—or their part of it—a better place.

If your troop members want to pursue their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award, they'll develop a Take Action project on an issue that's close to their hearts. To make Take Action projects even more impactful for your Girl Scouts, set time aside for them to reflect on their projects. When they take time to internalize the lessons they've learned, they're more likely to find success in their future projects—or anything else they put their minds to.

Traditions, Ceremonies, and Special Girl Scout Days

Time-honored traditions and ceremonies unite Girl Scout sisters, and the millions of Girl Scout alums who came before them—around the country and around the globe—and remind girls how far their fellow trailblazers have come and just how far they'll go.
A few of those extra special days, when you will want to turn up the celebrations, include:

- Juliette Gordon Low's birthday or Founder's Day, October 31, marks the birth in 1860 of Girl Scouts of the USA founder Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia.
- World Thinking Day, February 22, celebrates international friendship. It is an opportunity for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides to connect with each other and explore a common theme around the world.

- Girl Scouts' birthday, March 12, commemorates the day in 1912 when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the organization's first eighteen girl members in Savannah, Georgia.

So, whether they're working on a new badge, making new friends, or closing meetings with a friendship circle, your troop won't want to miss out on Girl Scouts' treasured traditions, ceremonies, and special Girl Scout days.

Highest Awards

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards honor girls who become forces for good and create a lasting impact in their communities, nationally and around the world.

As your Girl Scouts discover the power of their voices, they'll want to take on an issue that is close to their hearts and meaningful to them. Encourage them to turn their ideas into reality by pursuing Girl Scouts' highest awards.

- The Girl Scout Bronze Award can be earned by Juniors. The prerequisite is completion of one Junior Journey and the associated Take Action project. The Bronze Award is earned by the group.
- The Girl Scout Silver Award can be earned by Cadettes. The prerequisite is completion of one Cadette Journey and the associated Take Action project. The Silver Award can be earned by an individual girl or by a small group.
- The Girl Scout Gold Award can be earned by Seniors and Ambassadors who have completed either two Girl Scout Senior/Ambassador level Journeys and the associated Take Action project or earned the Silver Award and completed one Senior/Ambassador level Journey.

Did you know that a Gold Award Girl Scout is entitled to enlist at a higher paygrade when she joins the U.S. military? A Gold Award Girl Scout's achievements also prime her for the fast track when it comes to college admissions and make her an outstanding candidate for academic scholarships and other financial awards.

Girl Scouts are eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which they are registered. Any Girl Scout is eligible to earn the Girl Scout Gold Award even if she joined Girl Scouts for the first time in high school.

Check out the Gold Award Class Workbook to read about girls in your community and how they're doing their part to make the world a better place. For inspiration, consider inviting a local Gold Award Girl Scout to speak to your troop about how she took the lead and made a difference. You'll be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish when they take the lead—and by the confidence, grit, problem-solving, time and project management, and team-building expertise they gain while doing so!

Girl Scout Travel and Destinations

Girl Scouts encourages girls to try new things and see the world with fresh eyes, both inside and outside of their usual troop meetings. As COVID-19-related travel restrictions are lifted across the globe and you and your troop feel safe doing so, you may be excited to travel and explore the world as a troop.

Traveling as a Girl Scout is a more engaging experience than traveling with family, school, or other groups because girls take the lead. They'll make important decisions about where to go, what to do, and take increasing responsibility for the planning of their trips. During this process, they will also build their organizational and management skills—skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

Girl Scout travel is built on a progression of activities, so girls are set up for success. Daisies and Brownies start with field trips and progress to day trips, overnights, and weekend trips. Juniors can take their adventures farther with longer regional trips. And Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors can travel the United States and then the world. There are even opportunities for older girls to travel independently by joining trips their council organizes or participating in GSUSA's travel program, Destinations.

Planning Troop Adventures

At the beginning stages of planning a trip, visit the volunteer training page to find out more about their approval process for overnight and extended travel. They will also likely have training programs that will raise your confidence as a chaperone.

Not sure where to begin? Check out the Girl Scout Guide to U.S. Travel. This resource is designed for Juniors and older Girl Scouts who want to take extended trips—that is, longer than a weekend—but also features tips and tools for budding explorers who are just getting started with field trips and overnights.

Once girls have mastered planning and embarking upon trips in the United States, they might be ready for a global travel adventure! Global trips usually take a few years to plan, and the Girl Scout Global Travel Toolkit can walk you through the entire process.

Safety First

If you're planning any kind of trip—from a short field trip to an overseas expedition—the "Trip and Travel" section of Safety Activity Checkpoints is your go-to resource for safety. Our Volunteer Training page is a good place to explore the steps to getting out and about!

Be sure to follow all the basic safety guidelines, like the buddy system and first aid requirements, in addition to the specific guidelines for travel. You'll also want to refer to the COVID-19 guidelines in Safety Activity Checkpoints as well as any COVID-19 guidelines for your destination. You will learn more about how to use and follow Girl Scouts Safety Activity Checkpoints in the next section.

Note that extended travel (more than three nights) is not covered under the basic Girl Scout insurance plan and will require additional coverage.

Travel and Girl Scout Program Connections

It's easy to connect eye-opening travel opportunities to the leadership training and skill building your girls are doing in Girl Scouts! When it's safe to travel together, girls can use their creativity to connect any leadership Journey theme into an idea for travel. For example, girls learn where their food comes from in the Sow What? Journey. That would connect well with a trip focusing on sustainable agriculture and sampling tasty foods!

There are abundant opportunities to build real skills through earning badges too. The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, but there are plenty more, such as Eco Camper, New Cuisines, Coding for Good, and, of course, all the financial badges that help girls budget and earn money for their trips.

Want to include Girl Scout traditions in your trip? Look no farther than the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace in Savannah, Georgia! Your girls also have the chance to deepen their connections to Girl Scouts around the world by visiting one of the WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) World Centers, which offer low-cost accommodations and special programs in five locations around the world.

And if your troop is looking to stay closer to home this year? Check out all the properties GSGLA has that can be rented out.

As your Girl Scouts excitedly plan their next trip, remember to limit your role to facilitating the girls' brainstorming and planning, never doing the work for them. Share your ideas and insights, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

TROOP MANAGEMENT

Leadership is more than "being in charge" or having a title; it's recognizing that you're part of a team and understanding that team's needs and interests.

Here's how you'll do that with your troop!

Girl Scout badges covering topics like civic engagement, healthy living, and communication skills help Girl Scouts grow in confidence as they develop the skills to lead their best life!

Whether by exercising and staying healthy, developing strong relationships with family and peers, advocating on behalf of others, protecting our environment, or exploring careers that can truly change the world for the better, girls:

- Gain the skills and the inspiration to accept challenges and overcome obstacles.
- Develop greater confidence and a stronger sense of self.
- Are happier overall and display more positive values throughout life.

Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is based on three keys—discover, connect, and take action—but it's not just for your troop. As a Girl Scout leader, you will embark on your own leadership journey as you help girls develop the leadership skills they'll use to make the world a better place. Here are a few basic concepts that outline what leadership means in Girl Scouting.

Leadership is teaching your Girl Scouts:

- That they can do and be anything!
- That they are decision makers and should own their decisions.
- How to live the Girl Scout Law by modeling it for them.

As a leader, see yourself as a coach who:

- Advises, discusses, and cheers on your troop, not as a teacher with a planned lesson or activity but as a mentor and coach.
- Ensures each member understands and can carry out their responsibilities within the troop.
- Encourages Girl Scouts to build their skills and their ethics.
- Gives more responsibilities to the girls as they grow and develop.

It is important to remember that:

- You cannot know everything that your Girl Scouts might ever want to learn.
- You'll explore and learn alongside your girls and grow your confidence in the process.
- You're not expected to know everything about Girl Scouting, but you should know where to go for information—and to ask for help when you need it.

Your Responsibilities as a Girl Scout Volunteer

Your responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Understanding and coaching Girl Scouts Three Keys to Leadership—discover, connect, and take action—that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Sharing your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible approach.
- Working in a partnership with your Girl Scouts so that their activities are girl-led and that they learn by doing, individually and as a group. You'll also partner with other volunteers and GSGLA 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 troop families on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media, and any other method you choose.
- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork, such as permission slips.
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized, and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group.
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise.
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team as well as your council.
- Facilitating a safe experience for every Girl Scout.

Planning for Your First Troop Meeting

Depending on the ages of your girls, you might take the lead in guiding the structure and experiences of your troop—from how and when meetings are held to how the troop communicates, from steering girl-led activities to setting financial expectations. You'll make these decisions collaboratively with your volunteer team or co-leader, as well as with input from the girls and their parents and caregivers.

Use the questions below to guide your conversations with your troop committee volunteers or co-leader before discussing these topics with parents and caregivers.

- When will we meet and for how long? How frequently should we schedule troop meetings?
- Where will we meet? Your meeting space should be somewhere safe, clean, and secure that allows all girls to participate. Some great meeting space ideas include schools, places of worship, libraries, and community centers. If working with teens, consider meeting at coffee shops, bookstores, or another place they enjoy.
- Which components of the uniform will families need to purchase? Which uniform components will the troop provide for each girl?
- Will our troop be a single-grade level or facilitated as a multi-level troop with girls of many grade levels combined into one troop? If multi-level, how will we make sure they each get an age-appropriate experience?
- How will we keep troop activities and decisions girl-led? Use the Volunteer Toolkit to help you through this process by exploring options for activities and reviewing the meeting plans and resource lists.
- How often are we going to communicate with troop families? Which channels will we use to keep families in the loop? Effective communication will help set expectations and clarify parent/ caregiver responsibilities.
- Will our troop charge dues, use product program proceeds, and/or charge per activity? How much money will we need to cover supplies and activities? What should our financial plan look like?

Choosing a Meeting Place

What makes a great meeting space? It depends on your troop, but here are a few considerations as you visit potential locations:

- **Cost.** The space should be free to use.
- **Size**. Make sure the space is large enough for the whole group and all planned activities.
- **Availability.** Be sure the space is available for the day and the entire length of time you want to meet.
- **Resources.** Ask if tables and chairs come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby of some sort where you could store supplies or a safe outdoor space for activities.
- **Safety.** Potential spaces must be safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards, and have at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure first-aid equipment is on hand.
- **Facilities.** It goes without saying, but make sure that toilets are sanitary and accessible.
- **Communication-Friendly**. Check for cell reception in the potential space and whether Wi-Fi is available.
- **Allergen-Free**. Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won't bother susceptible girls during meetings.

- **Accessibility**. Your space should accommodate girls with disabilities as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.

Need a few talking points to get the conversation started? Try…

"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 [something your group is doing] and [something else your troop is doing]. 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 [reason why you'd like to meet there]."

Stuck and need additional support? Contact your membership specialist or your service unit support team for help with a troop meeting place.

Virtual Meetings

If your group or troop can't meet in person or hold a traditional meeting, there are many ways to bring the power of Girl Scouting home! Meeting virtually can be a fun and engaging option for your troop.

Before setting up a virtual meeting, you'll want to:

- Partner with troop families to make sure the girls are safe online.
- Select a meeting platform that allows families who may not have internet access to call in.
- Think about logistics. Work with the girls to set up ground rules; consider how you will incorporate in-person meeting traditions in your virtual space and how you'll keep meetings on track.
- Talk with families on how to keep activities girl-led if your girls will be completing them from home.

And don't worry if your girls want to use a web or social platform you're not as familiar with, because you'll learn alongside them! For more tips on successful virtual meetings, check out Tips, Tools, and Ideas for Planning a Great Virtual Meeting.

Girl Scout Troop Size

The troop size "sweet spot" is large enough to provide an interactive and cooperative learning environment and small enough to encourage individual development. Though the ideal troop size is 12 girls, we recommend that groups be no fewer and no larger than:

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

A Girl Scout troop/group must have a minimum of five girls and two approved adult volunteers. Be sure to double-check the volunteer-to-girl ratio table below to make sure you have the right number of adults present for group meetings, events, travel, and camping. Adults and girls registering in groups of fewer than five girls and two approved, unrelated adult volunteers, at least one of whom is female, will be registered as individual Girl Scouts to accurately reflect their status and program experience. Individual girls are always welcome to participate in Girl Scout activities and events.

Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

From troop meetings to camping weekends and cookie booths, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure Girl Scouts have fun and stay safe, no matter their grade level. If you are not sure about the number of adults you will need for your activity, the chart below breaks down the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of Girl Scouts.

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

Safety in Girl Scouting

The emotional and physical safety and well-being of Girl Scouts is our top priority. Safety Activity Checkpoints outlines the Safety Standards and Guidelines used in Girl Scouting, which apply to all Girl Scout activities. All volunteers should review the Safety Activity Checkpoints manual when planning activities with girls in order to manage safety and risk in Girl Scout-sanctioned activities.

In Safety Activity Checkpoints, you will find:

- Girl Scouts Safety Standards and Guidelines, which apply to all Girl Scout activities, including requirements for adult supervision, permission slips, preparation, field trips and overnight trips, and other vital information.
- Activities that are not permitted by Girl Scouts of the USA and actions that girls and volunteers should not take.
- Policies surrounding chartered aircraft trips and aviation.
- First aid and overall health information.
- Standards for well-being and inclusivity along with ways to include Girl Scouts with disabilities and ways to ensure girls' emotional safety.
- Individual safety activity checkpoints for specific activities—such as camping, internet use, and water sports provide activity-specific safety information.

The document is laid out in three primary sections, Safety Standards and Guidelines, Activities at a Glance, and individual safety activity checkpoint pages.

Girl Scouts' Activities at a Glance table provides a quick look at the safety standards for that activity with a focus on two critical points to keep in mind when considering and planning activities for your troop:

- Age-appropriate activities and participation by grade level.
- Any prior approval(s) that may be required by GSGLA before girls participate in a specific activity.

Individual Safety Activity Checkpoint pages provide activity-specific safety measures and guidance on the individual activities that troops and girls may choose to participate in.

Registering Girls and Adults in Girl Scouting

Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). GSUSA membership dues are valid for one year. Membership dues cannot be transferred to another member and are not refundable.

Preregistration for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring. Girls are encouraged to register early to avoid the fall rush. Early registration allows for uninterrupted receipt of forms and materials from staff, helps girls and staff plan ahead, and gets girls excited about all the great things they want to do as Girl Scouts next year. A Girl Scout's grade level is determined by the current membership year beginning October 1.

Lifetime membership is available to anyone who accepts the principles and beliefs of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, pays the one-time lifetime membership fee, and is at least 18 years old (or a high school graduate or equivalent). Volunteers with ten or more years of service can become lifetime members at the discounted young alum rate.

Adding New Girls to Your Troop

Growing your troop is a great way to share the power of the Girl Scout experience and there are many ways to get the word out, like hanging posters at your girl's school, using social media to reach families in your community, or including your troop in GSGLA's Opportunity Catalog.

Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

Girl Scouts is for every girl, and that's why we embrace girls of all abilities and backgrounds with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl—regardless of socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, physical or cognitive ability, sexual orientation, primary language, or religion—is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.

We believe inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, all girls being offered the same opportunities with respect, dignity, and celebration of their unique strengths. It's about being a sister to every Girl Scout. You're accepting and inclusive when you:

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

If you have questions about accommodating an individual girl, please email customer care or call (213) 213-0123.

As you think about where, when, and how often to meet with your group, consider the needs, resources, safety, and beliefs of all members and potential members. Include the special needs of any members who have disabilities or whose parents or caregivers have disabilities. But please, do not rely on visual cues to inform you of a disability; approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population has a disability—that's one in five people of every socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and religion.

If you want to find out what a girl with a disability needs to make her Girl Scout experience successful, simply ask her or her parent or caregiver. If you are open and honest, they'll likely respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone.

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

Here are some examples of ways to modify activities:

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

Focus on a person's abilities—on what she can do rather than on what she cannot. In that spirit, use people-first language that puts the person before the disability.

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

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

Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities

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

Getting Support for Your Troop

Just as your Girl Scouts rally around each other for support, you will also have a dedicated Girl Scout support team, consisting of GSGLA staff and passionate volunteers like you. Your support team, which is referred to as a service unit in GSGLA, is ready to offer local learning opportunities and advice as well as answer your questions about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, product sales, and much more.

Before you hold your first troop meeting with girls, consider the support and people resources you'll need to cultivate an energizing troop experience. Parents, friends, family, and other members of the community have their own unique strengths and can provide time, experience, and ideas to a troop, so get them involved from the very beginning as part of your volunteer troop team. This team is made up of troop leaders (like you) and troop committee volunteers.

Your troop committee volunteers are the extra set of eyes, ears, and hands that help the troop safely explore the world around them. Depending on your troop's needs, they can play a more active role—for instance, someone can step up as a dedicated troop treasurer—or simply provide an occasional helping hand when you need to keep a meeting activity on track.

If a parent or caregiver isn't sure if they can commit to a committee or co-leader role, encourage them to try volunteering in a smaller capacity that matches their skill set. Just like your young Girl Scouts, once troop parents and caregivers discover they can succeed in their volunteer role, they'll feel empowered to volunteer again.

Troop Management Tools and Resources

From toolkits and guides to regular contact with experienced individuals, you'll have all the support you need to be a Girl Scout volunteer. Here's a list of some important resources you'll want to check out.

The Volunteer Toolkit

With the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), girls and leaders can explore meeting topics and program activities together and follow the fun as they plan their Girl Scout year.

Using the VTK troop leaders can:

- Plan the troop's calendar year and meeting schedule.
- Email parents/caregivers with one click.
- View the troop roster, renew girls' memberships, and update girls' contact information.
- View meeting plans for Journeys and badges, including suggested tracks for multi-level groups (K–5 and 6–12).
- Customize meeting agendas to fit your troop.
- Explore individual meeting plans that show a breakdown of every step, including a list of materials needed, editable time allotments for each activity within a meeting, and printable meeting aids.
- Record attendance at meetings and their troop's badge and Journey achievements.
- Add GSGLA or custom events to the troop's calendar.
- Easily locate both national and local council resources, such as Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Using the VTK parents and caregivers can:

- View the troop's meeting schedule and individual meeting plans to stay up to date on the badges and Journeys the troop is working on.
- Renew their memberships and update their contact information.
- View their Girl Scout's attendance and achievements.
- See upcoming events the troop is planning or attending.
- Easily locate both national and local council resources.

Additional Tools and Resources

- **The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting** — What does it mean to be a Girl Scout? You'll find it all in The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting. These grade level-specific binders will break it down for your girls. It's part handbook, part badge book, and 100 percent fun! Visit our shops in person or online to purchase yours today!
- **Safety Activity Checkpoints** — Safety is paramount in Girl Scouting. The Safety Activity Checkpoints contain everything you need to know to help keep your girls safe during a variety of exciting activities outside of their regular Girl Scout troop meetings.
- **Tips for Troop Leaders** — When you're looking for real-world advice from fellow troop leaders who've been there, this volunteer-to-volunteer resource on the Girl Scouts of the USA website has what you need for a successful troop year.
- **Girl Scout Volunteers in Your Community** — Remember that Girl Scout support team we mentioned? You'll find them in your service unit! Troops are organized geographically into service units or communities. You'll find a local network of fellow leaders and administrative volunteers ready to offer tips and advice to help you succeed in your volunteer role.
- **Customer Care** — Questions? Need help resolving an issue? We've got you! Customer Care can be reached during business hours at (213)-213-0123. You can also submit a contact us form or email Customer Care.

Take Advantage of Learning Opportunities

We know that when you have the knowledge and skills you need to manage your girls, both you and your troop will thrive. Our Volunteer Training page is a great place to learn about ongoing learning opportunities that will help you grow your skills and confidence.

Know How Much You are Appreciated

What begins with Girl Scouts speaking up at a troop meeting can go all the way to speaking in front of their city council for a cause they champion—and they will have your support to thank for that. Your volunteer role makes a powerful difference. Thank you for all you do.

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

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

Volunteer Appreciation

Without our passionate and dedicated volunteers, there would be no Girl Scouting. That's why we celebrate National Volunteer Month every April and turn up the party as we ring in National Girl Scout Leader's Day on April 22.

Girl Scouts also celebrates National Volunteer Week, which falls during the third day of April. What can we say, we love our volunteers! Visit our website to learn more about how GSGLA recognizes our volunteers.

Girl Scout Participation in Activities with Other Scouting Organizations

The decision by Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to open the Boy Scout program to girls has fundamentally altered the nature of the relationship between BSA and Girl Scouts nationally and locally. Local relationships between BSA and Girl Scout councils that have led to partnerships and joint activities in the past may now create certain risks or challenges for Girl Scouts. For this reason, councils are encouraged to avoid joint recruiting and/or joint participation in community events or activities.

Marketplace Confusion

To protect the integrity of the Girl Scout brand and reinforce our programming as unique, girl-only, and best in class, we must ensure that we take care that the activities in which girls participate are exclusive to the Girl Scout program, are safe and girl-led, and are conducted under the appropriate supervision of Girl Scouts.

Protecting Use of Girl Scout Materials

Girl Scout materials are intended for the exclusive use of Girl Scouts and are protected as the intellectual property of Girl Scouts of the USA. Materials include but are not limited to: Girl Scout logo, tag lines, and/or program and badge requirements.

TROOP FINANCES

With your guidance, your Girl Scouts will learn money skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Your Girl Scout troop will plan and finance its own activities, and you'll coach your girls as they earn and manage troop funds. Troop activities are powered by proceeds earned through council-sponsored product program activities (such as the Girl Scout Cookie Program), group money-earning activities (council approved, of course), and any dues your troop may charge.

Remember that all funds collected, raised, earned, or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting belong to the troop and must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Funds are administered through the troop and do not belong to individuals.

Establishing a Troop Account

No matter how much your troop plans to save or spend, you'll need a safe place to deposit your troop dues, product program proceeds, and other funds. If you've stepped up to lead an existing troop, you may inherit a checking account, but with a new troop, you'll want to open a new bank account. At GSGLA, all troops that have more than $50 and/or plan to participate in council-sponsored money earning activities must have a troop bank account.

Here are a few helpful tips you can take to the bank:

- Be sure to find a bank that has free checking and low fees.
- Designate a "troop treasurer," that is, one person who is responsible for troop funds and for keeping a daily account of expenditures.
- Ensure your account comes with a debit card that you can use during activities or trips. These transactions are easier to track at the end of the year.
- Be prepared and make sure another troop volunteer has a debit card for the troop account in case the main card is lost.
- Handle a lost troop debit card the same way you would a personal debit card: cancel it immediately.
- Keep troop funds in the bank before an activity or trip and pay for as many items as possible in advance of your departure.

Accounts must be held in the name of "Girl Scouts of Greater LA, Troop #_____"(or) "Girl Scouts of Greater LA, Service Unit #_____". All bank accounts are opened as a non-profit business checking account, using **GSGLA's Tax ID number** to open the account. Approved Pathway group accounts must be held in the name of "Girl Scouts of Greater LA, (name of group)" and follow the same guidelines as troops and service units.

Please do not use your personal social security number to open your Girl Scout account. Although a Social Security number will not affect tax status for the individual, the use of personal information can complicate identification of troop and GSGLA accounts.

Some banks may request to run a ChexSystem or credit report on signers for the account using the signer's Social Security number. This is a standard procedure for most banks and credit unions when opening a business account and is for their purposes only. GSGLA does not have access to any information from the ChexSystem or credit reports.

As a reminder, GSGLA REQUIRES a troop/SU bank account to have two authorized signers to open a bank account and the third authorized signer should be added within 120 days of opening the account. **All accounts must have the protection of two signatures when writing a check.**

GSGLA now has a preferred bank for new troop/SU bank accounts which can be found in the Bank Letter Request eForm. After selecting a bank branch, the troop leader should complete the Bank Letter Request eForm. The leader will then receive the Bank Authorization letter containing GSGLA's tax ID # and other documents needed to take to the bank to open the account. Please read the following requirements for opening a bank account:

Follow our council's financial policies and procedures for setting up an account. Troop/Group Financials – Quick Reference information. Most council-sponsored product program activities have specific banking and tracking procedures.

Disbanding Troops and Unused Troop Funds

When a troop disbands, any unused Girl Scout money left in the account becomes the property of the GSGLA. Troop funds are not the property of any individual member. Before disbanding, ask your girls how they want to pay it forward. They may decide to donate any unused funds to their service unit, to another troop, or to pay for Girl Scout activities. Activities can also include purchasing materials to support another organization through Take Action projects. Consult your membership specialist for details.

Closing the Troop Account

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

Year-End Financial Report

Each year, by June 30th, troops are required to complete the Troop/Service Unit Year-End Financial Report. This report provides GSGLA with an overview of the troop over the past year.

Within the report, troops will be asked for information regarding:

- Basic troop details
- Information about what your troop accomplished over the year (troop activities).
- What the troop leader has experienced & observed (through a survey).
- Annual troop financials (financial summary with some clarifying questions when applicable and uploading of two bank statements).

Troops that do not complete the Troop/Service Unit Year-End Financial Report will not be able to participate in troop money earning activities including the Fall Product and Cookie Product Programs. Troops that wish to participate in troop money earning activities should reach out to their assigned staff membership specialist to get the annual cut-off date for submission to participate.

Money-Earning Basics for Troops

Money-Earning Options

- **The Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Sales —** All girl members are eligible to participate in council-sponsored product program activities each year with volunteer supervision—the Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Fall Product Program. Please remember, volunteers and Girl Scout council staff don't sell products—girls do.
- **Group Money-Earning Activities —** organized by the troop (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with volunteers) and that earn money for the group.

Participation Guidance

Girls' participation in both council-sponsored product program activities and group money-earning projects is based on 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 program 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.

Additional Guidelines

- Keep these specific guidelines—some of which are required by the Internal Revenue Service—in mind to ensure that sales are conducted with legal and financial integrity.
- All rewards earned by girls through the product program activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel, and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).
- Rewards are based on sales ranges set by councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
- Troops are encouraged to participate in council product programs as their primary money-earning activity; any group money earning shouldn't compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or Fall Product Program.
- Obtain written approval from your council before a group money-earning event; most councils ask that you submit a request for approval.
- Girl Scouts discourages the use of games of chance. Any activity which could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo) must be approved by GSGLA and be conducted in compliance with all local and state laws.
- Girl Scouts' Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash. Girls can collect partial payment toward the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and other Girl Scout–authorized products through participation in council-approved product program donation programs.
- Girl Scouts forbids product demonstration parties where the use of the Girl Scout trademark increases revenue for another business, such as in-home product parties. Any business using the Girl Scout trademark or other Girl Scout intellectual property must seek authorization from GSUSA.
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the ages and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product programs. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group according to council procedures.

Sample Money-Earning Activities

- **Collections/Drives**
  - Cell phones for refurbishment
  - Used ink cartridges turned in for money
  - Christmas tree recycling
- **Food/Meal Events**
  - Lunch box auction (prepared lunch or meal auctioned off)
  - Themed meals, like a high tea or a build-your-own-taco bar, related to activities girls are planning; for instance, if girls are earning money for travel, they could tie the meal to their destination.

- **Restaurant Fundraisers**
  - Restaurants offer local troops the opportunity to fundraise by donating a percentage of the restaurant sales on a particular day. Girl Scout troops and service units may:
    - Organize fundraising events at restaurants and keep 100% of the money raised.
    - Wear their uniforms when promoting their fundraiser and during the event itself.
- **Service(s)**
  - Service-a-thon (people sponsor a girl doing service and funds go to support a trip or other activity).
  - Babysitting for holiday (New Year's Eve) or council events.
  - Raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, shoveling snow, walking pets
  - Cooking class or other specialty class

The Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program are designed to unleash the entrepreneurial potential in your girls. From there, your troop may decide to earn additional funds on its own.

Help Your Troop Reach its Financial Goals

We get it—there's something exciting about opening that first case of Girl Scout Cookies. However, before your girls take part in all the cookie program fun, it's important they have a clear plan and purpose for their product program activities.

As a volunteer, you have the opportunity to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps for the girls:

1. **Set goals for money-earning activities** — What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities present themselves?
2. **Create a budget** — Use a budget worksheet that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, and so on) and available income (the group's account balance, projected cookie proceeds, and so on).
3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn** — Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.
4. **Make a plan** — The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans.
   a. Will cookie and other product programs—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the group's goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference?
   b. Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group's financial goals?
   c. In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.

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

Remember: It's great for girls to have opportunities like the Girl Scout Cookie Program to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals. As 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!

Financial Management and Product Program Abilities by Grade Level

As with other Girl Scout activities, girls build their financial and sales savvy as they get older. Every girl will be different, but here you'll find some examples of the abilities and opportunities for progression of girls at each grade level.

Girl Scout Daisies

- The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and does all group budgeting.
- Parents/caregivers may decide they will contribute to the cost of activities.
- Girls can participate in Girl Scout Cookie Program activities and other council-sponsored product programs.
- Daisies are always paired with a volunteer when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but volunteers handle the money and keep the girls safe.
- Girls should be given the opportunity to practice identifying money and counting back change with an adult during each transaction.

Girl Scout Brownies

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

Girl Scout Juniors

- The group volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.
- 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 based on their plans and income from the group dues.
- Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.
- Girls budget for Take Action projects including the Girl Scout Bronze Award if they are pursuing it.

Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

- Girls estimate costs based on plans.
- Girls determine the amount of group dues, if any, and the scope of money-earning projects.
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.
- Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning programs.
- 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 Girl Scout Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.

Working with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Local sponsors can help councils power innovative programs for Girl Scouts. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations, and individuals may be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, offer in-kind donations, provide activity materials, or loan equipment. Encourage your girls to celebrate a sponsor's contribution to the troop by sending thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony, or working together on a Take Action project.

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

- **Avoid fundraising for other organizations.** Girl Scouts are not allowed to solicit money on behalf of another organization when identifying themselves as Girl Scouts by wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. However, you and your group can support another organization through Take Action projects. Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose as long as they are not wearing anything that officially identifies them as Girl Scouts.

- **Steer 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.
- **Be 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.
- **Avoid selling or endorsing commercial products.** A commercial product is any product sold at a retail location. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell such products.

Donations to a Troop/Group/SU/Gold Award Project

All Troops/Groups (Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior, Ambassador, Multi-Level/Rainbow) and Service Units may receive a gift from any one source during one Girl Scout year of up to $1,000. Gold Award Girls working towards their Gold Award may individually receive a maximum of $1,000 from any one source. For gifts in excess of $1,000, the balance remains with GSGLA.

If the direct gift is larger than the maximum limit or if the donor wants a tax receipt, the gift must be sent directly to GSGLA. A troop leader or a SUM must complete the process by submitting an eForm. Once this form and donation are received, GSGLA will distribute payment to the Troop/Group/Service Unit.

For questions, please review the eForm or contact Fund Development, or call (213) 213-0123.

ENGAGING FAMILIES

Creating the kind of environment in which girls are unafraid to try new things and to be who they want to be starts with you! By meeting your girls where they are, you'll help them develop the leadership skills they'll use now and as they grow.

Understanding Healthy Development in Girls

It sounds simple, but just being attentive to what girls are experiencing as they mature is a big help to them—and to you, as you guide and mentor them! You will experience different joys and challenges with each Girl Scout level, but here are some guidelines for meeting girls' needs and abilities at different grade levels, you will also find these listed in the adult guide of each leadership Journey.

Girl Scout Daisies

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

Girl Scout Brownies

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

Girl Scout Juniors

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

Girl Scout Cadettes

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

Girl Scout Seniors

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

Girl Scout Ambassadors

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

Engaging Families

You want your Girl Scouts to have fun, be inspired, take risks, and learn about themselves and the world—that's why you're a Girl Scout troop leader or troop volunteer! Parents and caregivers want the same thing for their girls but getting families to pitch in and play an active role in the troop while also enhancing the experience for their girls and themselves can be tricky for many volunteers. It doesn't have to be this way.

Kick the Year Off Right by Engaging Parents and Other Caregivers

When families step up and play an active part in troop life, your troop can shine its brightest! Plus, girls feel a special sense of pride when their families take part and show interest in the things they are doing.

What Is a Parent and Caregiver Meeting?

It is the first meeting you have to start each troop year—whether you are a new or returning troop, it is valuable for all troops.

Why Hold a Meeting? Kicking off each year with a parent and caregiver meeting sets the troop up for success. Outlining clear expectations, building a team, and engaging parents in the Girl Scout experience is a great way to start off on the right foot. When parents are involved, leaders have support, the troop has a plan, and girls' benefit!

The meeting helps:

- Families understand what Girl Scouting can do for their girl.
- Families and leaders identify ways they will work as a team to support the troop.
- Families and leaders agree about what the troop pays for and what families pay for individually.
- You fill key troop positions—you never know which parent will make an awesome assistant leader or troop cookie manager.
- Families know how the troop will communicate things like upcoming events or schedule changes.
- Families learn about uniforms, books, and other important basics.

For even more tips on working with troop families, check out Girl Scouts' Tips for Troop Leaders hub.

How to Keep Parents and Caregivers Engaged

Make the Ask(s)

The main reason people don't take action is because they were never asked to in the first place. That's why hearing one out of three Girl Scout parents say no one had communicated expectations around involvement with their girl's troop is so troubling. Parents may have many talents, but they're certainly not mind readers.

If you're nervous about getting turned down, don't be. Sure, a few parents might be unable to lend a hand, but the helpers you do get will be worth their weight in gold. And just because someone wasn't available a month or two ago doesn't mean they won't be free to help now. Loop back, follow up, and ask again!

Make Sense of "Why"

Explain that not only does the whole troop benefit with extra help from parents and other caregivers, but also that girls feel a special sense of pride in seeing their own family member step up and take a leadership role. Getting involved can strengthen the caregiver/girl bond and is a meaningful way to show daughters that they are a priority in their parents' lives.

Make It Quick and Easy

Everybody's got a full plate these days, so instead of starting conversations with a list of tasks or responsibilities that parents and other caregivers could take on (which can be intimidating), ask how much time each week they might be able to dedicate to the troop, then go from there. For instance, if a troop mom or dad has 15 minutes each week to spare, they could organize and manage the calendar for troop snacks and carpools. If a grandparent has one to two hours, they could assist with leading the troop through a specific badge on a topic they're already comfortable with.

Make Family Part of the Formula

While Girl Scout programming is always focused on the girls themselves, it's important and helpful to open up a few events to their families throughout the year. Inviting the whole crew to celebrate her accomplishments in Girl Scouting—whether at a holiday open house, a bridging ceremony, or a fun "reverse meeting" where girls take the role of leaders and guide the adults, including caregivers, through an activity—will help parents better understand the value of Girl Scouts and they'll be more likely to invest their time and talents to the troop.

That said, there's no need to wait for a special event to engage families in their girls' Girl Scout life. Keep communication lines open throughout the year—whether it's through your troop's social media page, personal emails, or in-person chats—to keep parents in the loop on what the girls are doing and learning during each meeting and encourage them to let their daughters "be the experts" at home, explaining or teaching the new skills they've learned. You can get everyone in on the fun and keep Girl Scouts strong at home by sharing the family badge guides on the Volunteer Toolkit with parents and caregivers.

CREATING A SAFE SPACE

A safe space is where girls feel that they can be themselves, without explanation or judgment. As a volunteer, the environment you create is just as important as the activities girls do—it's the key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of! Cultivate a space where confidentiality is respected, and girls can express their true selves.

Recognize and Support Each Girl

You're a role model and a mentor to your girls. Since you play an important role in their lives, they need to know that you consider each of them an important person too. They can weather a poor meeting place or an activity that flops, but they cannot endure being ignored or rejected.

- Give a shout-out when you see girls trying their best, not just when they've had a clear success.
- Emphasize the positive qualities that make each girl worthy and unique.
- Be generous with praise and stingy with rebuke.
- Help your girls find ways to show acceptance of and support for one another.

Promote Fairness

Girls are sensitive to injustice. They forgive mistakes if they are sure you are trying to be fair. They look for fairness in how responsibilities are shared, in handling of disagreements, and in your responses to performance and accomplishment.

- When possible, ask the girls what they think is fair before decisions are made.
- Explain your reasoning and show why you did something.
- Be willing to apologize if needed.
- Try to see that responsibilities as well as the chances for feeling important are equally divided.
- Help girls explore and decide for themselves the fair ways of solving problems, carrying out activities, and responding to behavior and accomplishments.

Build Trust

Girls need your belief in them and your support when they try new things. You'll also need to show them that you won't betray their confidence.

- Show girls you trust them to think for themselves and use their own judgment.
- Encourage them to make the important decisions in the group.
- Give them assistance in correcting their own mistakes.
- Support girls in trusting one another—let them see firsthand how trust can be built, lost, regained, and strengthened.

Inspire Open Communication

Girls want someone who will listen to what they think, feel, and want to do. They like having someone they can talk to about the important things happening in their lives.

- Listen to the girls. Respond with words and actions.
- Speak your mind openly when you are happy or concerned about something and encourage girls to do the same.
- Leave the door open for girls to seek advice, share ideas and feelings, and propose plans or improvements.
- Help girls see how open communication can result in action, discovery, better understanding of self and others, and a more comfortable climate for fun and accomplishment.

Managing Conflict

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, but if handled constructively, they show girls that they can overcome their differences, exercise diplomacy, and improve their communication and relationships. Respecting others and being a sister to every Girl Scout means that shouting, verbal abuse, or physical confrontations are never warranted and cannot be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment.

When a conflict arises between girls or a girl and a volunteer, get those involved to sit down together and talk calmly in a nonjudgmental manner, keeping in mind that each party may need some time—a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this. Talking in this way might feel uncomfortable and difficult now, but it lays the groundwork for working well together in the future. Whatever you do, do not spread your complaint around to others—that won't help the situation and causes only embarrassment and anger.

You'll also find conflict resolution activities in some of the Journeys, such as the Amaze Journey for Cadettes or the Mission Sisterhood Journey for Seniors.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your service unit manager. If the service unit manager cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the service unit manager), the issue can be taken to your membership specialist and, ultimately, to another supervisor if you need extra help.

Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age

Make sure your words and intentions create connection with the girls. Keep in mind how important the following attitudes are.

Listen. Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do (no "you should") is the first step in building a trusting relationship and helping them take ownership of their Girl Scout experience.

Be Honest. If you're not comfortable with a topic or activity, it's OK to say so. No one expects you to be an expert on every topic. Ask for alternatives or seek out volunteers with the required expertise. Owning up to mistakes—and apologizing for them—goes a long way with girls.

Be Open to Real Issues. Outside of Girl Scouts, girls may be dealing with issues like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs, and other serious topics. When you don't know, listen. Also seek help from your membership specialists if you need assistance or more information than you currently have.

Show Respect. Girls often say that their best experiences were the ones where adults treated them as equal partners. Being spoken to as young adults reinforces that their opinions matter and that they deserve respect.

Offer Options. Girls' needs and interests change and being flexible shows them that you respect them and their busy lives. Be ready with age-appropriate guidance and parameters no matter what the girls choose to do.

Stay Current. Show your girls that you're interested in their world by asking them about the TV shows and movies they like; the books, magazines, or blogs they read; the social media influencers they follow; and the music they listen to.

Remember LUTE: Listen, Understand, Tolerate, and Empathize. Try using the LUTE method to thoughtfully respond when a girl is upset, angry, or confused.
Listen. Hear her out, ask for details, and reflect back what you hear; try "What happened next?" or "What did she say?"

Understand. Show that you understand where she's coming from with comments such as, "So what I hear you saying is..." or "I understand why you're unhappy," or "Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too."

Tolerate. You can tolerate the feelings that she just can't handle right now on her own. Let her know that you're there to listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Say something like: "Try talking to me about it. I'll listen," or "I know you're mad—talking it out helps," or "I can handle it—say whatever you want to."

Empathize. Let her know you can imagine feeling what she's feeling with comments such as, "I'm sure that really hurts" or "I can imagine how painful this is for you."

Addressing the Needs of Older Girls

Let these simple tips guide you when working with teenage girls:

- Think of yourself as a "guide on the side"—a partner, a coach, or a mentor, not a "leader."
- Ask girls what rules they need for safety and what group agreements they need to be a good team. When girls take the lead in establishing group rules, they're more likely to stick to them.
- Understand that girls need time to talk, unwind, and have fun together.
- Ask what they think and what they want to do.
- Encourage girls to speak their minds.
- Provide structure, but don't micromanage.
- Give everyone a voice in the group—understanding that "speaking up" may look different for each girl. For some girls, it might mean sharing their ideas in front of the entire group; for others it could mean submitting a written response or contributing as part of a group.
- Treat girls like partners.
- Don't repeat what's said in the group to anyone outside of it (unless necessary for a girl's safety). See "Report Concerns" below to understand the guard rails.

When Sensitive Topics Come Up

It's an amazing feeling when your Girl Scouts put their trust in you—and when they do, they may come to you with some of the issues they are facing such as bullying, peer pressure, dating, athletic and academic performance, and more. Some of these issues may be considered sensitive by families who may have opinions or input about how, and whether, Girl Scouts should cover these topics with their girls.

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

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

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

We at Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles believe every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of girls. When adults and Girl Scouts are together, we all have a responsibility to keep girls safe.

Parents/caregivers make all decisions regarding their girl's participation in Girl Scout program that may be of a sensitive nature. As a volunteer leader, you must get written parental permission for any locally planned program offering that could be considered sensitive. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls will take when the activity is complete.

Be sure to have a form for each girl and keep the forms on hand in case a problem arises. For activities not sponsored by Girl Scouts, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow GSGLA's guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Report Concerns

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

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

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

Contact your membership specialist to find out how to refer the girl and her parent/guardian to experts at school or in the community. Share your concern with the girl's family if this is feasible. All adults are protectors of children. Safety Standards are not only about activity safety, but they are also about the mental, emotional, and psychological safety of girls too. When adults and Girl Scouts are together, we all have a responsibility to keep girls safe. For more information see Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Reporting Child Abuse

All states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have specific laws which identify persons who are required to report suspected child abuse to an appropriate agency. Therefore, if you witness or suspect child abuse or neglect, whether inside or outside of Girl Scouting, always notify your membership specialist immediately and follow GSGLA's guidelines for reporting your concerns to the proper agency within your state.

Each county has its own agencies that manage child welfare cases. GSGLA covers four counties in our membership area.

Los Angeles County
(800) 540-4000
(800) 272-6699 – TDD
Mandated Reporter Online Child Abuse Report

Kern County
(661) 631-6011 or
(760) 375-6049
Online Child Abuse Report

San Bernardino County
(909) 384-9233 or
(800) 827-8724
Information on Reporting Child Abuse

Ventura County
(805) 654-3200
Information on Reporting Child Abuse

Orange County
(714) 940-1000 or
(800) 207-4464
Information on Reporting Child Abuse

For more information, please review these available resources:

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Child Abuse and Neglect
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: How to Report Child Abuse and Neglect
Mandatory Reporters
CDC Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

PRODUCT PROGRAM

Learning to think like an entrepreneur? Developing business smarts? Getting to know customers and building lasting relationships? There's so much more to that box of Thin Mints®!

Whether girls participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program or the Girl Scout Fall Product Program (or both!), everything your Girl Scouts learn prepares them to take on the world. Plus, Girl Scout Cookie proceeds stay in your local community to power amazing year-round experiences—experiences that broaden girls' worlds and spark their sense of wonder.

Five Essential Skills

Girl Scouts as young as five develop five essential skills through the Girl Scout product programs—skills that will help them be successful today and throughout their lives:

- **Goal Setting.** Girls learn to create a plan to reach their goals.
- **Decision Making.** Girls learn to make decisions on their own and as a team.
- **Money Management.** Girls learn to create a budget and handle money.
- **People Skills.** Girls find their voice and up their confidence through customer interactions that build relationships.
- **Business Ethics.** Girls learn to act responsibly and honestly, both in business and in life.

But building their business know-how isn't just tied to the cookies and fall products themselves! Girl Scouts at any level can continue honing their entrepreneurial skills by earning the Cookie Business badges, Cookie Entrepreneur Family Pin, and the Financial Literacy badges year over year.

Before your cookie bosses open shop, be sure to check out these helpful troop leader resources that will empower you to:

- Manage your troop's funds.
- Learn how girls participate in money earning.
- Discover how your troop can reach its financial goals.
- Plan activities to help her earn cookie pins and badges
- Understand just how much your girls are capable of by grade level and how their entrepreneurial skills progress.

Girl Scout Cookie History

What started with Girl Scouts selling home-baked cookies to raise money grew into enlisting professional bakers in 1936 to handle the growing demand—and the rest is history. Explore Girl Scout Cookie History to find out how cookies have helped build generations of female entrepreneurs and leaders who make the world a better place.

Where Cookie Proceeds Go

After paying for the cost of cookies and materials, Girl Scout Cookie proceeds stay local and help councils provide Girl Scout programs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), the outdoors, life skills, entrepreneurship, and more—in camps, through leadership training, and multiple other ways. A portion of the proceeds is directly managed by girls, and it's up to them to decide how to invest their troop's share of the earnings.

Your council will provide a breakdown of how cookie program proceeds support Girl Scout activities locally. Please share this information with girls and their families so everyone understands that product program sales make it possible for your Girl Scout council to serve girls.

Troop members share in the proceeds from a successful product program; proceeds are not distributed to individual girl members. Girls, however, are eligible for rewards and credits that they put toward council-sponsored camps, programs, and Girl Scout swag. The council plan for rewards applies equally to all girls participating in the product program activity. Visit the GSGLA Cookies+ page of the for more information about individual rewards and troop proceeds locally.

The Girl Scout Blue Book of Basic Documents specifies that:

"All money and other assets, including property, that are raised, earned, or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be held and authorized by a Girl Scout council or Girl Scouts of the USA. Such money and other assets must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting."

"Ownership of Assets," Blue Book of Basic Documents

Making s'mores under the stars, creating a lasting impact in your community, or ordering supplies for an eye-opening STEM project—there are limitless ways to put troop proceeds toward dynamic Girl Scout experiences! There are a few things, however, that don't qualify for "purposes of Girl Scouting," for instance, using troop proceeds to purchase memberships in or uniforms for another organization. We encourage all councils to remind their volunteers of this policy in order to protect the all-girl environment and to avoid diversion of Girl Scout funds.

Your Council's Role

When you are set up for success, you are better able to set up your girls for success! That's why every year, your council provides trainings, guidelines, and procedures for conducting the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program and determines how the proceeds and product rewards system will be managed. Visit the GSGLA Cookies+ page to find the answers you need as well as local trainings and resources.

Each council also selects the vendors of its choice to provide the products for their product programs. Two commercial bakers are licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies: Little Brownie Bakers and ABC Bakers. Our council partners with Little Brownie Bakers for our Cookie Program. You can also Meet the Cookies and find additional info on cookie varieties, including nutritional details.

Councils also work with vendors to offer magazine subscriptions, nut, and candy products, and more for the Fall Product Program. These companies are Ashdon Farms, Trophy Nut, and M2 Media Group. Each provides online tools and activities for girls to download. Magazine selection and sales may take place online—visit the Fall Product Page for more details.

Your Role

You play an exciting role in giving your Girl Scouts opportunities to practice the five skills as they learn how to think like entrepreneurs. Some of the things you will do include:

- Get girls excited about the opportunities to support the troop (but allowing their participation to be voluntary).
- Support both competitive and apprehensive cookie bosses, helping all your girls set meaningful goals for themselves.
- Fostering partnerships with each Girl Scout's family to ensure success, whatever that may look like for her, will help you build a positive partnership with girls and families, and the Cookie Entrepreneur Family pin is designed to help families support girls' growth at home.

Not only can girls sell individually, both in-person and using the online tools provided by each vendor, but they can also participate in group booth sales during the Cookie Program. Your local council has additional guidance and processes to market and ensure every booth is in a safe and appropriate location.

As your Girl Scouts grow, your role will evolve from a hands-on one to providing oversight and support where needed. No matter their ages, remember that volunteers and parents/caregivers do not sell the product. Your role is to encourage your girls and let their entrepreneurial spirit soar. Learning by doing is exactly how your girls develop the business savvy and communication skills that will empower them to reach any goals they set for themselves.

Another critical task for each troop is to establish a clear accounting system for all proceeds and product during the programs. It's up to you to make sure that money is spent wisely, that excellent records are kept (remember to keep copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and that all product is tracked. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work as they learn to keep impeccable records. Be sure to attend product program orientation or training so you are aware of the systems and helpful tools available.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Fall Product Program can be exhilarating and busy times during the troop year, but you're never alone in your efforts! You can reach out to your service unit product program manager when you're feeling stuck, or you can build a cookie team to provide the support your troop needs.

Product Program Safety

Safety is the top priority while selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products. Volunteers, families, and girls should be familiar with and practice the safety guidelines outlined by GSGLA in the Troop Cookie Guide and the Family Cookie Guide and in GSGLA's Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Selling Products Online

Will your troop use the Digital Cookie® platform to manage its cookie business or the M2OS platform for the Fall Product Program? Follow the specific guidelines provided in the training. Before girls begin selling online, they should partner with their troop leader and families to learn how to safely run their business online. For more information about Digital Cookie® and M2OS and training, please visit the GSGLA Cookie Resources and Fall Product Program pages.

Additional Safety Practices

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl-led program; a Girl Scout should always lead online marketing and sales efforts, with the supervision of her parent or caregiver. Girl Scouts engaging in online sales and marketing must review and apply the Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Their Families.

Girls, volunteers and parents must review and adhere to the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, the Digital Cookie Pledge, the Supplemental Safety Tips for Online Marketing, and Girl Scouts' Safety Activity Checkpoints for Computer and Internet Use and Cookie and Product Sales (with the exception that they may share beyond friends and family). Girl sales links should never be posted to resale sites (Craigslist, eBay, Facebook Marketplace etc.).

Girls must adhere to all terms and conditions on the Digital Cookie platform. For copies of terms and conditions, please contact GSUSA, LBB, or M2 as needed.

Girl Scouts of the USA reserves the right to remove or disable the link for any reason including violation of guidance, inventory fulfillment issues, safety issues, or if sales and marketing activity goes viral and otherwise creates unanticipated disruption. Additionally, families, girls, and volunteers should contact and collaborate with their councils and Girl Scouts of the USA in advance on any national news media opportunities tied to girls online marketing and sales efforts.

The Buddy System

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

Preparing for your Girl Scout Cookie Booth

Cookie booths—that is, cookie sales in areas with lots of foot traffic—are a fun way for Girl Scouts to connect with their community and practice their sales pitch with new customers. Booth locations must be approved by GSGLA, facilitated within Council jurisdiction, and participants must follow all Council guidelines with regard to setting up, running, and taking down a booth.

Create a great cookie booth experience for your Girl Scouts by:

- Using your best judgment in setting up cookie booths in locations that will be open, accessible, and safe for all Girl Scouts and potential customers.
- Choosing a high traffic area—this could be your local supermarket, mall, or park—where you'll maximize the number of visitors to your booth.
- Signing up for your cookie booth in eBudde, the Cookie Program inventory management system.
- Checking out your booth site ahead of the sale. Talk to business owners in the area so they'll know what to expect. Find out what security measures are in place—these may include lights for evening sales and whether a security camera watches the booth area—and where the nearest bathrooms are located.
- Respecting the surrounding businesses by making sure your booth isn't blocking a store entrance or exit.

Encouraging your Girl Scouts to unleash their creativity—and work on their advertising skills—to make colorful signs and booth decorations that potential customers can't resist! Remind girls to be polite and to have their sales pitch ready for interested customers.

Keep in mind:

- A minimum of two volunteers (at least one of whom is an approved Girl Scout volunteer) and one Girl Scout should be present at the booth at all times. With two or more volunteers, you'll have adequate booth coverage if the girls need to be accompanied to the restroom.

- Daisies do not handle money.
- Changing your cookie booth hours or location? Keep your customers in the loop and update your baker's Digital Cookie system with the new details. All scheduled booths are available on the Cookie Finder App (IOS or Android).
- Certain locations may be inappropriate for younger Girl Scouts based on the standards of your local community, may negatively impact the cookie program experience for girls, and/or may negatively impact our brand in your community. For additional clarity, girls should not sell in or in front of establishments that they themselves cannot legally patronize.
- Additionally, with respect to marijuana dispensaries, we have been steadfastly combating the unauthorized uses of the Girl Scout trademark by the cannabis community, which has been marketing—without our authorization—certain cannabis products under our youth-appealing brand. We are continuing to aggressively fight these unauthorized uses of the Girl Scout brand and hope that our councils and volunteers will join Girl Scouts of the USA's efforts by discouraging cookie booth locations at such locations.

For more tips to make your booth a success, check out our Cookie Booth Essentials. For additional information about setting up a booth and safety and security suggestions, consult your council guidelines.

Cookie Donation Program

Cookies also help girls make a big impact in their community! GSGLA has an established cookie donation program entitled "Cookies for the Community (C4C)" where customers can purchase cookies that will be donated to an organization within our Council. Cookie donations are not only a great talking point for girls to share with their customers—they're also a thoughtful way to show girls how cookies can help them give back.

Cookies for the Community Beneficiaries

All Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles Cookies for the Community partners are registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations. The list includes:

- The Los Angeles Regional Food Bank
- USO
- Blue Star Mothers
- Operation Gratitude

Handling Product Complaints

In the food industry, product complaints are not unusual. GSGLA and GSUSA expect a certain number of product complaints every year. These include, for example, reports that the product does not taste right or was found damaged when the package was opened. Occasionally, there are reports of foreign objects in the product. Customers may mistake crystallized sugar for glass or oat hulls and nutshells for wood.

Containment

Confining a difficult incident to the situation and the locale in which it took place - is the key to the successful resolution of product complaints.

Immediately notify your Service Unit Cookie Program Chair of any irregularities with cookies or any other situation to ascertain a course of action - whether an exchange of cookies or a refund is appropriate. Whenever possible, take pictures and get the lot number of the cookies to add to your report. Contact your Product Programs Manager as needed.

If a customer approaches you at a booth with a package of damaged or compromised cookies, take the cookies and exchange them at a cookie cupboard.

Customers may visit the Little Brownie Bakers website, or call them at 800-962-1718 to file a complaint about a product.

Any and all media contact must be handled by GSGLA staff. Do not respond to media questions or inquiries but refer them to the External Relations Department, who will work with the Product Programs Team. Media inquiries may be directed to call our Marketing and Communications team at 213-213-0123.

Recognizing Cookie Sellers in the Media

Focusing on entrepreneurial outcomes has always been the focus of the Girl Scout Cookie Program. The cookie program has never been about and does not focus on individual girls' sales results.

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

STANDARDS AND PROCEDURES

The following Volunteer Management Standards and Procedures set out the requirements and guidelines for the volunteers of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles (GSGLA). A standard is a measurement of best practices specifically observed by GSGLA. A procedure is established as an official process by which a standard is adhered to. This document does not intend to create a contract between GSGLA and any actual or potential volunteer, nor does it give rise to any legal obligation on the part of GSGLA to any actual or potential volunteer or third person.

All volunteers will be informed of the existence of GSUSA and GSGLA standards and procedures. GSGLA standards and procedures will be made available to all volunteers on GSGLA's website. Every volunteer must agree to abide by the standards and procedures of GSUSA and GSGLA.

1. Inclusiveness Statement

We celebrate and honor every unique individual Girl Scout, adult, volunteer, and staff member, along with the multifaceted experiences that they bring to our council.
We believe that embracing our diversity leads to social, emotional, and innovative excellence, and we will continue to actively seek to understand the complex and rich identities of self and others, as well as strive for our programs to reflect the depth of our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA).

Vision Statement

To ensure Girl Scouts is an inclusive organization that inherently enlists intentional strategies in culture, program, and service to foster involvement and remove barriers—especially for those that have historically been excluded or marginalized, so girls, families, volunteers, and staff of all backgrounds feel that Girl Scouts is for them.

Mission Statement

We are committed to providing programs, policy, and culture that promote diversity, equity, inclusion, and access through opportunities, relationships, and meaningful experiences that inspire empathetic leadership and cultivate an environment of belonging for the diverse voices and perspectives of our community.

2. Being an Appropriate Role Model

Part of being an effective and responsible Girl Scout adult volunteer includes being an appropriate role model. Girl Scouts learn about leadership and appropriate health and safety standards directly and indirectly from the adults around them, and especially from their leaders.

2A. Procedure – Volunteer Essentials and Blue Book of Basic Documents

Adult volunteers should model the behavior that shows respect for local, state, and federal laws and ordinances. They should also follow the procedures and standards of GSGLA found in Volunteer Essentials and in GSUSA's Blue Book of Basic Documents when acting in an official Girl Scout capacity. Ault volunteers should model behavior that shows respect for the well-being of the Girl Scouts and other adults.

3. Membership Conditions

3A. Procedure - Volunteers

All adult volunteers, except those with lifetime memberships or adults serving as temporary advisors or consultants, must be registered members of the Girl Scout Movement and must pay the applicable membership dues on an annual basis and meet GSUSA membership requirements.

3B. Procedure - Short-term and Episodic Volunteers

Short-term (fewer than 30 consecutive days) and episodic (one-day event) volunteers are considered temporary assistants and annual membership dues are optional.

4. Recruitment

4A. Procedure

A position description will be provided for each volunteer position outlining the purpose, accountability, principal duties, and term of service of the position. Prospective volunteers for most positions will need to be approved volunteers*.

5. Becoming a Volunteer

5A. Procedure - Requirements:

Parents and other adults needed for adult-to-girl ratio, driving girls, staying overnight during troop trips, handling troop or service unit money, or bank account signers, must be approved volunteers.

Approved volunteers are registered Girl Scout members who have successfully cleared GSGLA's background screening process within the last three years, or have completed the GSGLA Live Scan fingerprinting process, and have completed position related training.

In order to ensure the safety and well-being of our members, GSGLA reserves the right to disqualify or restrict the duties of any person who has been charged with, convicted of, pled guilty to, pled no contest to, or received a deferred adjudication on certain crimes, or

who GSGLA, in its sole discretion, based upon the information before it, otherwise deems as not qualified or fit to hold a volunteer position.

The goal of the background screening process is to screen prospective volunteers and place capable and qualified adults in all operational positions. GSGLA reserves the right to conduct a multi-state search, California statewide search, county search, sex offender registry search, as well as an OFAC (Office of Foreign Assets Control) search, and any other necessary search.

Please note the following regarding background screening:

- All volunteers, including lifetime members, who interact with girls must have a background screening on record that dates back no further than three years.
- If the background screening is older than three years, those volunteers must complete submit a new Asurint background screening or complete the Live Scan fingerprinting process.
- GSGLA reserves the right to require updated background screenings or Live Scan for any volunteer at its sole discretion.
- Volunteers who will not be interacting with girls may be required to consent to an Asurint background screening or Live Scan fingerprinting depending on the position.
- GSGLA has sole discretion in requesting background screenings for any volunteer position.

5B. Procedure – Application and Background Screening and/or Fingerprinting

If a person chooses an open volunteer position, via the GSGLA Opportunity Catalog (electronically), this does not guarantee that they will be placed. All volunteers of GSGLA are appointed by a staff member or his/her designee (the service unit manager or day camp director, for example). The staff person or the designee may use many tools to determine the suitability of a volunteer to be placed, including, but not limited to background screening/fingerprinting, reference checks, personal knowledge of the applicant, and an interview.

Potential volunteers must complete the registration process via the GSGLA Opportunity Catalog (electronically) as well as either an Asurint background screening or Live Scan fingerprinting, depending on the position. Providing false information, including all zeros in place of the correct social or other fake social, on the application is grounds for automatic dismissal from participation as a GSGLA volunteer, regardless of the result of the background screening/fingerprinting.

5C. Procedure – Mandated Reporter Training and Live Scan Fingerprinting

Per California Assembly Bill 506 (AB506), which took effect on January 1, 2022, GSGLA must add mandated reporter training and Live Scan fingerprinting to our already robust protocols for some, but not all, of our volunteers. Per AB506, those who need to add the mandated reporter training and/or Live Scan fingerprinting are volunteers with direct

contact or supervision of children for more than 16 hours a month, or 32+ hours a year. Read the full text of the bill.

Roles that require both the mandated reporter training and Live Scan fingerprinting:

Volunteers with specific roles and those wanting to participate in specific activities will be prohibited from the role and/or participation if requirements are not met. At this time, volunteers with the following roles must complete both the mandated reporter training and the Live Scan fingerprinting process:

- Troop Leader (and co-leader)
- Troop Chaperone
- Service Unit Manager

Both the mandated reporter training and the Live Scan fingerprinting process must be completed within 90 days of starting these roles. **Troop leaders that have not met the requirement** within 90 days of beginning their new role will be suspended from their role as troop leader until the requirement is fulfilled.

Additionally, once the mandated reporter training has been completed, the certificate must also be submitted via the eForm within the same 90 days. If a volunteer has already completed a mandated reporter training that meets the California state requirements, GSGLA will honor that training. Those certificates must also be uploaded via the eForm for the volunteer to be compliant.

For adults not volunteering in the roles listed above:

- If friends and family members are included in the girl/adult ratio, are supervising Girl Scouts, and/or are included in the ratio for event staffing, handling money, or driving youth members, then background screening (Asurint* or Live Scan) is required.
- If volunteer hours of direct contact or supervision of children comprise of less than 16 hours a month, or 32+ hours a year, only our standard background screening (Asurint*) is required.
- If volunteer hours of direct contact or supervision of children comprise of more than 16 hours a month, or 32+ hours a year, mandated reporter training and Live Scan fingerprinting is required.

*Asurint background screening is initiated through MyGS. Once a volunteer role is selected in MyGS, An email from Asurint with a link to complete the background screening will be sent via email. This link will expire after 72 hours. Customer care will be able to assist with questions regarding the Asurint process and resending the link if needed.

Additional Live Scan information:

- Live Scans must be done in the state of California to be valid for GSGLA. Manual fingerprint cards will not meet AB506 requirements.

- Live Scans will only need to be done one time, as long as the volunteer maintains an active membership with GSGLA. If the volunteer is inactive for one year or longer, a new Live Scan will be required.
- Volunteers who have completed a Live Scan, and who maintain an active membership with GSGLA, will not need to complete the Asurint background screening to renew volunteer roles with GSGLA.
- Only Live Scans that are completed with GSGLA will be valid. By law, organizations cannot share this data. Therefore, fingerprints that may have been completed with other councils, other volunteer organizations or through employment will not be valid for GSGLA.

Please note - Neither an Asurint background screening nor a Live Scan will be required for adult members as long as they are not:

- Included in the girl/adult ratio.
- Supervising Girl Scouts
- Included in the ratio for event staffing.

This includes attending GSGLA sponsored events, programming, family camping or family overnights, troop or service unit sponsored events, outings, programming, or overnights, (I.E., troop meetings, outings, field trips, overnights, and family camping, etc.).

Live Scan Fingerprinting and Asurint Background Screening Results.

Information obtained through either the Live Scan fingerprinting or Asurint background screening process is shared directly with GSGLA by California reporting agencies. If this information includes anything that may disqualify or limit a volunteer's participation with Girl Scouts, GSGLA will be notified. Further details regarding disqualification are provided throughout the Standards and Procedures chapter of Volunteer Essentials.

Any volunteer who would like to review or contest the information provided through either the Live Scan fingerprinting or Asurint background check process may do so by visiting the following links:

- Asurint Dispute Form
- California Record Review

It is the applicant's responsibility to challenge the information received through the Live Scan fingerprinting or Asurint background check and to arrange for any corrections if necessary. GSGLA has no control over the information maintained by any reporting agency and cannot be liable to any person or entity for the information provided, or other reporting agencies, or to its agents, for any action taken by GSGLA in reliance on such information.

GSGLA is entitled to and shall rely upon the information contained in the background screening results until such time as a corrected criminal history transcript has been provided. Even if an applicant submits corrected background information, GSGLA retains exclusive discretion to exclude or limit an applicant's participation.

Some of the standards and procedures outlined in Volunteer Essentials and *Safety Activity Checkpoints* may apply if GSGLA discovers (via fingerprinting, background screening, or otherwise) that a prospective or current volunteer has been charged with, convicted of, pled guilty, received a deferred adjudication, or pled no contest to certain crimes in the past seven years under the laws of the state of California, another state in the United States, or another country. At all times, GSGLA has the discretion to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation as a result of other predating or non-criminal information.

Reminder

Volunteers have an important role in protecting children from abuse and neglect. As a Girl Scout volunteer, our existing volunteer policy and safety guidelines require you to report abuse to council staff. To do so, contact your assigned Membership Specialist directly, or email customer care to be connected to your assigned Membership Specialist.

6. Disqualification

6A. Procedure - Overview

The criminal offenses that will generally disqualify a person from volunteer participation and the corresponding process used to determine disqualification are discussed below. The decision whether to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation remains at all times within the discretion of GSGLA.

Factors that may be considered in making such determinations include, but are not limited to, the nature and severity of the criminal conduct, length of time since the criminal conduct occurred, and the tasks associated with the desired volunteer position. GSGLA's primary concern is always to safeguard the best interests of its members.

6B. Procedure – Grounds for Disqualification

The following rules generally will apply if GSGLA learns via fingerprinting, background screening, or otherwise) that a prospective or current volunteer has been convicted in the past seven years of one of the following crimes under the laws of the state of California, another state in the United States, or another country.

At all times, GSGLA has the discretion to exclude or limit a prospective volunteer's participation as a result of other pre-dating or non-criminal information.

Grounds for disqualification or limitations:

- Any felony offense, regardless of type
- Misdemeanor crime against a child
- Misdemeanor crime involving use of weapons
- Misdemeanor crime involving violence
- Misdemeanor crime involving arson
- Misdemeanor crime of public indecency
- Misdemeanor DUI, DWI, or possession of any controlled substance

Other misdemeanors - As GSGLA may determine, including but not limited to theft, fraud, forgery, other crimes of dishonesty, or traffic violations. When an adult in any volunteer position with GSGLA has an outstanding debt to or has caused a financial loss to GSGLA or its entities, GSGLA has the right to remove the volunteer from her or his position.

Additionally, being a registered sex offender or having a registered sex offender living in the home will be an automatic disqualification for a volunteer position with GSGLA.

Unresolved situations - If there is an open warrant for the arrest of the applicant, or there is a pending charge with no disposition, the volunteer cannot be placed until the situation has been satisfactorily resolved and the background screening report updated.

If the applicant has already begun to serve in a volunteer capacity, his or her participation must be suspended pending disposition of the case or resolution of the open warrant.

Other circumstances and general principles - For all other criminal offenses, including traffic violations classified as misdemeanors, self-disclosures of complaints about or arrests for violence or abuse against children, GSGLA shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. A prospective volunteer may be disqualified due to non-criminal information, such as negative references, and/or interview.

Additionally, a prospective volunteer may be disqualified for:

- Failure to complete Asurint background screening and/or Live Scan fingerprinting.
- Failure to submit a correct social security number.

6C. Procedure – Failure to disclose

Failure to disclose the following may result in disqualification from a volunteer position:

- Any arrests, allegations, pleadings of "no contest", dismissals, or convictions of a crime other than a minor traffic offense. (Including DUI's, misdemeanors, or felonies)

- Allegations, complaints, arrests, or reports regarding your involvement in child molestation, violence or abuse against children, or neglect. (Regardless of whether the incident was confirmed or denied)
- If a member of your household is a registered sex offender.
- Any pending criminal charges against you.

6D. Procedure – Final Action

GSGLA reserves the right to permanently deny anyone a volunteer position if GSGLA officials believe the person is inappropriate for that position. There is no appeal process once a final denial decision has been made by GSGLA.

7. Placement

7A. Procedure – Overview

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of GSGLA.

7B. Procedure –Choice of Position

Approved volunteers not placed in positions for which they applied may discuss other positions that may be available with a GSGLA representative or designee.

7C. Procedure – Leadership Team Requirements

If two people in the leadership team of a troop or other membership pathway are related (e.g., spouses, mother and daughter, brother, and sister) or share the same household (e.g., roommates), they must have a third unrelated person, who does not live in the same household as another leader on the leadership team present at all troop meetings and activities. Two of which always must be unrelated adults, and one of whom must be female.

7D. Procedure – Events, Camping, Travel Adult Requirements

For events, travel, and camping trips, two approved, unrelated adult volunteers, who do not live in the same household, and one of whom is female, must be present at all times.

7E. Procedure – Male Leader Additional Requirements

Male leaders must have a female co-leader so that in case of emergency, a female-leader is present at all times, who is unrelated and who does not live in the same household.

8. Appointment

Girl Scout volunteers must be appointed to their position, using the procedures below. It is the responsibility of the prospective volunteer to complete all the required steps. GSGLA reserves the right to limit volunteer involvement until all steps have been completed.

8A. Procedures – Initial Steps:

- The prospective volunteer begins the process by selecting a desired volunteer role through the GSGLA Opportunity Catalog in MyGS and paying the membership dues.
- The prospective volunteer completes the Asurint background screening and/or Live Scan fingerprinting.
- The prospective volunteer may need to provide references if requested by GSGLA staff. These references may be contacted if additional information is necessary.
- If an Asurint background screening is completed, the prospective volunteer will receive a notification that their background screening has been approved or is approved with restrictions via the prospective volunteers MyGS portal.
- If Live Scan fingerprinting is completed, the prospective volunteer will only be notified directly if the fingerprints need to be resubmitted or if there is a potential for disqualification. Otherwise, the volunteer will be added to the weekly SUM report of cleared Live Scans.
- If the position is mutually agreed upon after reviewing the appropriate volunteer position description, the new volunteer accepts the position.
- The new volunteer will complete the training required for their position, as described in the position description.

8B. Procedures – Service Unit Manager and Team

- Appointment of a service unit manager(s) or service unit team members. Service unit managers and service unit team member positions are extremely important. These groups of volunteers directly impact the troop and girl experience.
- Appointment of the service unit manager is done through an interview conducted by the membership specialist and the membership manager. Upon their recommendation for appointment, the appointment is granted by the senior manager of membership.
- The appointment period is Oct. 1 - Sept. 29. Appointment requires an initial three-year commitment which is thereafter confirmed annually by the senior manager of membership and/or the membership manager.
- Appointment of service unit team members is done in partnership with the service unit manager (SUM) and membership specialists. Upon recommendation or recruitment of a team member, the SUM and specialist would confer and agree upon appointment.

Appointment of the service unit manager and of the service unit team members will be conditional upon completion of the requirements.

9. Reappointment

9A. Procedure – Requirements

Troop volunteers, Pathway* volunteers and other volunteers who work directly with girls, such as service unit volunteers, training facilitators, camp, and other GSGLA volunteers, must demonstrate inclusiveness, and knowledge of and commitment to safety issues, in addition to financial responsibility, in order to continue in a volunteer role. Volunteers with financial responsibility to local troops/groups or to GSGLA will not be reappointed to a position if required financial responsibilities have not been met.

* Series, event, camp, travel, and virtual pathways.

9B. Procedures – Review, Agreement, and Training:

Each appointed operational volunteer's performance will be reviewed periodically.
If mutually agreeable, the volunteer completes the appropriate volunteer position description/agreement. Continuing operational volunteers agree to complete and/or update training as required for the position.

10. Benefits and Services

Benefits and services to volunteers may include training and other learning opportunities, support from GSGLA staff and other GSGLA volunteers, GSUSA and GSGLA publications and website, tools for recording volunteer experiences, awards and recognitions, and performance evaluations.

10A. Procedure – No Monetary Compensation

Volunteers recognize their Girl Scout position(s) as a voluntary service and do not expect, receive, or solicit any monetary reimbursement for service.

10B. Procedures – Expenses, Insurance, and Protections for Volunteers

Volunteers are encouraged to keep a record of expenses incurred while doing Girl Scout activities (e.g., cost of uniforms, mileage, etc.). Many of these expenses can be applied as income tax deductions. Volunteers are advised to check with the Internal Revenue Service or a tax consultant regarding volunteer expense tax deductions.
All currently registered members of GSUSA are automatically covered by a supplemental activity accident insurance policy. The plan provides limited coverage for medical expenses due to accidents that occur while participating in approved, supervised Girl Scout activities, including traveling directly to and from the activity. GSGLA cannot guarantee that all claims will be paid.

According to the Nonprofit Risk Management Center, the federal Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 protects volunteers acting in the scope of their responsibilities as defined in the position description.

Under California law, directors and officers of non-profits enjoy limited protection from liability, as do an organization's volunteers. A member, director, trustee, or officer who serves without compensation for a non-profit hospital or association or a charitable organization is immune from civil liability for an act of or omission done in service if they were acting in good faith and within the scope of their duties, with the exception being damage or injury caused by willful or wanton misconduct.

A charitable institution is not liable for the negligence of its officers and employees unless the institution fails to exercise ordinary care in the selection or retention of competent officers and employees.

11. Training

Every adult volunteer shall be selected on the basis of interest, ability to perform the assignment, and agreement to participate in training as required. Training is provided and required for appointment to most positions.

11A. Procedure – Overview

All appointed volunteers will receive an orientation to Girl Scouting and any required training as stated on the position description. All volunteers must complete training within the timeframes established in the position description. Failure to complete training shall be a basis for release or a cause for not being reappointed to a position.

11B. Procedure – Orientation

An orientation to the Girl Scout program should be given for any volunteer position as part of the appointment process.

11C. Procedure – Initial Leader Training

Troop leaders and assistant troop leaders must complete the new leader training requirements prior to beginning work with the troop. The New Leader Orientation is mandatory for every new leader. Additional training may be required as GSGLA or GSUSA updates their programs, policies, or offerings.

11D. Procedure – Non-Leader Training

Each position description will list the minimal training a volunteer must complete prior to beginning work in that position. The position description may also list progressive training that may be taken beyond the minimal requirements.

11E. Procedure – Additional Training

Additional training, annual training, and workshops may be required for any volunteer position. Volunteers not completing the additional training required for their position within a reasonable amount of time may be asked to step down.

11F. Procedure – Class Offerings

Refer to GSGLA's event calendar for class offerings. Refer to MyGS for gsLearn course offerings online.

12. Recognitions

GSGLA's volunteer recognition program is designed to be a valuable component of the volunteer support system. It offers formal and informal recognition on a year-round basis. Formal recognition is for significant service and for completing established requirements. Recognition success is defined by doing it well, doing it often, and making it meaningful.

12A. Procedure – Description

Outstanding service to Girl Scouting will be recognized by GSGLA as outlined on the GSGLA website on the Volunteer Awards page.

12B. Procedure – Council Level Awards

At the council or national level, volunteers can be nominated for:

- Appreciation Pin
- Honor Pin
- Platinum Service Award (GSGLA specific)
- Thanks Badge
- Thanks Badge II

Council level recognitions also include:

- Numeral Guard – 30 years+ as a registered Girl Scout member
- Years of Service – 25 years+ as an adult Girl Scout volunteer

For details on each award, how to qualify and how to nominate, please visit the Volunteer Recognition page of the GSGLA website.

13. Confidentiality

All information concerning staff, volunteers, financial data, and business records of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles is confidential. Care shall also be taken to ensure that unauthorized individuals do not overhear any discussion of confidential information and that documents containing confidential information are not left in the open or inadvertently shared.

Information that is sensitive in nature should not be disclosed or discussed with anyone without written authorization from GSGLA. GSGLA relies on volunteers to conform to this

rule of confidentiality. Respecting the privacy of our clients, donors, members, staff, volunteers and of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles itself is a basic value of Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles.

13A. Procedure – Volunteer Responsibility

Volunteers of GSGLA may be exposed to information which is confidential and/or privileged and proprietary in nature. It is the standard and procedure of GSGLA that such information must be kept confidential both during and after volunteer service.

Volunteers are expected to return materials containing privileged or confidential information at the expiration of service. Unauthorized disclosure of confidential or privileged information is a serious violation of this standard and procedure and will subject the person(s) who made the unauthorized disclosure to appropriate discipline, including removal/dismissal.

13B. Procedure – During and After Volunteer Commitment

Volunteers are asked to comply with all confidentiality procedures. During the course of volunteerism, and after retirement of a volunteer position, sensitive or confidential information shall not be divulged, disclosed, or communicated for any reason.

14. Dismissal

In any organization, situations may arise which make it necessary to consider releasing an individual from their volunteer assignment. An action to release an adult volunteer should receive careful and detailed consideration of the possible implications and consequences for both the individual and GSGLA.

14A. Procedure - Overview

It is always within the discretion of GSGLA to take immediate action, in the appropriate circumstances, to release a volunteer. Grounds for dismissing or restricting the responsibilities of a current volunteer appear below. The decision to release a person from a current volunteer position or from the volunteer ranks of GSGLA could be the result of an evaluation and feedback process or the result of one problematic incident.

Reasons for release may include, but are not limited to, elimination of the position in which the volunteer serves, failure to abide by procedures and standards of GSUSA or GSGLA, refusal to accept and foster the Girl Scout mission and values, or membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with those of GSUSA.

14B. Procedure – Role Model

GSGLA may release any volunteer who, in conducting the Girl Scout program, advocates, solicits, or promotes a personal lifestyle so as to create a substantial risk that such conduct will be detrimental to being a proper role model for girl members.

14C. Procedures – Releasing an Operational Volunteer

The release of any volunteer is taken very seriously. Each situation will be investigated objectively to our furthest abilities and will be kept confidential. If the release of the volunteer is under consideration, the appropriate staff will arrange a conference with the volunteer as soon as possible and advise them of the decision. An additional party will be required to attend the discussion. Volunteers will be given the opportunity to resign voluntarily.

If a current Girl Scout volunteer is charged with, convicted of, pled guilty to, received deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to certain crimes in the Grounds for Dismissal list (see below), GSGLA may ask the volunteer to resign from a position working with Girl Scouts. It is at the discretion of GSGLA whether to allow the volunteer to continue in any capacity, and any adverse action taken will be done so only after a thorough investigation.

Grounds for Dismissal List

- Any felony offense, regardless of type
- Misdemeanor crime against a child
- Misdemeanor crime involving use of weapons
- Misdemeanor crime involving violence
- Misdemeanor crime involving arson
- Misdemeanor crime of public indecency
- Misdemeanor DUI, DWI, or possession of any controlled substance
- Being a registered sex offender or having a registered sex offender living in the home.

GSGLA may determine other misdemeanors not listed above are ground for dismissal. These may include, but are not limited to, theft, fraud, forgery, and other crimes of dishonesty or traffic violations. Additionally, if an adult in any volunteer position holds an outstanding debt to or has caused a financial loss to the Council or its entities, GSGLA has the right to remove the volunteer from their position.

Unresolved Situations

If there is an open warrant for the arrest of the prospective volunteer, or there is a pending charge with no disposition, the volunteer cannot be placed until the situation has been satisfactorily resolved and the background screening report updated.

If the prospective volunteer has already begun to serve in a volunteer capacity, their participation must be suspended pending disposition of the case or resolution of the open warrant.

Other Circumstances and General Principles

For all other criminal offenses, including traffic violations classified as misdemeanors, GSGLA shall review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. A prospective volunteer may be disqualified due to non-criminal information, such as negative references. Failure to disclose any of the above within 10 days to the Membership Department.

Volunteer Misconduct

Adult volunteers are expected to conduct themselves with respect to the Girl Scout Promise and the Girl Scout Law. The following volunteer misconduct situations may result in the dismissal from a volunteer position:

- **Theft:** Any concerns relating to misappropriate or misuse of Girl Scout funds or theft of equipment, materials, or supplies. This includes funds or equipment at the Council, service unit, or troop level.
- **Excessive absenteeism or inability to perform responsibilities:** Not completing the agreed to term or service or demonstrating no improvement in performance after being coached multiple times by GSGLA staff or service unit team member.
- **Continuous or malicious slander:** Continuous and malicious gossip or derogatory attacks concerning anyone associated with Girl Scouts. This includes Girl Scout volunteers, parents, and GSGLA staff.
- **Serious behavioral concerns:** This includes the use of drugs or alcohol while participating in Girl Scout activities, threats of violence (personal injury, defamation of character, etc.), physical fighting, arrest and yelling/verbal aggression towards girls, volunteers, or staff.
- **Breach of confidentiality:** Sharing confidential information about girls or volunteers with outside parties that are not privy to said information. This includes the use of Girl Scout contact information and materials for personal use or gain.
- **Refusal:** Actively choosing not to subscribe to or adhere to GSGLA policies, procedures, and program expectations.
- **Failure to cooperate:** Actively failing to cooperate with a financial audit or dispute resolution investigation.
- **Failure to meet position requirements:** This includes, but is not limited to, completing membership registration, Asurint background screening and/or Live Scan fingerprinting or position training when directed by GSGLA.
- **Intentionally providing false or misleading information:** This includes, but is not limited to, the social security number during background screening or fingerprinting.
- Intentionally failing to abide by the duties and responsibilities as outlined in the position description.

The service unit manager responsible for overseeing the volunteer is responsible for notifying their membership specialist at GSGLA if they become aware of a situation

involving one of the above bulleted items. The membership specialist should then notify the membership manager. After reviewing the facts, the team may ask the volunteer to step down from the position.

Asurint background screenings include a time frame of at least seven years; therefore, it is appropriate that the volunteer may be dismissed or put in a position with appropriate restrictions for a minimum of seven years from the disposition of the offense. The length of this time frame and all other considerations related to the volunteer's position are at the sole discretion of GSGLA.

14D. Procedures – Restriction of Activity

If a current Girl Scout leader or assistant leader is charged with, convicted of, has pled guilty to, received a deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to, certain crimes, they may have restrictions placed on their volunteer activities or responsibilities.

In keeping with the denial guidelines for incoming volunteers, an ongoing volunteer who has been charged with, convicted of, has pled guilty to, received a deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to, certain crimes, may be asked to step down from their volunteer position and not allowed to become a leader or assistant leader if the incident or knowledge of the incident is within seven years. At the end of this time frame, it is within the sole discretion of GSGLA to determine whether the volunteer can be placed in a leadership position.

Volunteer misconduct as described within the standards and procedures section of Volunteer Essentials may result in restriction of leadership duties.

14E. Procedure – Restriction from Money Handling

If a volunteer has been charged with or convicted of, or has pled guilty to, received a deferred adjudication for, or pled no contest to misdemeanor crimes involving theft, fraud, or forgery, or other crimes of dishonesty in the event that the person is allowed to continue as a volunteer, that person will be restricted from management of Girl Scout money.

14F. Procedure – Current Arrest or Conviction:

Arrests of current volunteers, and current volunteers who have pled guilty or no contest to certain crimes, or who have been placed on probation or deferred adjudication for crimes that are brought to GSGLA's attention, will be handled in a similar manner to open warrants and pending charges for prospective volunteers.

The activities of the volunteer will be restricted while GSGLA researches the matter. It is at the discretion of GSGLA to determine whether the person should be suspended from all volunteer positions or be allowed to continue.

14G. Procedures – Service Unit Manager or Team Member or Leader

There are occasions where current service unit managers or current service unit team members are not reappointed or are removed from their current service unit positions.

This may occur after the following:

- A thorough review of position performance based on the position description, and observable documented information.
- A review of records of attendance and participation in formal and informal training sessions and meetings.
- A personal interview with the volunteer at the earliest opportunity. The volunteer will be told of the specific performance areas(s) that is not satisfactory.
- Efforts are made to help the volunteer achieve satisfactory job performance within a specific time period.
- If a satisfactory level of position performance is not achieved within the designated time period, official notice of release from the volunteer position will be communicated to the volunteer.
- The health, safety, or welfare of girl members, other volunteers, or staff is endangered.

Note: Volunteers are released from their volunteer position only; this does not cancel their membership with Girl Scouts. All circumstances, including all written documentation and communication concerning release from a volunteer position, are strictly confidential and will be protected.

In addition to the items listed in the procedure for releasing an operational volunteer, a service unit manager or a service unit team member may be removed or not reappointed for the following reasons:

- Persistent or continual refusal to support and promote council initiatives.
- Persistent or continual negative and disparaging communications about the Girl Scout organization, "Council", staff, or other volunteers.
- Failure to adhere to compliance requirements as designated in the position description
- Failure or refusal to follow GSGLA and GSUSA policies, standards, and procedures.
- Failure or refusal to communicate/return calls or emails from staff or other volunteers in a timely manner.
- Failure to stay current with GSGLA and GSUSA communications.
- Failure or refusal to partner/cooperate with council staff.

15. Resignation

In order to maintain professionalism in our volunteer organization, a person having reason(s) to resign is provided with appropriate channels to follow.

15A. Procedure - Volunteer Action

A volunteer may resign from their position at any time. Written notification to a GSGLA staff member or designee is encouraged. Membership fees are non-refundable.

15B. Procedures – Staff Action

Reason(s) for desiring to resign should be discussed immediately with the person to whom the volunteer is accountable to, prior to making a final decision. Any resignation submitted will be acknowledged by a GSGLA membership specialist or membership manager.

If notice of resignation has not been submitted, but GSGLA staff have attempted to reach out to the volunteer on several documented occasions without success, the volunteer may be deemed to have resigned.

16. Dispute Resolution

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

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

When difficulties arise with a girl or girls at a troop, within the community or during a Council activity, it is best to discuss the situation calmly and objectively with the girls first. Make sure your conversation is in the presence of another adult – not one on one. It is important for a Girl Scout's parent/guardian to be informed of the situation and to be involved in its resolution. Consult with your troop mentor for advice and support.
It is appropriate to ask the parent/guardian to meet with the troop leadership team to discuss the girl's behavior and ask them to help the leadership find a reasonable solution to the problem.

Assessing the Conflict

1. Fact find; listen actively to all persons involved. This may require an investment of your time, one-on-one meetings or group meetings may be necessary.
2. Take notes.
3. Don't act upon emotion – many problems are emotion-based, and emotions are not logical.

4. Watch for the implied meaning of words.
5. Don't make moral judgments.
6. Don't jump to conclusions.
7. Consider each person's point of view.
8. Take a break and come back fresh.

Tips for Resolving Conflict

1. Create a clear framework for all involved; set time limits on meetings or discussions.
2. Setting clear expectations is critical. Determine what the desired outcome/solution is for each person.
3. Diffuse anger by stating how you feel, but use "I" messages.
4. Don't launch a personal attack.
5. Speak up. Don't let resentment build and reach a boiling point.
6. Don't expect an apology.
7. Ask open-ended questions.
8. Check your ego at the door.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your service unit manager. If the service unit manager (SUM) cannot help you resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the SUM), contact GSGLA membership staff for additional guidance; GSGLA membership staff will make the final decision on the resolution of the matter.

The needs of all the Girl Scouts affected by the situation should always be considered. As a Council, we make every effort to place and keep a girl in the troop she and her parent/guardian desires, however, it is not always possible to do. When the adults involved cannot reach a resolution or do not follow through with the agreed upon actions to resolve the issue, it may be necessary to find another solution; this may result in the removal of a volunteer, leader, parent, or girl.

Again, in all situations, the needs of the girls should come first. If, for any reason, a conflict or dispute arises between individuals and cannot be resolved through discussion with each other, the dispute resolution procedures outlined in this section 16. Dispute Resolution will be followed until the conflict or dispute is resolved.

16A. Procedures - Description:

A grievance may arise when:

- An individual believes that policies, standards, or procedures related to their position in Girl Scouting are not being properly administered.
- There is a disagreement of any kind between two or more volunteers, or between volunteers and parents, or between volunteers and staff, or volunteers and community members.

- There is a dispute over the interpretation of one or more GSGLA procedures and standards. In order to present the best possible Girl Scout experience to all members, non-Girl Scout conflicts or issues should not be addressed, discussed, or brought forth within a Girl Scout setting, to include meetings, events, trips, social media, or electronic communication, etc.

GSGLA encourages volunteers and staff to take positive actions to resolve conflicts quickly. We believe a personal phone call or meeting to be the most effective and positive action step. Due to potential escalation of conflicts, email, texting, instant messaging, social media, or any other exchange that does not promote person-to-person resolution is not recommended by GSGLA.

If, for any reason, a conflict or dispute arises between individuals and cannot be resolved through discussion with each other, the dispute resolution procedures outlined in the dispute resolution section of Volunteer Essentials will be followed until the conflict or dispute is resolved.

16B. Procedures – Steps for Resolving the Dispute

The most effective way to resolve a dispute is by calm and open discussion between the persons involved. A problem-solving tone should be adopted during these discussions.
If a solution is not resolved privately between the two parties involved, the next step is for one or both or all individuals to email their concern to their membership specialist. They may also contact customer care to be directed to their membership specialist.

The correct protocol for seeking assistance with dispute management is in the following order:

1. Affected parties and the troop leader, if the troop leader is not a source of the conflict.
2. Service unit manager if the service unit manager is not a source of the conflict.
3. Membership specialist
4. Membership manager
5. Senior manager, membership

The email should include the results of the first attempt(s) at resolution, including dates, times, individuals involved, proposed resolution, and explanation why the proposed resolution did not/will not resolve the grievance.
If there is any reason why a volunteer cannot communicate their issue to the next immediate person in this chain of command, the person holding the next position in this hierarchy should be contacted.

Within two weeks after receiving the email, the appropriate membership staff person will investigate the situation and may call a conference of the parties involved with the purpose of mediating and resolving the conflict or dispute.

A written summary of the meeting will be distributed to all parties involved. As a Council, we make every effort to place and keep a girl in the troop she and her parent/guardian desires, however, it is not always possible to do. When the adults involved cannot reach a

resolution or do not follow through with the agreed upon actions to resolve the issue, it may be necessary to find another solution; this may result in the removal of a volunteer, leader, parent, or girl. GSGLA Senior Manager of Volunteer Relations and Compliance will make the final decision on the resolution of the matter.

In some situations, it may be necessary to form an ad hoc group. This is at the sole discretion of GSGLA. If a solution is still not reached, an ad hoc group may be formed and may consist of operational volunteers and GSGLA staff, to reach a final decision.

17. Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when the interests or concerns of any GSGLA volunteer or any member of his/her immediate family, or any party, group, or organization in which said volunteer is actively involved, may be seen as adverse to, or in competition with the interests or concerns of GSGLA. This standard and procedure is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

In conducting the affairs of GSGLA, a conflict of interest shall be defined as a volunteer, or a member of his/her family who could expect financial gain of $150.00 or greater from a particular troop, service unit, or GSGLA decision or transaction. The purpose of the conflict-of-interest standard and procedure is to protect the GSGLA's constituents when volunteers are contemplating entering into a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a volunteer or family member holding a leadership position over Girl Scout members or other volunteers. Volunteers are prohibited from soliciting directly or indirectly any Girl Scout member or their families for any business relationship, charitable organization, or vendor relationship that may be perceived as a conflict of interest.

17A. Procedure – Overview

A volunteer or any member of his/her immediate family shall not engage in conduct or activities which constitute a conflict of interest. The following transactions constitute examples of conflicts of interest prohibited by this standard and procedure:

- Financial gain of $150.00 or greater from a troop, service unit, or GSGLA decision, or transaction.
- Utilizing their position as a volunteer for personal, professional, political, or monetary gain (acting individually on behalf of any group, organization, or business to which she/he has allegiance).
- Using for personal advantage or for the advantage of any other person or organization the confidential information or material of GSGLA (such as rosters, mailing lists, donor lists, etc.)

17B. Procedure – Disclosure and Subsequent Steps

Volunteers shall disclose, in writing, a full description of any activity, interest, or relationship that might create or appear to create a conflict of interest as soon as practicable, prior to the inception of the activity, interest, or relationship. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest where a volunteer, or family is expected to gain financially the volunteer must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all facts to their service unit leadership and membership managers to consider the proposed transaction or arrangement.

If the proposed transaction may cause a potential financial gain of less than $150.00 (aggregated throughout the membership year), the membership manager will determine if a conflict of interest exists.

If the proposed transaction may cause a potential financial gain greater than $150.00 (aggregated throughout the membership year), the service unit leadership should contact the membership manager, who shall consult with the Manager of Volunteer Relations and Compliance for review in determining if a conflict of interest exists.

18. Uniforms

18A. Procedure – Girl Uniform

The official Girl Scout uniform for girls is a white shirt (either their own or the official Girl Scout polo shirt for their program level), their own khaki pants or skirt, and the official program level tunic, vest, or sash for displaying official pins and awards.

Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies may wear the khaki and white uniform or choose to wear other official Girl Scout uniform components for their program level, such as the Daisy or Brownie beanie, and other official components offered. As a link with Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from other WAGGGS member countries, all Girl Scouts have an official, neckerchief-style scarf to wear with their uniform, too.
Dress code for all Girl Scouts include the following:

- Girls should always wear shirts with sleeves that cover at least the top of the shoulder. This prevents sunburns and hides straps for older girls. The shirt should go below the waist so no midriff shows.
- Shorts should come to mid-thigh or at least be long enough to provide full bottom coverage.
- Socks should cover the ankles, especially in outdoor settings.
- Closed toed shoes should be worn at all times.

18B. Procedure – Adult Uniform

The recommended uniform for Girl Scout adults is their own navy business attire, worn with an official Girl Scout scarf for women or official Girl Scout tie for men, and the Girl Scout Membership Pin and World Trefoil Pin.

18C. Procedure – When to Wear

Girl Scout adults are encouraged to wear the official uniform at ceremonies and when they are representing the Girl Scout Movement (meeting with community leaders, for example). Having a uniform is not required for Girl Scout membership, but wearing the uniform may be required for participating in certain events for both adults and girls.

19. Contracts and Agreements

There is a wide variety of contracts and agreements associated with volunteer-led events and services. Each time a location reservation is made, a community space is requested for troop meetings, a sleepover, field trip, or camping excursion is planned, or a volunteer is obligating themselves and the council to the terms of the written document.

Take care to read each contract carefully and understand what is being agreed upon. Does it say what you want? Are prices, dates, and other details in line with your event and clearly defined? When planning your events, you are the first proofreader of any written agreement. Follow council guidelines to obtain approval for any GSGLA activity, offering only documents that you have thoroughly read and understand before signing. Send your request and questions to the risk management team. Please allow a minimum of 10 business days for processing.

19A. Procedure – Signature

Contracts or agreements for events or services obligating any GSGLA entity will be signed by the event organizer, and must represent rules, terms, and conditions established by the council. They will be considered supported by the council only when entered into with vetted parties or approved vendors.

19B. Procedure – Requirements

Contracts or agreements signed on behalf of GSGLA will uphold council values and be protective of the council, its resources, and its membership.

19C. Procedure - Request for GSGLA Documents

Requests for GSGLA documents should be in writing. Written requirements for council documents will be found in the event's contract or rules and regulations from the venue. If the only written version of the request of council documents is on the venue's website, please provide the link or print out of that specific webpage.

20. Troop Treasury

20A. Procedure - Source

Troops should be self-supporting. Troop funds should not be solely reliant on money collected from parents.

20B. Procedure - Money Earned and Collected Belongs to the Troop

Troop funds include dues and money earned by the girls to support their program plans; they may also include donations made to the troop. Troop funds do not belong to individual girls – they belong to the Girl Scout troop as a whole. Each Girl Scout's family should receive a written or electronic Troop Finance Report in the troop's June year-end reports.

20C. Procedure - Troop splits or Disbands

When a troop splits or disbands, the remaining troop funds will be distributed at the discretion of the membership specialist. In most cases, if the troop splits, funds are divided equally between both troops. However, in no instance does the money become the property of an individual member. The final Troop Finance Report and disband notice must indicate how the funds were distributed. The signed report is submitted to the service unit manager.

21. Private Inurnment/Private Benefit

21A. Procedure – Description

To ensure council compliance with IRS regulations and to protect GSGLA's 501(c)3 tax exempt status with the IRS, GSGLA does not allow troops or other Pathways to create reserve funds or earmark funds or financial disbursement for individual Girl Scouts.

21B. Procedure – Gifts to an Individual

GSGLA does not accept tax deductible donations where the gift appears to be primarily for the benefit of a single individual.

21C. Procedure – Funds Remain with the Troop/Group

All benefits to Girl Scouts from troop or other pathway accounts must support the Girl Scout Mission. Funds from troop or other pathway accounts remain with the group and do not follow the Girl Scout(s) when they leave the group.

22. Debt Collection

22A. Procedure – Description

When an adult in any volunteer position with GSGLA has a personal outstanding debt to GSGLA, GSGLA has the right, at its discretion, to remove the volunteer from her or his position and not reinstate the volunteer. Misappropriation of funds could result in legal action.

23. Social Media

23A. Procedure – Troops/Groups and Service Units

Girl Scout troops/groups and service units may create a website or use social media to promote or communicate with members regarding Girl Scout activities. When forming a troop/service unit Facebook, Twitter account, website, or other form of social media you must have a GSGLA volunteer/adult member as part of your group and the group must follow the computer/online Safety Activity Checkpoint.

23B. Procedure – Age of the Girl

Websites or online service directed to children under 13 that collects personal information from children must comply with the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act, which indicates what a web operator must include in a privacy policy, when and how to seek verifiable consent from a parent and what responsibilities an operator has to protect children's privacy and safety online.

Girl Scout troops/groups and service units using social media must meet the age requirement established by social media channels, and all minor Girl Scouts must have a photo release form on file at their troop and/or service unit. We also recommend all troops/service units obtain parental permission for girls to participate.

23C. Procedure – Media Contact

If contacted by a member of the media through social media and asked to comment on a Girl Scout related issue, please as them to contact the marketing and communications team or call customer care at (213) 213-0123, and they can route the call to the correct person.

23D. Procedure – Safety

When representing Girl Scouts on social media channels, safety is a priority. Make sure the privacy standards settings ensure the safety of each Girl Scout.

23E. Procedure – Maintain Girl Scout Positions and Common Sense

Practice diligence to ensure that groups you are joining or linking to have standards consistent with Girl Scouts and make sure that the messages you post do not conflict with Girl Scouts' positions. If unsure of the Girl Scout position on a manner, contact your membership specialist or customer care at (213) 213-0123. Use good judgment and common sense - do not write or post anything that would embarrass or upset Girl Scout members and volunteers or reflect badly on the organization.

23F. Procedure – Monitor Posts

Treat others as you want to be treated; do not use the internet to harass, attack, or abuse any individual, group, race, gender, religion, political group, etc. Profane language or derogatory remarks against any individual or group used in any of the context posted will not be tolerated and could result in automatic dismissal. Careful monitoring of social media is important in maintaining a positive image of Girl Scouting.

Remember that what you post online will be around for a long time, and realize that when you release something on-line, that it can be released for the world to see. Use discretion and think twice before you post something. Respect other's privacy and your own personal boundaries by using discretion when posting photos, comments, etc.

23G. Procedure – Graphic Guidelines / Social Media and Photography

Registered troop leaders may use Girl Scout graphic images provided by GSGLA in the annual Volunteer Marketing Toolkit for production print materials. In the production of print or online materials, Girl Scout graphics must maintain their original design, may not be altered in any way (color, shape, etc.) and must be presented in adherence to usage guidelines provided. When appropriate, have a parent's or caregiver's written permission before using pictures of girls on any print or electronic materials—including social media.

Do not tag or attach personal identifying information—girls' full names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, school locations, etc. Follow the guidelines found in the computer/online Safety Activity Checkpoint. Questions related to the Graphic Guidelines/ Social Media and Photography standard and procedure should be addressed to the GSGLA marketing and communications department. GSGLA reserves the right to dismiss a volunteer from any volunteer position if they are found to be in clear violation of this standard and procedure.

24. Accident/Incident Management

Guidelines and procedures presented in all GSGLA documents, manuals, and trainings are designed to prevent or minimize any injury or damage to people and property. Accidents do happen; however, all accidents, incidents, mishaps, conflicts, and property damage require submission of an Accident/Incident form.

24A. Procedure – Accident/Incident Report

The adult in charge of the activity where the accident/incident took place must submit an Accident/Incident Report eForm within 72 hours. If the eForm cannot be completed, this paper form may printed, completed in full, and emailed directly to the risk management team.

24B. Procedure – 24-Hour After-Hours Emergency Hotline

In addition to submitting the Accident/Incident Report eForm or paper form, all accidents (requiring treatment beyond basic first aid) and/or any damage done to property must also be reported to GSGLA's 24-Hour After-Hours Emergency Line: (877) ICE GSLA (877-423-4752)

24C. Procedure – Report to Staff

An administrative volunteer who is notified of an accident/incident should report it to their immediate staff contact person (e.g., service unit manager notifies the membership specialist, the training facilitator notifies the training staff).

24D. Procedures – Handling the Accident/Incident

- Give the injured person(s) first aid and simultaneously have someone call a hospital, ambulance service or doctor.
- Call 911 if available; if not, call the police.
- Contact the camp ranger if you are on camp property.
- If there has been an automobile accident, a death, or a suspected crime, call the police.
- Put a responsible adult in charge of accounting for all individuals; organize a search for anyone who is missing.
- See that a responsible adult remains with the injured person.
- Do not move the person unless their life is endangered by being left at the scene of the accident/incident.
- If there has been a death, do not move the victim or change the surrounding area until the police have arrived.

After immediate emergency needs have been met, call GSGLA's 24-Hour After-Hours Emergency Hotline: (877) ICE-GSLA (877-423-4752). Your call will be returned by a GSGLA official as soon as possible. Please keep a phone line open or have the ability to accept a message at the number you left with the ICE operator.

After giving the injured person(s) first aid, call the family and report the nature of the emergency and the person's condition. Give only the facts; do not blame anyone. Ask their wishes concerning medical treatment and hospitalization.

For your protection, do NOT discuss the accident/incident or give out information to anyone except the police or a known and recognized GSGLA staff member in a leadership position. If the media contacts you, know you are NOT authorized to make a statement. Immediately direct them to GSGLA's 24-Hour After-Hours Emergency Hotline: (877) ICE-GSLA (877-423-4752) and state it is a media issue.

Make a record of the following, indicating the time and what procedures were followed:

- How the accident or emergency happened
- First aid administered and by whom
- Statements made to ambulance attendants, doctors, police, etc.
- Telephone calls (who made them, who they called, what they said)
- Names and addresses of all witnesses
- Take photos of any property damage

Remember: An Accident/Incident Report eForm must be submitted within 72 hours of the accident/incident. If the eForm cannot be completed, this paper form may printed, completed in full, and emailed directly to the risk management team.

25. Troop Transfers

Troops are assigned to a geographical area called a service unit, based on a member's zip code. A troop may request a transfer to a new service unit, if the troop moves into another service unit's geographical area based on zip code. Troops that are having personal issues with their service unit must follow the dispute resolution protocol. Transferring to another service unit due to personal issues would be approved in only extremely rare cases and must align with the troops meeting location zip code as it relates to service unit zip code boundaries.

26. Smoke-Free/Tobacco-Free Environment

Research has shown the harmful effects of cigarette smoke to non-smokers, especially children. Cigarettes have also been known to cause fires. As such, smoking and the use of other tobacco products or the use of e-cigarettes is prohibited at all GSGLA facilities and properties.

26A. Procedure - Smoking:

As role models to Girl Scouts, leaders and volunteers are prohibited from smoking at Girl Scout events or activities where minor girls are the focus of the event, i.e., troop meetings, outings, or activities, camps, GSGLA programs, etc. Volunteers working directly with girls must not smoke in front of the girls at any time or in any location where girls may be exposed to second-hand smoke. There will be no smoking in GSGLA-owned or operated buildings and facilities, or near the entry/exit doorways. Volunteers responsible for girls must ensure other adults present (e.g., parent helpers) follow the no-smoking rule.

26B. Procedure – Tobacco Use

Smoking and the use of other tobacco products is not allowed in the presence of girls when acting in an official Girl Scout capacity.

27. Alcohol and Substance Abuse

27A. Procedure – Requirements

Girl Scout volunteers and chaperones shall not possess, sell, or use illegal drugs. The use, distribution, or possession of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages is not permitted at Girl Scout events or activities where minor girls are the focus of the event, i.e., troop meetings, outings, or activities, camps, GSGLA programs, etc.

7B. Procedure – Legal Drugs

Girl Scout volunteers and chaperones shall not misuse prescribed or over-the-counter drugs at any Girl Scout activity. While volunteering, including transporting girls, it is not permitted to be under the influence of any substance, including marijuana, which may impair physical and/or mental skills.

27C. Procedure – Alcohol at adult Events

Girl Scout volunteers shall not drink or be under the influence of alcohol during Girl Scout activities when girls are present. An exception to this standard and procedure includes a limited number of GSGLA sponsored or approved (with prior written consent) events for adults where girls may be participating as speakers, greeters, flag ceremony color guard, etc. and whose parents will be notified that alcohol is being served to adults.

27D. Procedure - Dismissal:

Violations of these procedures and standards regarding alcohol and substance abuse will result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

28. Harassment

28A. Procedure – Requirements

GSGLA is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, and conduct that is in alignment with the principles of the Girl Scout Law. It is the standard and procedure of GSGLA to provide all volunteers with an environment free from all forms of harassment. Any act of harassment by any volunteer, of any gender or identity, against another volunteer, girl member, or GSGLA employee, shall not be tolerated.

28B. Procedure – Reporting harassment

Any volunteer who feels that they have been subjected to harassment of any type should follow the dispute resolution standards and procedures as outlined in the dispute resolution section of Volunteer Essentials. The appropriate staff member will follow the escalation guidelines to investigate and resolve the situation in an expeditious manner.

29. Child Abuse

What is Child Abuse? Although there are many formal and acceptable definitions of child abuse, the following is offered as a guide on child abuse and neglect:

- Child abuse consists of any act of commission or omission that endangers or impairs a child's physical or emotional health and development.
- Child abuse includes any damage done to a child which cannot be reasonably explained, and which is often represented by an injury or series of injuries appearing to be non-accidental in nature.

Forms of Child Abuse:

- **Physical Abuse** - Any non-accidental injury to a child. This includes hitting, kicking, slapping, shaking, burning, pinching, hair pulling, biting, choking, throwing, shoving, whipping, and paddling.
- **Sexual Abuse** - Any sexual act between an adult and child. This includes fondling, penetration, intercourse, exploitation, pornography, exhibitionism, child prostitution, group sex, oral sex, or forced observation of sexual acts.
- **Neglect** - Failure to provide for a child's physical needs. This includes lack of supervision, inappropriate housing or shelter, inadequate provision of food and water, inappropriate clothing for season or weather, abandonment, denial of medical care and inadequate hygiene.
- **Emotional Abuse** - Any attitude or behavior which interferes with a child's mental health or social development. This includes yelling, screaming, name-calling, shaming, negative comparisons to others, and telling them they are "bad, no good, worthless or a mistake."

All states, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands have specific laws which identify persons who are required to report suspected child abuse to an appropriate agency.

Therefore, if you witness or suspect child abuse or neglect, whether inside or outside of Girl Scouting, always notify the appropriate council staff immediately and follow your council's guidelines for reporting your concerns to the proper agency within your state.

For more information, please review these available resources:

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Child Abuse and Neglect
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: How to Report Child Abuse and Neglect
Mandatory Reporters
CDC Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

29A. Procedure – When to Report

Any act of child abuse or neglect, including physical, sexual, verbal, or emotional abuse or neglect by any volunteer, regardless of gender or identity, against any girl member, shall

not be tolerated. Girl Scout volunteers are also responsible for protecting the well-being of girl members by reporting any witnessed or suspected abuse or neglect.

29B. Procedure – Reporting Instructions

Volunteers have an important role in protecting children from abuse and neglect. When a Girl Scout volunteer witnesses or suspects that a child may be a victim of child abuse or receives information that a child is or may be a victim of abuse, they should contact their membership specialist.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, our existing volunteer policy and safety guidelines require you to report abuse to council staff. To do so, contact your assigned membership specialist directly, email customer care, or call (213) 213-0123 to be connected to your assigned Membership Specialist.

Additionally, an Accident/Incident Report eForm is to be submitted within 72 hours of the accident/incident. If the eForm cannot be completed, this paper form may printed, completed in full, and emailed directly to the risk management team.

If you witness or suspect child abuse or neglect, whether inside or outside of Girl Scouting, always notify your membership specialist immediately and follow GSGLA's guidelines for reporting your concerns to the proper agency within your area.

Each county has its own agencies that manage child welfare cases. GSGLA covers four counties in our membership area.

Los Angeles County
(800) 540-4000
(800) 272-6699 – TDD
Mandated Reporter Online Child Abuse Report

Kern County
(661) 631-6011 or
(760) 375-6049
Online Child Abuse Report

San Bernardino County
(909) 384-9233 or
(800) 827-8724
Information on Reporting Child Abuse

Ventura County
(805) 654-3200
Information on Reporting Child Abuse

Orange County
(714) 940-1000 or
(800) 207-4464
Information on Reporting Child Abuse

For more information, please review these available resources:

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services Child Abuse and Neglect
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: How to Report Child Abuse and Neglect
Mandatory Reporters
CDC Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention

29C. Procedure - Immediate Danger

While volunteers are not mandated reporters, all adults are protectors of children. If a child is in immediate danger, call 911 or the local police. Keep the child in your care until appropriate assistance arrives.

When a Girl Scout volunteer observes physical injuries of a suspicious nature, receives a report or accusation of sexual abuse, learns that a child is fearful of returning home, and/or has been abandoned by the parents or caregivers, the volunteer must call the local police or contact your county's child abuse agency.
Within 72 hours of the calling either 911 or the local police, an Accident/Incident Report eForm must be submitted. If the eForm cannot be completed, this paper form may be printed, completed in full, and emailed directly to the risk management team.

This information is considered confidential. Therefore, after it is reported to law enforcement and the appropriate person at GSGLA, it should be discussed on a need-to-know basis only, to protect the privacy of the child.

29D. Procedure – Abuse or Bullying at a Meeting or Activity:

Volunteers are expected to establish a no-tolerance procedure for abuse or bullying at troop meetings, events, or any Girl Scout activity. In instances where one child abuses another, the parents or caregivers of each child should be notified immediately. The child responsible for the abuse will be removed from the program or environment in which they are participating. In such situations, the parent or caregiver of the abused child can determine whether to submit a report to local authorities about the behavior of the other child or take other appropriate action.

29E. Procedure – Child Abuse Charge or Conviction:

GSGLA will release a volunteer who has been convicted of or pleads guilty or no contest to a charge of child abuse or neglect when GSGLA is aware of such conviction or charges. GSGLA may release a volunteer who has been charged with child abuse or neglect pending resolution of the charge. It is within the discretion of GSGLA to determine whether the person should be suspended from all volunteer positions or will be allowed to continue. If and when such charges are cleared, a volunteer may be considered for reinstatement, at the discretion of GSGLA.

30. Sex Offenders

A registered sex offender may not serve as a troop leader, co-leader, troop helper, chaperone, or in any other troop volunteer position. A registered sex offender may not participate in any way, either in troop activities of any kind or in GSGLA activities where girl members may be present. Troop meetings and activities may not be held or conducted at any residence where a member of the household is a registered sex offender. Having a registered sex offender living in the home disqualifies all adult members of that household from becoming a GSGLA volunteer.

30A. Procedure – Reporting Volunteers or Family/Household Members:

Troop leaders, other troop volunteers, and parents or caregivers of girl members are required to immediately notify GSGLA if they learn or become aware that any troop leader or other troop volunteer, or troop family member is a registered sex offender, has pending charges, has pled guilty or no contest, or has been placed on probation or deferred adjudication, regarding sexual offenses.

In addition, troop leaders or other troop volunteers, and parents or caregivers of girl members, are required to immediately notify GSGLA if he or she is or has an immediate family or household member who has pending charges, pled guilty or no contest, or who has been placed on probation or deferred adjudication regarding sexual offenses.

30B. Procedure – Notification of Parents

When GSGLA, in its discretion, determines that it is reasonably necessary to safeguard girl members, GSGLA may notify the parents or caregivers of all girl members of a troop regarding: (a) the status of a troop leader or volunteer or family member as a registered sex offender; (b) the requirements of this standard and procedure; and (c) the steps taken by GSGLA to comply (for instance, the dismissal of, or written notice as described above to, the registered sex offender.) For instance, if a family member of a registered sex offender withdraws his or her girl member from the troop, or if a troop leader or other troop volunteer has been dismissed, GSGLA may determine it is not necessary to give notice to the parents or caregivers of the other girl members of his or her status as a registered sex offender.

This standard and procedure addresses registered sex offenders only. It is not intended to and does not limit GSGLA's right to dismiss troop leaders, volunteers, or girl members or to deny the applications of potential troop leaders, volunteers, or girl members, for other reasons than those addressed in this registered sex offender standard and procedure.

Reminder: GSGLA does not appoint any volunteer who is a registered sex offender nor has a registered sex offender in their household.

31. Weapons and Fireworks

31A. Procedure – Firearms and Weapons

GSGLA strictly prohibits staff, volunteers, or girls from possessing any form of weapons, handgun, firearm, prohibited weapon, or explosives restricted or allowed by local, state, or federal law at any time while engaging in Girl Scout activities, programs, or while on any Girl Scout properties. Exempted from this are specific instances approved in writing by a GSGLA executive, or Law Enforcement Personnel when acting in a professional capacity. Volunteers and girls may use pocketknives, kitchen knives, hatchets, and other such equipment only under strict supervision and only after proper instruction.

The possession of unauthorized weapons or firearms at any Girl Scout event on GSGLA property will be grounds for dismissal. A pocketknife is acceptable when used for training or as a camping tool.

31B. Procedure – Law Enforcement

Exceptions to the standard and procedure include law enforcement officers, security guards, or other persons who have been given (prior) written consent by GSGLA to carry a weapon on the property. GSGLA reserves the right to conduct searches on its property or authorize searches by law enforcement on its property.

31C. Procedure – Weapons in the Home or Vehicle

All persons who normally maintain weapons in their home or their vehicle will secure or remove them before girls enter the premises. This includes troops who meet in a home where weapons are present.

31D. Procedure – Fireworks

GSGLA strictly prohibits the possession, use, or sale of fireworks at Girl Scout events or on GSGLA-owned properties. Fire-powered projectiles or rockets may be approved for an organized program or activity conducted with a council approved instructor or agency.

32. Legal Action Against or by GSGLA

32A. Procedure – Description

When an adult has brought legal action against GSGLA or has caused GSGLA to initiate legal action, GSGLA has the right, at its discretion, to decline to appoint that person to a volunteer position within GSGLA or to remove that volunteer from his or her position if currently in place. Legal action includes, but is not limited to, taking out a warrant to appear in small claims or magistrate court.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES AND SUPPORT

Coronavirus Safety in Girl Scouts

The health and safety of our members is always Girl Scouts' highest priority. Recognize that COVID-19 health and safety guidance will continue to evolve as the risk of coronavirus transmission changes over time.

Being prepared to adjust for changes in coronavirus risk and the federal, state, and local protocols concerning pandemic safety is something we will all need to continue to manage carefully and factor into plans as appropriate.

Recognize that state and local rules concerning coronavirus safety will vary from place to place. Safety regulations will also change as the risk of transmission changes. Be sure to stay current on what is required in your region but also consider that troop members may reside in different areas with different sets of safety parameters to abide by.

For more information, please use the following resources:

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles Safety Activity Checkpoints
CDC Covid-19 Information
State of California Covid-19 Information
Los Angeles County Covid-19 Guidelines
Kern County Covid-19 Guidelines
San Bernardino County Covid-19 Guidelines
Ventura County Covid-19 Guidelines
Orange County Covid-19 Guidelines

© Copyright 2009–2022 Girl Scouts of the United States of America. All rights reserved. All information and material contained in Girl Scouts' Volunteer Essentials guide ("Material") is provided by Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) and is intended to be educational material solely to be used by Girl Scout volunteers and council staff. Reproduction, distribution, compiling, or creating derivative works of any portion of the Material or any use other than noncommercial uses as permitted by copyright law is prohibited, unless explicit, prior authorization by GSUSA in writing was granted. GSUSA reserves its exclusive right in its sole discretion to alter, limit, or discontinue the Material at any time without notice.