Volunteer Resource Guide

2019-2020
September 1, 2019

I’m excited to welcome you as a volunteer for the Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council. You have embarked on the wonderful adventure of helping build girls of courage, confidence, and character. We couldn’t do it without you and for that I am grateful!

Together, we are creating a space for girls to feel comfortable to be themselves, to find their voices, and to flourish as leaders. Please know that we are dedicated to providing you the tools needed for our girls to succeed. The Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Volunteer Resource Guide (VRG) will serve as a reference in helping make your volunteer role a rewarding experience throughout this membership year.

As you set off to lead and inspire, I encourage you to share your stories and motivate others to join in the mission of Girl Scouts.

Enjoy creating lifelong memories with our girls and other dedicated members of Girl Scouts. Together, we can make the world a better place!

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Tammy H. Wharton
President & Chief Executive Officer
Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland
Contents

INTRODUCTION .................................................................5
THE GIRL SCOUT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE .........................6
OUR PROGRAM ....................................................................7

GETTING STARTED WITH YOUR GIRLS .........................8
PLANNING IN A GIRL-LED ENVIRONMENT .................................8
MEETING WITH GIRLS FOR THE FIRST TIME .............................9
SIGNS, SONGS, HANDSHAKE, AND MORE! .............................10
USING SAFETY ACTIVITY CHECKPOINTS ................................12
FOLLOWING THE GIRL SCOUT SAFETY GUIDELINES ...............13
UNDERSTANDING HOW MANY APPOINTED VOLUNTEERS YOU NEED .................................................................14

GIRL SCOUT VOLUNTEERS ........................................15
HOW TO BECOME A GIRL SCOUT VOLUNTEER ...................15
ADULT ROLE MODELS ..................................................16
GIRL SCOUTS OF OHIO’S HEARTLAND’S VOLUNTEER PERSONNEL POLICIES ..............................................................18

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT RESOURCES ................................21
VOLUNTEER TOOLKIT ....................................................21
CUSTOMER CARE TEAM .............................................21
VOLUNTEER SUPPORT FACEBOOK PAGE:..........................21
NAVIGATING FORMS ON OUR WEBSITE ..............................22
GIRL SCOUT SHOP ................................................................22
COUNCIL RESOURCE LIBRARIES .......................................22
SUPPORT AND EVENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS .......................23
VOLUNTEER DEVELOPMENT HEARTS ..................................23
RECOGNITIONS ..................................................................24
WEB PAGE AND SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR SERVICE UNITS, TROOPS, AND VOLUNTEERS ..........................................................25
GSOH COUNCIL PUBLICATIONS 2019-2020 .........................29
USING THE GIRL SCOUTS OF OHIO’S HEARTLAND LOGOS AND BRAND MARKS ..........................................................30

PROGRAM RESOURCES ..............................................31
PROGRAM AND SPECIAL EVENTS .......................................31
TRAVEL ................................................................................31
CAMPS & PROPERTIES ..................................................32
TROOP CAMP ..................................................................33

MANAGING GIRLS FINANCES ........................................35
UNDERSTANDING FINANCIAL ABILITY BY GRADE LEVEL ........35
BANK ACCOUNTS ..........................................................36
TROOP FINANCE OPERATIONS – WHAT SHOULD I KNOW? ... 39
TROOP AND SERVICE UNIT FINANCE REPORTS ..................41
DISCREPANCIES/MISMANAGEMENT OF FUNDS ....................41
DISBANDING A TROOP .....................................................42
SERVICE UNIT FUNDS ....................................................43
FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE ................................................44
MONEY-EARNING BASICS ...............................................45
HELPING GIRLS REACH THEIR FINANCIAL GOALS .............47
WAYS TO SUPPORT GIRL SCOUTS .....................................48
COLLABORATING WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS ..............49
DONATIONS & GRANTS ..................................................50
ONLINE FUNDRAISING ................................................51

SAFETY ...........................................................................52
KNOWING YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES ..................................52
GIRL SCOUT ACTIVITY INSURANCE ...................................56
REPORTING REQUIREMENTS FOR ACCIDENTS OR INJURIES ...58
IN CASE OF SERIOUS ACCIDENT, EMERGENCY, OR FATALITY ...59
CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE OF ACCEPTANCE AND INCLUSION 60
PRODUCT PROGRAM SAFETY ..........................................65
COOKIE BOOTS ..........................................................66
COMPUTER/ONLINE SAFETY .........................................68
HEALTH HISTORIES (INCLUDING EXAMINATIONS AND IMMUNIZATIONS) ..........................................................70
FIRST-AIDER ..................................................................71

GIRL SCOUT LINGO .....................................................73
**Introduction**

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

**Our Mission**
Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We strive to be the premier leadership organization for girls, and experts on their growth and development.

---

**Girl Scout Promise**

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.”

**Note:** This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls’ books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it’s your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your group and to make sure that everyone in the group feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls’ families.

---

**Girl Scout Law**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- Develop a strong sense of self
- Display positive values
- Seek challenges and learn from setbacks
- Form and maintain healthy relationships
- Identify and solve problems in the community

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

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

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

---

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

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

**LIFE SKILLS** - Civic engagement, healthy living, global citizenship, communication skills

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

---

**Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland**

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

**Your Support Team**

A team of volunteers and staff provides you with local support, learning opportunities, and advice. As a volunteer, you will have the most contact with your Girl Scout support team, which is called a service unit. Service units have a team of volunteers available to help. Be sure you attend service unit meetings and ask plenty of questions!

---

**Girl Scouts of the USA:**

- Web: [girlscouts.org](http://girlscouts.org)
- Facebook: [facebook.com/GirlScouts](http://facebook.com/GirlScouts)
- YouTube: [youtube.com/user/girlscoutvideos](http://youtube.com/user/girlscoutvideos)
- Twitter: [twitter.com/girlscouts](http://twitter.com/girlscouts)
- Instagram: [instagram.com/GSUSA](http://instagram.com/GSUSA) and [instagram.com/girlscouts](http://instagram.com/girlscouts)
- Pinterest: [pinterest.com/GSUSA](http://pinterest.com/GSUSA) and [pinterest.com/GirlScoutsOH](http://pinterest.com/GirlScoutsOH)
- LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/girl-scouts-of-the-usa/](http://linkedin.com/company/girl-scouts-of-the-usa/)

---

**Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland**

- Web: [gsoh.org/](http://gsoh.org/)
- Facebook: [facebook.com/Girl ScoutsOH](http://facebook.com/Girl ScoutsOH)
- Instagram: [instagram.com/Girl ScoutsOH](http://instagram.com/Girl ScoutsOH)
- Twitter: [twitter.com/GirlScoutsOH](http://twitter.com/GirlScoutsOH)
- Pinterest: [pinterest.com/GirlScoutsOH](http://pinterest.com/GirlScoutsOH)
- LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/GirlScoutsOH](http://linkedin.com/company/GirlScoutsOH)
Getting Started with your Girls

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

At the core of the GSLE are National Leadership Journeys. Each Journey has all the important components of the GSLE sewn right in. So, to guide girls on a great Journey, all you need is enthusiasm and a sense of adventure. Before you dive in, try these simple tips:

- **Choose a Journey.** Because Girl Scouting is girl-led, it’s important to give girls the chance to pick the Journey they want to do. Talk to them about what each Journey for their grade level is about and let them choose one.
- **Get to know the Journey.** Pick up a girls’ book and an adult guide. Read the girls’ book for the pleasure of it, just to get an overview of the Journey’s theme and content.
- **Invite girls (and their parents/guardians) to use their imaginations** to make the Journey come to life in ways that excite them. Remember that you and the girls don’t have to do everything exactly as laid out in the sample sessions.
- **Build the troop year in the Volunteer Toolkit**— The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) gives Troop Leaders the tools and features they need for troop management and program delivery. Parents have their own view of VTK as well.
- **Step back and watch** how the girls, with your knowledge, support, and guidance, have enormous fun and a rewarding experience. Celebrate with them as they earn their National Leadership Journey awards — and perhaps some Girl Scout badges, too!

Planning in a Girl-Led Environment

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

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

After you’ve drafted a loose framework, ask the girls what they think. Or create the online calendar together! Remember that you want girls to lead, but younger girls will need more guidance, and older girls will require much less. Seniors and Ambassadors may not even want you to draft a calendar in advance, so if they balk at what you’ve done, let them take the reins.

As your group starts its Journey/badge, get a discussion (or debate!) going on the Journey’s theme and what it means to the girls. Probe to find out what they’re most interested in accomplishing during their time together, and then help them connect those interests to their Journey/badge.
Meeting with Girls for the First Time
When you first get together with girls (and this meeting may also include parents/guardians, or you may decide to hold a separate meeting for the adults), you’ll want to get to know the girls, and give them a chance to get to know one another.

1. **Introduce the Journey/badge, its theme, and its ties to leadership.** Each Journey’s adult guide offers ideas for talking with girls and their parents/guardians about the Journey’s theme and the Three Keys to Leadership.

2. **Find out what interests the group (and be sure to include the other adult volunteers), so that you and the girls can begin to customize the Journey/badge.** Do the girls want to dig deeper into a particular aspect of the Journey/badge? Without promising anything (yet!), ask the girls to talk about what they’re passionate about, what they’ve always wanted to do, and how they would spend their time if money and other barriers were no object. Build off the ideas shared but be sure to include opinions from all the girls. Ask direct questions of those who seem to be holding back or are unsure about answering, so everyone is included.

3. **Get the girls talking about how they want to schedule their time together.** Use the planning pages from their Journey (referring to your draft calendar only as needed, so that the girls lead). Consider questions like these:
   - Can girls organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular Journey topic or theme?
   - Is there an event that meshes with this topic or area of interest?
   - Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via email or social media?
   - Can they invite a guest speaker to answer questions or demonstrate particular skills?
   - Which badges can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?
   - If they are Juniors or older, are they interested in pursuing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards?
   - Do they have ideas for activities that will involve younger or older girls?

**Build the year in the Volunteer Toolkit.** Building the year in the Volunteer Toolkit allows for easy planning and implementation of the journeys, badges and activities that girls choose. It also provides an easy way to keep track of attendance, awards earned, and communicate with the girls and their families.
Signs, Songs, Handshake, and More!

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

**Girl Scout Sign**

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

Girls give the sign when they:

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

**Girl Scout handshake**

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

**Quiet Sign**

The quiet sign can be extremely useful to you as a volunteer, so teach it to girls during your first meeting. Raise your right hand high with an open palm. As girls in the group see the sign, they stop talking and raise their hands. Once everyone is silent, the meeting can begin.

**Girl Scout Slogan and Motto**

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

The Girl Scout motto is, “Be prepared.”

**Songs**

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

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. Check out your council shop or visit the GSUSA online shop. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to “Song Leading Workshops” at girlscouts.org. A variety of songbooks are also available for purchase. Check out your council shop or visit the GSUSA online shop.
Time-Honored Ceremonies
Ceremonies play an important part in Girl Scouts and are used not only to celebrate accomplishments, experience time-honored traditions, and reinforce the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, but also to encourage girls to take a short pause in their busy lives and connect with their fellow Girl Scouts in fun and meaningful ways. Many examples of ceremonies — for awards, meeting openings and closings, and so on — are sewn right into the Journeys, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create.

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

- **Bridging** ceremonies mark a girl’s move from one grade level of Girl Scouting to another, such as from Junior to Cadette. (Note that **Fly-Up** is a special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Juniors.)
- **Closing** ceremonies finalize the meeting, with expectations for the next. A closing ceremony may be as simple as a hand squeeze while standing in a circle.
- **Court of Awards** is a time to recognize girls who have accomplished something spectacular during the Girl Scout year.
- **Flag** ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag.
- **Girl Scout Bronze (or Silver or Gold) Award** ceremonies honor Girl Scout Juniors who have earned the Girl Scout Bronze Award (Cadettes who have earned the Silver Award; Seniors or Ambassadors who have earned the Gold Award) and are usually held for a group and combined with council recognition.
- **Girl Scouts’ Own** is a girl-led program that allows girls to explore their feelings and beliefs around a topic (such as the importance of friendship or the personal meaning they get from the Girl Scout Promise and Law) using the spoken word, favorite songs, poetry, or other methods of expression. It is never a religious ceremony.
- **Investiture** welcomes new members, girls or volunteers, into the Girl Scout family for the first time. Girls receive their Girl Scout, Brownie Girl Scout, or Daisy Girl Scout pin at this time.
- **Opening** ceremonies start troop meetings and can also begin other group meetings.
- **Pinning** ceremonies help celebrate when girls receive grade-level Girl Scout pins.
- **Rededication** ceremonies are opportunities for girls and volunteers to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
Using Safety Activity Checkpoints

When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. You can find these on Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland’s website under “Forms” or under “Resources” in the Volunteer Toolkit.

Each Safety Activity Checkpoint offers you information on where to do this activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity, how to prepare yourselves for the activity, what specific steps to follow on the day of the activity, and so on.

In keeping with the three processes of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, be sure that:

- **All activities are girl-led.** Take into account the age and abilities of the girls. Older girls can take the bulk of the responsibility for carefully planning and executing activities, while younger girls will require more of your guidance but should still be deeply involved in making decisions about their activities.
- **Girls have the chance to learn cooperatively.** Have girls teach each other new skills they may need for the activities, rather than hearing all that from you.
- **Girls learn by doing.** If research or special equipment is needed, they’ll learn better by doing that research themselves than by having you do the legwork and report back to them. Even Daisies can do basic research and give reports or do show-and-tell for each other. Ambassadors may need you only for moral support as they research, teach each other, and plan every detail of their excursions.

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

- **Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from your council for girls ages 12 and older who will operate motorized vehicles, such as personal watercrafts; take trips on waterways that are highly changeable or uncontrollable; or fly in noncommercial aircraft, such as small private planes, helicopters, sailplanes, untethered hot air balloons, and blimps.

- **Caution:** You must get written pre-approval from your council for Juniors through Ambassadors to participate in go-kart activities that are on a rail system (such as those that are an amusement park ride). They must follow the weight and height restrictions set by the facility. Go-karts that are privately owned or used for racing are not permitted.

- **Warning:** The following activities are never allowed for any girl: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing, and outdoor trampolining); creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, skis, snowboards, skateboards, water-skis, and wakeboards); hunting; shooting a projectile at another person; riding all-terrain vehicles and motor bikes; and taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher.

**An additional note:** Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive — even for some — put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from your council. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring volunteer who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position. You are required to obtain permission slips signed by the girls’ parents/guardians; see the “Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels” chapter of this handbook for more information.
Following the Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

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

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

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

**Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, or a topic is discussed that could be considered sensitive, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.

**Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow your council’s guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.

**Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other volunteers to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/volunteers, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories and contact information for girls’ families.

**Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer, over the age of 21 and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears their seat belt at all times and adheres to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.

**Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.

**Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don’t consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.

**Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults and volunteers are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.

**Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

**Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online or engage in virtual conversation with strangers. Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult. On group websites, publish girls’ first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge and have them commit to it.

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

Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow development of individual girls. The following group sizes are recommended:

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

**Girl Scouts volunteer-to-girl ratios** show the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls. (Council may also establish maximums due to size or cost restrictions.) These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls. For example, if one volunteer has to respond to an emergency, a second volunteer is always on hand for the rest of the girls.

**NOTE:** Multi-age level troops use the guidelines for the youngest age level in their group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Troop Meetings</th>
<th>Events, Travel, and Camping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two unrelated appointed volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for up to:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Plus, one additional appointed volunteer for each additional:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Daisies</strong> (grades K–1)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Brownies</strong> (grades 2–3)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Juniors</strong> (grades 4–5)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Cadettes</strong> (grades 6–8)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Seniors</strong> (grades 9–10)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Ambassadors</strong> (grades 11–12)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example: A meeting with 17 Daisies, needs three volunteers, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), and at least one of whom is female.

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

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

- The Computer and Internet Use section of the Safety Activity Checkpoints
- Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge
Girl Scout Volunteers

How to become a Girl Scout Volunteer
Successful completion of the membership process, including a background check, is required to be appointed to a volunteer position with Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland.

- Purchase a membership. Go to gsoh.org and click volunteer now.
- Proceed through the steps and purchase your membership.
- Watch a short video introducing the Girl Scout Program.
- Complete a successful background check (look for the email with information on how to complete your background check).

Once those steps are complete, you will receive two emails and a phone call:

- Email: How to access the My GS Membership Community
- Email: Next steps for training, information about your service unit meetings and other useful support.
- Call: From your membership manager.

Contact Customer Care for assistance if needed at 1-800-621-7042.

Background Check
The background check is required in the state of Ohio and includes a criminal record check as well as a check of sexual offender registries. This is for the safety of our girls. If you continue to hold your volunteer position in continuous service in a troop or service team, you are required to renew your background check every three years.

Due to the confidential nature of all background checks, Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council:

- Does not accept background checks from other agencies.
- Is not authorized to share the results of the background check with the individual for any purpose.
- Will maintain the confidentiality of all background check information obtained, including reasons why a volunteer applicant may not be appointed.

Volunteer Requirements
Requirements for appointment to volunteer positions include:

- Completion of the membership process and successful background check.
- Completion of required courses for the position within six months of starting the position.

Training requirements can be found on our website, gsoh.org, under the volunteer tab.

Reappointment
Requirements for reappointment to volunteer positions include:

- Current successful background check.
- Registration as a member of Girl Scouts of the USA.
- Completion of required courses.
- Successful completion and submission of all required paperwork for the position by the required deadlines.
Adult Role Models
Volunteers in Girl Scouting serve as positive role models to girls and make sure the values of the organization are kept strong and made “real” to the girls. All volunteers who work with girls or are present at Girl Scout activities adhere to the adult volunteer behavior standards in Chapter 4: Safety-Wise and accompanying Safety Activity Checkpoints. The troop leadership volunteers are expected to ensure that other adults enlisted to work with girls know and agree to abide by the behavioral expectations of adults in Girl Scouting. All adults involved in any Girl Scout activity, whether registered Girl Scout members or occasional helpers, are expected to meet the highest standards of personal conduct.

As a troop leadership/support volunteer within the Girl Scout organization, you are tasked with the responsibility to guide your troop in a manner consistent with the Girl Scout mission and its values. Girl Scouts puts a great deal of trust in its volunteers and relies heavily on the character, integrity, accountability and judgement of each volunteer to make day to day administrative decisions and to create, identify and execute appropriate opportunities for the girls. **As a trusted volunteer, if you ever question whether an opportunity is appropriate for Girl Scouts, for any reason, please contact customer care at customercare@gsoh.org before proceeding.**

Take Advantage of Learning Opportunities
Girl Scouts strives to provide you with the necessary information and knowledge to successfully manage your group of girls and to let you know how and where you can get additional information on certain topics when you want to learn more.

For required training for your position visit the training page at gsoh.org or contact your membership manager.

**REMEMBER**
All volunteers who at any time will:
- Have **care, custody or control of girls** other than his or her daughter
- And/or be **counted as part of the volunteer to girl ratio**
- And/or handle **funds**

**MUST complete the following requirements:**
- Current membership
- Successful background check
- GS101 - online
- Safety Essentials - online
- Leadership Essentials - two hour face-to-face
- Finance Report Training (for all signers on the troop bank account) - live webinar

**First Aid/CPR** – The levels of first aid required for any activity consider both how much danger is involved and how remote the area is from emergency medical services. This information can be found on the activity’s Safety Activity Checkpoint or the Safety chapter of this document.

**Caution:** First Aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts’ requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you’re considering a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the Safety chapter of this manual, or any course that has online components, get approval from your council prior to enrolling in the course.
Permissions
Parents/guardians are required to give permission for their daughters to join Girl Scouts. Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council also offers two versions of Activity Permission Forms available at gsoh.org.

- Signed permission is required for any activity at a different time or place than a regular troop meeting or involving unusual risk or sensitive issues, including product programs. Girl Scout volunteers may create similar forms tailored to specific events.
- No form of “blanket permission” is valid. If you wish to use a permission slip that is available through an online computer service, please be certain that it includes all the elements that Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council permission slips include.
- All members agreed to or declined a photo release when they purchased a membership.

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

Understanding Your Role as a Girl Scout Volunteer
Your most important role as a Girl Scout volunteer is to be excited about everything this opportunity affords you: a chance to help girls succeed, play a critical role in their lives, and watch them blossom! You also want to be someone who enjoys the activities you’ll be embarking on with the girls.

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you’ll serve as a partner and role model to girls. You’ll also work closely with a co-volunteer, because two volunteers must be present at all times when working with girls, and at least one of those volunteers must be female and not related to the other adult. This is an important distinction that bears repeating: Men can serve as troop volunteers, but an adult female who is not related to the other volunteer must be present at all times, and only in cases of emergency is a girl to be alone with only one volunteer.

Other Volunteer Responsibilities
Your other responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

- Accepting the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Understanding the Three Keys to Leadership that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Discover, Connect and Take Action
- Sharing your knowledge, experience and skills with a positive and flexible approach
- Working in a partnership with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning; you’ll also partner with other volunteers and council staff for support and guidance
- Organizing fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls’ interests and needs
- Providing guidance and information regarding Girl Scout group meetings with girls’ parents or guardians on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, phone calls, newsletters, blogs, other forms of social media and any other method you choose
- Processing and completing registration forms and other paperwork, such as permission slips
- Communicating effectively and delivering clear, organized and vibrant presentations or information to an individual or the group
- Overseeing with honesty, integrity and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise
- Maintaining a close connection to your volunteer support team as well as your council
- Facilitating a safe experience for every girl
Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland’s Volunteer Personnel Policies

We maintain that the leadership of the Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc. rests in the strength of its adults.

All volunteers are selected on the basis of qualifications for membership, ability to perform the job and willingness and availability to participate in training. All volunteers are governed by policies adopted by the board of directors, which are periodically reviewed.

**Affirmative Action:** In the Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc., there shall be no discrimination against an otherwise qualified adult volunteer by reason of disability or the basis of age. Furthermore, there shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, sex, religion, national origin, or socio-economic status. In addition, to insure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc., affirmative action policies and procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of underrepresented racial groups.

**Membership:** All volunteers participating in the Girl Scout Movement shall meet GSUSA membership standards, and shall agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc.

All girls and adults shall be registered members through the council with GSUSA and individually pay the applicable membership dues, except those adults working as temporary advisors or consultants.

**Selection:** Every adult volunteer is selected on the basis of qualification for membership, ability to perform the volunteer position and willingness and availability to participate in training for it. (Reaffirms GSUSA policy.)

**Placement:** Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of the council. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the council will take precedence over the needs of the individual.

**Agreement/Appointment/Reappointment:** Operational volunteers shall be appointed for a term not to exceed one year, unless otherwise negotiated or indicated by term of office. A volunteer agreement will be completed at the time of appointment/election to a volunteer position.

Reappointment/renomination takes place only after completion of a satisfactory performance review and mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations and time commitment.

**Training:** Upon accepting a position in the Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc., every volunteer must complete training appropriate for the position within six months of appointment.

**Performance Appraisal:** Each operational volunteer shall be provided with the opportunity for regular review and evaluation.

**Uniforms:** Members of the Girl Scout Movement are readily identified by uniforms worn for official functions. A uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scout activities but is suitable for almost all Girl Scout functions. Volunteers are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout pin when they are not in uniform. (GSUSA standard)
**Grievance:** A grievance is a complaint that policies and/or procedures related to a volunteer’s position are not being administered properly as applied to her or him. The grievance procedure is a systematic process to ensure the objective hearing and orderly handling of volunteer grievances.

The grievance procedure may be used by all operational volunteers. Every volunteer may expect a fair resolution of her or his grievance without fear of jeopardizing her or his volunteer status. The council also maintains an open-door policy regarding volunteer concerns.

Many possible grievances can be anticipated and prevented by volunteer managers who understand the council’s volunteer management system and who are sensitive to human relations. Likewise, many grievances can be avoided when volunteers are informed at the time of placement of the council’s structure, and their place in it, who carries decision-making responsibilities, and how decisions are made.

Most complaints and concerns can be resolved when they are brought to the attention of the volunteer’s immediate supervisor. It is hoped that most, if not all, grievance situations will be resolved through informal conferences and communications, the goals of which are to eliminate the cause for the grievance.

If occasionally a volunteer and her or his immediate supervisor are unable to resolve a job-related difference of opinion through informal efforts, the volunteer may request a copy of the council’s grievance procedures for operational volunteers. The initiation of the grievance procedure, however, will not restrict the council from taking appropriate action with respect to the volunteer.

**Recognition:** The council’s formal recognition system will be consistent with GSUSA guidelines.

**Resignation:** A volunteer may initiate termination of services prior to the end of the term of appointment. A volunteer unable to complete her/his term should give notice to her/his supervisor as far in advance as possible. Membership in the Girl Scout movement may continue beyond the term of a specific position and is not contingent upon current appointment to a job.

**Release:** Situations may arise that make it necessary to consider releasing an individual from an assignment. Any action to release a volunteer should receive careful and detailed consideration because of the possible implications and consequences for both the individual and the council. Possible reasons for release are:

- restructuring of volunteer positions
- the elimination of the volunteer position in which a person serves
- inability or failure to complete the requirements (or perform the job) of the position
- refusal to comply with council or GSUSA policies
- refusal to support the mission and values of the organization and council goals or performance not consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Movement
- misappropriation of funds
- excessive absences or tardiness from required meetings
- membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with GSUSA.

An adult volunteer who is terminated from her or his position may continue her or his membership with GSUSA unless it is determined that she or he is not able to meet the membership requirements related to accepting the principles and beliefs of the Movement or to support the mission and values of the organization. When this is the case, her or his membership will not be renewed.
**Child Abuse:** The council supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect as defined by the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act.

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts and it is against the council’s policy for any volunteer, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any girl member.

The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or to exclude from affiliation with the council, any volunteer implementing a Girl Scout program who is found guilty of child abuse and neglect or who has been convicted of child abuse and neglect.

**Sexual Harassment:** The council policy guarantees volunteers an environment free of sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination. Sexual harassment has been defined as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.”

It is against the organization’s policies for any volunteer, male or female, to sexually harass another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex. The council reserves the right to refuse membership endorsement or reappointment, and to dismiss or suspend from affiliation with the council any volunteer who, in conducting a Girl Scout program, advocates, solicits, or promotes a personal lifestyle or sexual orientation so as to create a substantial risk that such conduct will be detrimental to the proper role model for girl members.

**Council Position on Concealed Carry Law:** Firearms or weapons of any type are strictly prohibited anywhere on council-owned premises whether or not permitted by Ohio law. With the exception of the police or sheriff’s personnel, Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc., does not permit its members, guests, employees, or any other individual to carry weapons, such as firearms, on their body or in their belongings while engaged in Girl Scout activities or on Girl Scout property.

**Non-smoking Policy:** All buildings owned, rented, leased, or loaned to Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc., are designated as non-smoking environments. Adults who must smoke must use special areas on the grounds designated as smoking areas. Extinguished cigarettes must be put in the trash. There is to be no smoking, including electronic or vapor cigarettes, in the presence of minors. Adults must not leave minors unattended to smoke.

**Benefits:** Benefits to volunteer personnel include:

- job description
- accident and liability insurance as part of national/council membership
- continuing education and other learning opportunities
- opportunity to make a difference
- right to apply for financial assistance
- recognition and appreciation
Volunteer Support Resources

Volunteer Toolkit
Girl Scouts of the USA provides digital troop tools just for you! The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is an exciting resource where volunteers can find the tools and features they need for troop management and program delivery. Parents have their own view of VTK as well. Access the VTK by going to the My GS link at gsoh.org and using your member portal login.

Currently Registered Troop Leadership Volunteers can:
- View your roster, renew girls’ memberships and update information all on one screen
- Use pre-populated year plans with meeting content
- Add your own troop activities or council events
- Email meeting reminders to parents with one click
- Track girls’ attendance and achievements and
- Easily locate resources such as the Safety Activity Checkpoints!

Parents can:
- See what troop plans the girls have decided upon (read only)
- Check out your girl’s achievements
- Review your contact information and renew memberships
- Download meeting aids and resources!

Customer Care Team
The Customer Care Team is here to help you get questions answered quickly and get access to much of the information you need to make working with girls easier.

Here are just some examples of how the Customer Care Team can assist you:
- Address, phone and email changes to membership records
- Answering questions and sending documents and other forms troops use
- Resetting passwords to My GS and CORA and assisting with access issues

Contact Customer Care by calling 614-487-8101 or 800-621-7042 and asking for Customer Care or emailing customercare@gsoh.org.

Customer Care Hours:
Aug. 15 - May 15
- Monday through Thursday 8:30 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. and Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
May 16 – Aug. 14
- Monday through Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Volunteer Support Facebook Page:
Join this Facebook group to share information with other volunteers in GSOH as well as receive updates from the council staff team. Search for GSOH Volunteer Support on Facebook and ask to join.
Navigating Forms on our Website
Need a form or document, but don’t know where to look?
- Visit gsoh.org
- In the top right corner, click “Forms”
- Enter the name of the form (or a keyword) in the “Keyword Search” box and press enter
- To narrow your search, click “Options” right below the box. You can choose a category or categories based on the context of the form.
- Forms will populate under the Keyword Search based off your search, so you can easily find your form!

Girl Scout Shop
The Girl Scout Shop has everything a Girl Scout, troop leader, or volunteer needs from badges, books, and clothes to games, toys, gifts, and sportswear for the family.

Email us at girlscoutshop@gsoh.org to join the mailing list for special events, discounts and giveaways held throughout the year.

Girl Scout Shop Locations: Times may change so please call the shop in advance.

- **Columbus** 1700 Watermark Drive | Columbus, OH 43215 | 614-487-8101
  Wednesday & Friday 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. | Thursday 11 a.m. – 7 p.m. | Saturday 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.
- **Chillicothe** 1130 Western Avenue | Chillicothe, OH 45601 | 740-773-2146
  Monday/Tuesday/Thursday/Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. | Wednesday 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.
- **Mansfield** 24 W. Third Street Suite 110 | Mansfield, OH 44902 | 419-522-0391
  Tuesday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. | Friday 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.
  September – May Third Saturday of the month 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Shop online 24/7 at gsoh.org and click “shop.”

Proceeds from all Girl Scout Shop sales support programming in your local community.

Council Resource Libraries
Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland has resource libraries that carry a variety of books, program resources, and equipment that may be checked out by any registered Girl Scout, age 18 or older who has completed a Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland library card application.

Library Hours and Locations:
- Library locations: Columbus, Mansfield, Zanesville, Portsmouth and Chillicothe
- Library hours are the same as the service center office hours.

Ask at the reception desk to get a library card.
Support and events for Volunteers

*Autumn Adventure:* Join us for the adult volunteer event of the year! Participate in inspiring workshops where you’ll learn new skills and get to know other fantastic volunteers!

*Adult Camporee:* This fun-filled get-away occurs yearly in September for adult members to meet new friends while exploring the beautiful grounds of Camp Molly Lauman.

*Online Classes:* The following courses are offered online:
- GS101
- Safety Essentials
- Finance Report – learn to manage troop and service unit finance reports
- Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) – videos will help you learn to use the Volunteer Toolkit to facilitate a successful Girl Scout year.

Check the website under the volunteer tab for more information and additional courses as they are added.

**Volunteer Development Hearts**

The volunteer development hearts are presented to adults in Girl Scouting who:
- Complete certain classes.
- Volunteer for specific positions.
- Engage new volunteers/donors to the organization
Recognitions

As a volunteer, your hard work means the world to girls, to your council staff, and to Girl Scouts of the USA. Thank you, from the bottom of our hearts!

All forms and information about adult recognitions can be found on the Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland’s website – click the Volunteer tab.

GSUSA’s Adult Recognitions

Girl Scout volunteers are amazing and deserve to be recognized for their efforts! The deadline for council recognitions is **Feb. 28** each year, so January is a great time to start identifying who has met the requirements for an award.

When starting the process, begin by thinking about the requirements for the position the potential nominee holds. Think about what the individual has done and is doing that could possibly set the person apart from others doing the same thing. Look in the resource area of the VTK and the recognition page of the website for some tips to help the recognitions committee understand the amazingness of the nominee!

![Volunteer of Excellence](image1)

- **Volunteer of Excellence**
  - Nominated and awarded at the service unit level
  - Recognizes outstanding service in one service delivery area.

![Appreciation](image2)

- **Appreciation**
  - Nominated and awarded at the council level
  - Recognizes exemplary service in one service delivery area.

![Honor](image3)

- **Honor**
  - Nominated and awarded at the council level
  - Recognizes exemplary service in two or more service delivery areas.

![Thanks Badge](image4)

- **Thanks Badge**
  - Nominated and awarded at the council level
  - Recognizes extraordinary service for the entire council.

![Thanks Badge II](image5)

- **Thanks Badge II**
  - Nominated and awarded at the council level
  - Recognizes continuing extraordinary service for a previously awarded Thanks Badge recipient.

**The President’s Award:** The President’s Award recognizes the efforts of a service delivery team, committee whose exemplary service in support of delivering the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) surpassed team goals and resulted in significant, measurable impact toward reaching the council’s overall goals. Requirements are found on gsoh.org under the Volunteer Tab.
Web Page and Social Media Guidelines for Service Units, Troops, and Volunteers

Websites
The guidelines below are to help you create a website that will accomplish your goals while maintaining the integrity of the Girl Scout brand and protecting the safety of our girls.

- The design and content of your troop, service unit, or Girl Scout activity website should reflect the Girl Scout program and principles. Think carefully about how you want to present yourselves and Girl Scouting as you design the web page. The Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law apply in an internet environment as well as in a troop meeting or at an event.
- Be wary of inappropriate language or topics on your web page. You are creating a Girl Scout troop, service unit, or Girl Scout activity website, not a personal website. References to race, color, religion, age (except when referring to girl program age levels), sex, national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, learning disability, physical or mental disability, ancestry, genetic information, and any other protected class, as well as political and personal opinions, have no place on a Girl Scout web page.
- Avoid linking to commercial sites to avoid implied Girl Scout endorsement.
- The website must not request names, addresses, phone numbers, or any other identifying information from visitors. Also, be sure all messages are screened carefully before posting them.
- Troop websites may not be used to conduct sales of any products sold in “council-sponsored product sales,” such as Girl Scout Cookies and QSP. For safety and security reasons, sales on non-Girl Scout approved sites for any Girl Scout troop/group money-earning activities may not be conducted by individual girls or volunteers (this includes sites such as eBay and Craigslist.) However, troop websites may be used to market products. For more information on these guidelines, please refer to The Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Be sure to adhere to the rules listed below on the proper use of Girl Scout graphics and logos.
- Once you have created a site, we encourage you to share it with your regional membership manager.

Internet Safety
- Girls should not get online without permission from a parent/caregiver and should never give out their personal information, including name, address, school, or telephone number.
- Sign the Internet Safety Pledge found at girlscouts.org.
- If you will be including photos of girls on your webpage, make sure each girl’s parent/caregiver agrees that photos can be used and signs a photo release form located at gsoh.org (click Forms)
- Protect the identity of troop members — never use personal information (address, last name, phone number, school, or meeting location) about any girl or adult. If you wish to post Girl Scouts’ names, use first names only. Do not identify by full name any Girl Scouts pictured in any photos you post online. Photos of girls should not have nametags visible.
- In the interest of keeping girls safe, never post the location of Girl Scout events, programs, troop meetings, or camps before they occur. Instead, recap and review events after they have happened.
- Advise girls to consult a troop leader or parent immediately if they are uncomfortable with any material they receive via email or view online.
Social Media
The term "social media" refers to tools that allow the sharing of information and creation of communities through online networks or people. It is a method to have two-way conversations online. Some of the most common types of social media include social networking sites (Facebook), microblogging sites (Twitter), forums, blogs, and content-sharing services (YouTube). GSOH maintains a social media presence through Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and Instagram. The goal of our social media presence is to recruit potential Girl Scouts, volunteers, and donors, as well as to retain current membership. The use of social media enhances the visibility of our council as a united front reaching out to the community and media regarding council activities, events, and more.

Social Media Etiquette
We invite volunteers to participate and follow our social media accounts keeping the guidelines below in mind.

1. Be honest and fair
   Be transparent about your role as a Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland volunteer when communicating about Girl Scout-related issues online.

2. Be friendly, helpful, considerate, and caring
   Treat others as you want to be treated. Don’t use social media to attack other volunteers, troop members, and/or staff.

3. Be courageous and strong
   Careful monitoring of social media is important in maintaining a positive image of Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland. If you see posts/comments or behavior that concerns you, please notify your membership manager. Don’t be afraid to speak up or ask questions.

4. Be responsible for what you say and do
   Remember that what you post online can be around permanently. If you have questions about whether you should post something, ask your membership manager.

5. Respect yourself and others
   Respect other people’s privacy and your own personal boundaries by using discretion when choosing to accept or invite a fellow volunteer and/or parents as your Facebook “friend” on your personal page. (For the service unit or troop Facebook page, the privacy settings will give you the ability to give permission to only those who are involved with the service unit or troop.)

6. Respect authority
   Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland reserves the right to block or delete any postings, administrators, group members, etc., or restrict volunteer access to social media sites within council control. If you are contacted by a member of the media through a social media site and asked to comment on an issue, please refer them to the council Marketing and Communications department.

7. Use resources wisely
   Your time is a valuable resource and your social media activities should not interfere with your volunteer commitments.

8. Make the world a better place and be a sister to every Girl Scout
   This is true regardless of how you are communicating.

9. Be mindful of how you look and act by living the Girl Scout Promise and Law
   Your online presence can reflect positively or negatively on Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland. Be wary of your actions captured via images, posts, or comments. It is always recommended to set your personal Facebook profile to “private”, especially if you have Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland listed as an organization that you volunteer for or represent. Please remember that your Facebook profile picture can always be viewed publicly, so use discretion when choosing how the world sees you.

10. Deliver effective and deliberate communication to internal and external customers.
    Respond to questions and concerns in a timely manner. Be a valuable resource for information.
Volunteer responsibility
Before you begin developing a social media platform for your service unit, troop, or Girl Scout activity, you should designate one adult who will be responsible for monitoring the platform, ensuring that members communicate effectively and follow the guidelines stated below.

Identifying members
- If you wish to post Girl Scouts’ names, use first names only. Do not identify by full name any Girl Scouts pictured in any photos you post online.
- Only identify the schools, addresses, phone numbers, or email addresses of adult Girl Scout members in a closed group.
- Only list the address or location of any Girl Scout meeting or activity in a closed group. You may identify trip or event locations after they have occurred.

Content
Remember that anything posted is a reflection of Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland and GSUSA, so please be cautious when selecting content.

Girl use
Speak with the girls in your troop or service unit and make sure they understand the importance of preserving the Girl Scout image online. Encourage them to use good judgment and discretion when posting online.

GSUSA’s Internet Safety Pledge for girls can be found at: http://www.girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp.

Girl Scouts 13 years of age and older may use social media after they have reviewed this document with their parents and signed the pledge form. You can also find more online safety information in the Girl Scout Junior Amaze Journey.

Infractions
If you are contacted by Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland or GSUSA and asked to remove any content or links from your social media platform, please comply with that request. If you find a Girl Scout social media platform that is in violation of these guidelines, please contact your membership manager. Please describe the violation in detail and provide the web address. We expect all who participate in social media on behalf of Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland (or in relation to) to understand and follow these guidelines. These guidelines will continue to evolve as social media evolves and new technologies and tools are added.

Social Media Platforms
The next section of these guidelines gives specific information about council accounts and how to start Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Facebook – Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland
We post regular status updates, pictures, links, and more. We also invite our fans to participate in discussions and share information. Like us at facebook.com/GirlScoutsOH.
Creating a closed Facebook Group for your service unit or troop

The first step is to create your own Facebook account, if you have not done so already. You can create an account at facebook.com. To create a group, take the following steps:

1. At the homepage on your Facebook account, on the left side column, there is a menu item called “Groups.” Click on that option. On the that page, you will see “Create Group” on the left side column. A box will appear on your screen for creating a group.

2. Choose your group name. This should be the name of your service unit (or your troop number if you are creating a group page for your troop). For example: Big Walnut Service Unit or Troop #xxxxx. Please do not include “Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland” or “Girl Scouts” in your group name. You can specify in the “info” section that your service unit or troop is affiliated with Girl scouts of Ohio’s Heartland.

3. You can now add other service unit members to the group who also have Facebook accounts. Please make sure to add only service unit members and Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland staff.

4. **ALL service units must make Jane Volunteer an Administrator. That allows for the page to continue if volunteers move or change positions.**

5. Pull down the menu labeled “privacy.” Your options will be Open, Closed, or Secret. Select the “Closed” option. This ensures that only members of the group will see the information posted in the group page.

6. Click “Create” and you’re finished.

7. If you have already created a profile for your troop and/or service unit, please set the privacy settings to “friends only” (if it is a regular Facebook profile page). This way, individuals must request to be your “friend.” Note: This will only work if your page is a regular Facebook “profile” page. If you created a fan page, you should change it to a group and set the settings as noted above.

8. These guidelines for Facebook are in place so that girls are protected online, especially if you are posting pictures and/or meeting dates and times on the page.

Things you can do with a closed Facebook group:

- Post messages
- Use the Notes section for longer posts
- Post photos
- Create an event on the calendar
- Post links to other sites
- Post videos
- Post documents on Facebook
- Chat with group members

In a closed group, any member can invite other members to join, as long as they are Facebook friends. Remember to protect everyone’s privacy by only inviting current adult volunteers. The creator of the closed group is the administrator by default. For that reason, we encourage the communications consultant to create the closed group. It is a good practice to have more than one administrator so that the responsibility of the account can be shared.

If you have any questions, please contact the Marketing and Communications department at marcomm@gsoh.org or 614-487-8101.
### myGSOH

**What is it?** myGSOH is a program guide designed to help girls, troop leaders, and parents/caregivers plan activities for the year. It includes date-sensitive program information for council-sponsored programs.

**Who gets it?** All membership (one per Girl Scout household)

**When?** Twice a year – April and August

### Campfire Connections

**What is it?** It is a newsletter that provides the latest information on Girl Scout programs, events, shops, and more.

**Who gets it?** Parents/caregivers and volunteers

**When?** The parent/caregiver editions are sent on the first and third Wednesdays of each month. The volunteer edition is sent on the fifth day of each month regardless of day.

### Resident and Day Camp Guides

**What are they?** The camp guides contain resident camp and day camp program opportunities for Girl Scouts and volunteers.

**Who gets it?** All membership (one per Girl Scout household)

**When?** Once a year
- Resident Camp: January
- Day Camp: April

### Impact Report

**What is it?** The Impact Report is a comprehensive, annual report detailing the council’s activities and successes from the most recent year.

**Who gets it?** Donors and Annual Meeting attendees

**When?** Annually
Using the Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Logos and Brand Marks

Individuals and service units may request to use the Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland logos, brand marks, and fonts, however the council marketing department must review all requests to approve usage. The logo and council lockup may not be reassembled or manipulated in any way. GSOH council marketing department must approve all final artwork to ensure all guidelines are met before printing or production.

Merchandise offered for resale or distributed at fee-based activities must receive approval from council and council must facilitate orders through official GSUSA licensed vendors. Contact GSOH Marketing and Communications at marcomm@gsoh.org in the early planning stages to allow for approval time from GSUSA.

Merchandise may be purchased from non-licensed vendors when there are no resale or fee-based events involved. This merchandise is to be strictly used for gifts, displays, and awards. Council facilitates an order by granting a one-time approval to a non-licensed vendor. Non-licensed vendors may contact our Marketing and Communications department at marcomm@gsoh.org to request high quality files and branding guidelines.
Program Resources

Girl Scout program experiences and activities meet the needs and interests of girls, are based on the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and enable girls to grow and develop. Girl Scout program activities can take place in a variety of settings and come in many forms:

- Troop or group activities planned and implemented by the girls with the guidance of their adult leadership,
- Service unit or other large volunteer-driven local events, and
- Council sponsored – all programming coordinated and/or facilitated by council staff.

Program and Special Events

A wide variety of both indoor and outdoor programs are offered each year by council program staff and volunteers. Programs are offered for every age level and for families. These events are offered at council-owned facilities, community partners and local sites. While some programs do require adult supervision, activities are generally facilitated by council staff and/or trained program volunteers. Information about these programs, including dates/times, descriptions, fees, and supervision requirements, is published in the myGSOH publication. The link to the latest issue can be found on the council’s website gsoh.org. Registration information is online on CORA.

Patch, Kit Programs, and Community Resources

These activities may be completed throughout the year according to the schedules and interests of the girls. Many of the patch program activity guides can be downloaded for free or purchased through the GSOH Resource Stores. Program kits are available to borrow from the council office and service centers. Program specifics may vary, and new opportunities may be added throughout the year, so check back regularly on the website.

Travel

Whether you travel around the block or around the world, some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout’s life happen while taking trips. Visit http://forgirls.girlscouts.org/travel/ for information about GS Destinations and Getaways. Check out the Troop Travel Guide for important details regarding traveling with your troop that will help you plan your trip. All multi-day travel and all travel outside of Ohio must be approved by GSOH Program Staff prior to departure. Troop Travel Training is mandatory for travel outside of the state of Ohio, or for trips lasting more than two nights. See gsoh.org for guidelines.
Camps & Properties

Just like our girls, every one of our outdoor program properties is different, each with its own unique personality and special qualities. Every girl will find a GSOH camp that's as awesome as she is — whatever her interests, age or level of outdoor experience.

Plan a weekend camping trip with your troop, participate in an exciting outdoor program or event on your own, or venture to day camp or resident camp in the summer. Sing songs by the campfire, eat endless s'mores, have lots of laughs and make memories they'll never forget. You can find the list of our camps at [https://www.gsoh.org/en/camp/camps---properties.html](https://www.gsoh.org/en/camp/camps---properties.html).

Reserve a Camp

Whether you're a Girl Scout troop or service unit wanting to do some camping on your own or aren't involved with Girl Scouts but are looking for a unique place to host your next event, program or retreat, our beautiful properties are available to rent year-round. You can rent one or more of the individual camp facilities or the entire camp, just for the day or overnight using this link: [Camp Reservation](https://www.gsoh.org/en/camp/camps---properties.html) or on our website under the Camp tab.

***Before you go online to reserve a camp, be sure you have completed all the required certifications: troop camp certification training and up-to-date first aid/CPR training.***

The Rental Guide is available for download on our website under camp here: [Rental Guide](https://www.gsoh.org/en/camp/camps---properties.html).

Outdoor Program

Five program sites for year-round use are owned and maintained by the council. These include:

- Camp Beckoning Trails – Logan (Hocking County)
- Camp Crooked Lane – Mt. Gilead (Morrow County)
- Camp Ken-Jockey – Galloway (Franklin County)
- Camp Molly Lauman – Lucasville (Scioto County)
- Zanesville Service Center – Zanesville (Muskingum County)

These sites are used for troop camping, council program events, Programs on the Go, day camp, and resident camp. They are all available for rent by Girl Scout troops and groups as well as outside groups.

Day Camp and Twilight Camp

Day camp is for Girl Scouts having completed kindergarten and older and adult volunteers. Council sponsored day camps are available during the summer in multiple locations throughout the council.

- Girls register individually and are assigned to units ranging in size from 7-18 girls.
- A minimum of two adult day camp volunteers are assigned with each unit of girls.
- As a unit, girls learn outdoor skills, such as fire building and outdoor cooking, do a variety of crafts, share kapers (chores), sing, hike, explore nature, make friends and have a great time.
- At the end of the day, everyone returns home.

To learn more about the day camp program and locations of council-sponsored day camps, visit [gsoh.org](https://www.gsoh.org).

All day camps and twilight camps are COUNCIL SPONSORED. Service units CANNOT run day or twilight camps. Any multi-day summer program run by a service unit MUST have pre-approval from the program department. To obtain approval contact [customercare@gsoh.org](mailto:customercare@gsoh.org).
Resident Camp

Girls camp overnight for a period of two and half days or longer. The camps are operated by the council and supervised by employed staff members.

- Girls register for camp as individuals.
- Resident camp sessions of various lengths during the summer focus on programs suited to the interests and experience of both older and younger girls.
- All resident camp sessions take place at Camp Molly Lauman in Scioto County.
- Girls stay overnight at camp for the length of their program.

To learn more about the resident camp, visit gsoh.org.

Service Unit Events and Camporees at Council Sites

Service units must complete a site reservation to reserve any council-owned site for all service unit events. The same reservation timeline and procedures that apply to troops apply to service units except for the deposit requirement. A service unit must submit a $100 deposit at the time of reservation. The deposit will be credited toward the total cost of the site rental.

The Guide to Service Unit Camporees is designed to direct a team of girls and adults in the planning process to ensure that all aspects of program, safety, finances and scheduling are considered so the event can be successful. This guide will be sent to all service units requesting a reservation for a camporee or may be requested in advance of a reservation by contacting customercare@gsoh.org.

We want to hear about your amazing service unit events and camporees at our sites and beyond! Complete a PDF version or the online version of the Service Unit Event Report Form. It only takes a few minutes to complete, and the information helps the GSOH program staff help other service units with their events.

Specialized Activities

When planning a program activity, always begin by checking the Safety Activity Checkpoints established by GSUSA. GSOH program sites offer the opportunity for activities that require certified facilitators. These include:

- Target Sports (archery and slingshots) – certified archery instructor required
- Canoeing – certified canoeing instructor required
- Challenge Course – certified challenge course instructor required
- Swimming – certified lifeguards and adult lookouts required

In addition to the GSUSA Safety Activity Checkpoints, the council has specific written procedures that must be followed when participating in any of these activities. You can find that resource on our website.

Troop Camp

Troop camping is an overnight or extended camping experience that is planned and carried out by the girls and adults in a troop or group.

- The troop should have already participated in a number of outdoor activities to ensure a certain comfort level in the outdoors, to develop the girls’ outdoor skills, and to learn about what to pack and how to maintain a safe environment.
- Troops/groups can go camping on council-owned sites or sites not owned by the council.
- Troops may also wish to take advantage of the council sponsored troop core camp opportunities which provide a similar troop camping experience without the leaders having to plan or carry out the activities. See the myGSOH publication and CORA for more information on troop core camp opportunities.
When a troop goes camping, **an accompanying adult must be certified as a troop camping certified adult.** Troop camp certification courses are offered throughout the year in a variety of locations. Troop camp certification should be taken before the troop plans a trip (approximately four to six months before the camping trip). See the council website and CORA for troop camp certification course information.

**An adult who is currently certified in first aid and CPR** is required to accompany a troop while camping. See the council website and CORA for first aid/CPR course information.

To discover more about troop camping, the council-owned sites, and how to make a site reservation, go to [gsoh.org](http://gsoh.org).

**Council Position on Concealed Carry Law**

Firearms or weapons of any type are strictly prohibited anywhere on council-owned premises, whether or not permitted by Ohio law. Except for law enforcement personnel, Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc., does not permit its members, guests, employees, or any other individual to carry weapons or firearms on their body or in their belongings while engaged in Girl Scout activities or on Girl Scout property.

**Non-Smoking Policy**

All buildings owned, rented, leased or loaned to Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council, Inc. are designated as **non-smoking** environments. Adults who smoke (including electronic or vapor) must use special designated areas away from the girls. Adults must not leave minors unattended to smoke. Cigarette butts must be extinguished completely and disposed of in a trash can or other responsible manner.

**Special Accommodations**

Only girls or their parent/guardian may request reasonable accommodation for a disability. Adult volunteers should not presume accommodations are necessary.

**Tagalongs**

The inclusion of younger or older siblings in Girl Scout troop meetings, troop activities, and adult learning events is discouraged. Adult members of a service unit or council program planners should work together to arrive at a solution for care of siblings that will not interfere with their activities or drain resources from an organized troop. Council sponsored programs, except for family events, do not allow tagalongs. Do not bring non-member children to troop meetings. Have other parents be responsible for entertaining non-member siblings in adjacent rooms or other suitable locations.

**Questions** regarding program should be directed to [customercare@gsoh.org](mailto:customercare@gsoh.org).
Managing Girls Finances

Understanding Financial Ability by Grade Level
Every Girl Scout troop is responsible for planning and financing its own activities. This puts girls in charge, giving them the opportunity (with your oversight) to cooperatively set goals, manage a budget, spend responsibly, maintain records, and develop good math and finance skills. As with other activities, girls progress in their financial abilities as they get older.

The following are some examples, by grade level, that you may want to consider:
- Girl Scout Daisy and Brownies: may collect dues. The adult volunteer handles funds and keeps the troop Finance Report. Volunteers and parents decide on the amount of dues.
- Girl Scout Juniors: may collect dues. The troop treasurer keeps due records. The adult volunteer handles funds and keeps the troop Finance Report. The troop decides the amount of dues.
- Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors: may collect dues. The troop treasurer keeps due records. The troop decides the amount of dues. The adult volunteer handles funds and keeps the troop Finance Report.

Leading a Girl Scout troop should not cause undue hardship on a family or troop budget. As you consider the year ahead, you will need to plan carefully and discuss income and expenses regularly with both girls and parents.

Set a budget. It is highly recommended that you set a budget, working with the girls and parents. You go about it like establishing your own personal budget:
- What activities do the girls want to do for the year, and what are the associated costs?
- What revenue can you generate through fall product and cookie programs to offset these expenses? What additional revenue is available (e.g., troop dues)?
- Participating in the product programs is a great way of generating some revenue for the troop, as well as learning some valuable lessons in financial literacy and customer service.

As the troop becomes more established, they can include in their budget to fund a portion (or all) of the girls’ membership dues and patches, with much of the revenue coming from product program.

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

Girl Scout troops are funded by a share of money earned through council sponsored product program activities (such as the Girl Scout Cookie Program), troop money-earning activities (council approved, of course), and any dues your troop may charge.

***All funds, however earned, held by the Troop must be used exclusively to support Girl Scout activities.***
Bank Accounts

When do I open a troop bank account?
When a troop has accumulated $50, you MUST open a bank account.

Who can be a signer on a troop bank account?
- Each account must have two signers who **are not related in anyway or live in the same household**.
- Each signer on a troop account must:
  - Not be related and not residing in the same household.
  - Be an appointed volunteer with a successful background check.
  - Be a current registered member and permitted to handle troop funds.
  - Complete the Troop Finance Report training course.

How do I open a troop bank account?
- Decide which signer will be responsible for troop funds and for keeping a daily account of expenditures, and which signer will be responsible for receiving the bank statement and reconciling the finance report.
- Choose a bank. Although the council does not endorse a specific bank, we do our council business with these “Girl Scout friendly” banks: PNC and Richland Bank.

When you are ready to open a troop bank account, email the following information to customercare@gsoh.org.
- Names of the two approved troop volunteers who will be the account signers. (It doesn’t have to be the troop leaders, just two approved volunteers in the troop who are unrelated and not living in the same household.)
- Name of the bank the troop will be using (PNC is Girl Scout friendly, but you can choose another; Chase is no longer opening new Girl Scout accounts.)
- Mailing address of the account signer who will be receiving the bank statements/correspondence
- Email address of account signer who will have online access to the troop account

You will receive from customer care within five business days:
- A GSOH letter which authorizes opening the new account under our tax ID number, and designates who the signatories are on the account
- W-9 form with GSOH’s EIN (Tax ID number)
- Corporate Resolution and Articles of Incorporation granting GSOH access to bank account information.
- **Any troop bank account opened without these documents will be considered unauthorized and could be subject to bank compliance audit and ultimate account closure.**
- Please make sure to take all forms to the bank when opening the troop bank account. If you elect to change your bank selection after you have already received a bank letter, please contact your membership manager. It is important that the bank name within the bank letter matches the bank in which you are opening your account.
- **The account should be a Non-Profit, charitable account. This designation is important. Please make sure you work with your chosen bank to ensure this occurs.**
- Sign the bank signature card. **Please use the name that appears on your driver’s license.** Many banks request official documents (e.g., driver’s license, etc.), and, if your name does not match, it can create issues in opening an account, or doing troop business.
- Within the bank letter, there will be explicit instructions as to how the account should be named, to **include the troop number. It is important that the bank follows these instructions, to avoid potential issues in setting up online banking for the account.**
What is an ACH Form?
- The ACH (Automated Clearinghouse) form is an electronic network for financial transactions used to support product program.

What do I do next?
- When you open a troop bank account or make changes to the bank or signers on the account, you need to submit the ACH form to the council. This form can be found on the GSOH website, under forms (search: ACH form) or request one from customer care.
- Complete, sign and date the document.
- Include with the ACH form, either a cancelled check or a letter on bank letterhead confirming the account number and ABA routing information. This is needed to send the completed form.
- Send both the form and the cancelled check/bank letter to the finance office at the council via US Postal Service or scan and email it to: finance@gsoh.org.

IMPORTANT: It is important that this form is fully completed and returned to the council. You will not be considered a troop in good standing and able to participate in the cookie or fall product programs until the ACH Form and the confirmation information (cancelled check or letter from the bank) is received by the council.

Checks, Debit and Credit Cards, Online Banking, and Overdraft Protection
- GSOH does not require two signatures on checks. Most banks should provide free checks if the troop chooses to use them.
- Under NO circumstances should the troop account link with ANY personal account. If the troop has a savings account connected to the troop checking account, both accounts MUST be accounted for in the troop financial reports. Troops should typically only have savings accounts if they have a council approved trip for which they are saving money. There are some credit unions who only have savings accounts, which makes it difficult to participate in the council ACH program during the cookie program. In these situations, the troop will be asked to provide cashier’s checks (versus having funds withdrawn from the troop account).
- Debit cards can be requested for the two signers on the account only. No other debit cards are permitted.
- Protect your debit cards and your online banking information, to prevent unauthorized access and use of troop funds. Make sure the cards are secured properly. If a troop debit card is lost, or online banking access is compromised, please contact the bank immediately.
- Troop credit cards are not permitted for troop use. If offered, these must be declined.
- Online banking can be set up for the account, documenting the email for the troop volunteer responsible for receiving the bank statements.
- Overdraft protection should not be added to the account.
- Troops are not permitted to utilize Square®, PayPal® or other unauthorized electronic forms of banking.

What do I do if I am inheriting a bank account?
- Follow the same directions as opening a new troop account. Most banks require at least one, sometimes both, of the prior signers on the troop account to close or change an existing troop account. Please understand that is a bank requirement. If you need assistance contact your MM.
- Any changes to the troop account require a new ACH form to be completed and forwarded to the finance department to remain compliant and in good standing.

Regulatory Requirements (Patriot Act and Bank Secrecy Act)
To comply with the Patriot Act, most signers should be prepared to provide two forms of ID. One of these is a photo ID. Typically, a driver’s license and debit/credit card is used.

In addition to your ID, the signers will be asked for the following information: name, address, phone number, birthdate, Social Security number, employer and occupation, and may be
asked to complete a beneficial ownership form for the account. Do not be concerned with the request, it is to comply with federal regulations contained within the Patriot Act. If you have any questions, don’t hesitate to reach out to your membership manager.

Throughout the year but particularly during the cookie program, you may be asked by the bank for personal information, such as your name, address and Social Security number when depositing funds received from the cookie program into your bank account. Similar to the Patriot Act above, please do not be alarmed by this request, as this is a requirement from the Bank Secrecy Act (strengthened by the Patriot Act), which is triggered when there is $10,000 or more deposited in one day. Although you may have only deposited a small amount on any given day, remember hundreds of GSOH accounts may also be depositing in that bank family and your deposit could be the one that causes the total to reach the threshold.
Troop Finance Operations – What should I know?

It is important that all members of the troop pay attention to the finances of the troop.

- **Both signers** on the troop account are responsible for the financial transactions of the troop and the integrity of all financial reporting. Signers are the guardians of the troop funds, ensuring that all spending is in accordance of troop agreement and the council guidelines. Being good stewards of the girls’ money teaches girls about responsible money handling.

- **Girl members**: The monies that are in the troop account belong to the girls. They collectively decide how to spend the funds, for the benefit of the girls.

- **Parents**: Parents of troop girls are entitled to a copy of troop financial records at any time. As a best practice, it is recommended that parents are provided with a monthly or quarterly financial report, outlining revenues and expenses of the troop, in addition to what remaining funds are available.

- **Council**: Troops operate under the council’s Tax ID number and tax-exempt status. It is therefore important that troops are adhering to all IRS guidelines so as not to endanger the tax status of the entire council. Also, it is important to keep your bank balance in good standing with the bank. Operating at a negative balance not only creates issues for the troop with the bank, but also for future troops that may want to start an account at a bank branch. The bank may also choose to initiate charge off procedures, negatively impacting the troop and council. In addition, during fall product and cookie program seasons there are financial transactions, in the form of ACH transfers, that take place between troops and the council to meet the financial obligations of the troops.

**What expenses are appropriate for use of the girls’ troop monies?**

Expenses incurred for direct troop benefit (e.g. activity fees, materials, and supplies) are ones that should be drawn from the troop and/or from parental resources. These are typically consumable in nature.

Troop debit card or troop checks should be used to pay for troop expenses. Reimbursements for use of personal funds should be kept to a minimum, handled promptly and fully documented.

Some expenses that can be reimbursed are:

- Purchasing girl membership.
- Girl Scout Journey, Girl’s Guide or other resource publications.
- Materials directly benefiting the troop (craft supplies, camp supplies or equipment).
- Costs of required troop leadership volunteer development courses to be safety compliant. These are Troop First Aider and Troop Camp Certified volunteer and can be reimbursed up to one per troop. Cost caps are Troop Camp $10 and First Aid CPR $35.
- Earned Girl Scout badges, pins and awards
- For trips, please consult the council’s travel policy regarding what are approved expenses.

The following expenses may **not** be reimbursed or purchased from the troop funds:

- Purchase or renewal of adult volunteer memberships
- Items benefiting individual girls and adults (e.g. gift cards, souvenirs, clothing, etc.)

Troops may not track individual girl balances within the troop account. Girls may not receive individual credit for funds or the portion of the troop account that resulted from their contributed troop dues or their money earned or product programs program troop proceeds. The IRS requires that 501(c)(3) organizations must not be organized or operated for the benefit of private interests. The IRS has issued rulings recently that organizations that earmark fundraising for particular members is a non-exempt activity and those organizations may be required to pay unrelated business income tax or lose their tax-exempt status. If you have any question on private benefit or troop account activities, please reach out to your membership manager.

***All funds, however earned, held by the troop, must be used exclusively to support Girl Scout activities.***
What else do I need to know about troop finances?

**Deposits**

- All money earned by the girls should be deposited into the troop account — this includes cookie and fall product programs money.
- A receipt should be completed for any money given by parents for deposit into the girls’ troop account and provided to the parent to document the money transaction.
- Any personal checks received, made out to the troop, should be deposited in the bank immediately, to minimize the chance of non-sufficient funds.
- Any money from troop money-earning or program activities (e.g., cookie, fall program) is for the benefit of ALL the girls in the troop, not individual girls. This is an IRS regulation.
- Money-earning activities: Please reference the money-earning section of the VRG for guidance on what is permitted. Any funds earned from money-earning activities should be appropriately reflected in the troop financial records.

**Expenses**

- Under no circumstances should troop funds be used for personal expenses.
- Troop funds can only be used for Girl Scout activities and events.
- Troop purchases must be kept separate and documented by individual receipts, which are to be itemized with the establishment’s name and date of purchase.
- It is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED that the majority of purchases are handled through the troop debit card. Although cash purchases and ATM withdrawals cannot always be avoided, these should be kept to a minimum and appropriately documented.
- Troops are not permitted to utilize Square®, PayPal® or other unauthorized electronic forms of banking.
- Tax Exempt: You may request state sales tax exemption when purchasing supplies for Girl Scout use ONLY. Any inappropriate use can result in IRS complications. Many retailers require a Blanket Certificate of Exemption on file with the state. Contact your MM or the finance department to obtain a copy if needed. Note: Council sales tax exemption is within the boundaries of Ohio, and typically is not applicable to purchases outside of state lines.
- If you have questions about the appropriateness of using funds for a specific troop need, contact your MM.
- Failure to comply with council policy in the administration of troop finances can result in the termination of the volunteer’s position. If an audit of troop finances indicates theft of girl funds has occurred, the volunteer may be subject to legal action to collect the money owed, in addition to the termination of their position.

Note: Both signers on the account are responsible for documenting the financial transactions of the troop and ensuring that all income and expenses are documented appropriately. Both signers should meet regularly throughout the year to review the financial transactions of the troop. Any irregularities should be reported immediately to your MM. Regular financial updates should also be shared with the parents of the troop to promote transparency.

When a Girl Changes Troops

The amount of troop funds is assessed and then divided equally by the number of girls registered in the troop during that membership year. All funds are troop funds and have no relationship to the amount of funds generated by an individual girl. The transferring girls’ portion is sent to the new troop leadership. The transferred funds become part of the overall troop funds in the new troop.

Under no circumstances should this money be given directly to the girl.

If a girl wishes to continue as an individually registered Girl Scout, consult your membership manager.
Troop and Service Unit Finance Reports

The Finance Report is a communication vehicle which provides transparency into the financial well-being of the troop and service unit. It is the responsibility of the designated signers on the troop account to complete these reports and turn them into their MM by May 10 and Nov. 10 each year.

If the reports are not submitted within one month of the deadlines as noted, the signers on the troop account are at risk of being put on financial restrictions, where they will not be permitted to manage finances/resources going forward.

How do I complete the Troop Finance Report?

• Account for all financial activity within the report. This includes all money coming into the troop (e.g. fall product program, cookie program, troop dues, etc.), as well as all expenses being spent by the troop. Please make sure to include details describing all transactions to avoid questions from the auditors.
• Include a copy of the final sales report if participating in the fall product or cookie programs. You can get these reports from both product program online portals.
• Submit a printed or electronic copy (in pdf form) of the troop bank statements for each month included within the reporting time-period. This should be sent with each report. Be sure to include ALL pages.
• The May report represents activity from Nov. 1 – April 30; the November report represents May 1 – Oct. 31. The bank may have different statement dates. Please provide the most recent bank statement with each report.
• IMPORTANT: The report must be signed by both designated volunteers. Both signers are responsible for the accuracy of the information contained in the report and are held accountable for any discrepancies.
• Please Note: Each report will be audited for accuracy. If there are questions from the auditors, it is the responsibility of the signers on the troop account to respond on a timely basis.

IMPORTANT: Failure to submit a finance report within TWO (2) months of the deadline could result in removal from the volunteer position.

Troop income/expense reports are shared with the parents on a regular basis to provide transparency. Parents may request to see troop finance reports with the detailed cash record of troop income or expenditures at any time.

Discrepancies/Mismanagement of Funds

If there is a discrepancy with the troop funds:

• The troop leadership will meet to determine the problem and resolve it.
• If the problem is not resolved or if the discrepancy is part of a financial audit, the membership manager will reach out to the leadership to resolve the issue.
• If there are missing troop funds that are not resolved, a parent meeting will be called.
• Parents will make the decision as to what action, if any, will be taken with regards to the mismanagement of funds.
• The troop volunteers and/or parents are responsible for pursuing any legal action if that is the decision of the troop.
Disbanding a Troop

When a troop is left without troop leadership volunteers, the family members should contact their service unit manager or membership manager for assistance and options.

In the event the troop wishes to disband, follow these steps:

- Download and complete the disbanding troop report from our website, under Forms, search for Troop Disbanding Report.
- Close the troop bank account. When closing the bank account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account. All signers may have to close the account in person.
- Obtain the final bank statement from the bank.
- Collect a bank check for any remaining funds. Any remaining money in the bank account becomes the property of the council. Funds will be held for a period of one year, in the event the troop reorganizes, or girls rejoin other troops. At the end of the year, any remaining money is used to provide financial assistance to girls.
- Complete the troop finance report.
- Submit all the above documents to your membership manager.

All paperwork needs to be submitted to the council NO LATER THAN ONE MONTH from the time of disbandment of the troop.

NOTE: Under no circumstances are troop funds distributed directly to a girl or girls who are leaving a troop for any reason. Funds CANNOT be used to purchase items that individually benefit a girl (examples: gift cards, money for college, a pillow for her bed, payment for one girl to attend camp or anything that is not part of the Girl Scout troop experience.) Nor can funds be donated to a specific troop, service unit or outside organization. For questions about troop fund distribution contact your membership manager or service unit.

Be sure Girl Scout families understand these key points:
- Girl Scout troops should be self-supporting; they should not rely on funding from the girls’ families.
- Girls, parents and sponsors should know where troop funds come from and how they are spent.
Service Unit Funds
As with troops, a service unit with a cash balance of $50 or more must open a bank account and use the same procedures as troops. It is possible to have a small amount of leftover money from a service unit event, but keep in mind that service units are not permitted to conduct money-earning activities, nor are they permitted to solicit cash donations.

Service Unit Finance Reports should be submitted to your membership manager May 10 and Nov. 10. Follow the same directions as for the Troop Finance Report. Service units may use their funds to benefit all girls in the service unit, as determined by the service unit members. Examples are as follows:

- Subsidizing programs or program fees.
- Annual membership dues for girls or volunteers who require financial assistance.
- Handbooks and resources for new volunteers.
- Service unit programs and ceremonies.
- Volunteer development costs (first aid, camping) incurred by volunteers.
- Supporting girls attending a destination.
- Funding for service projects.
- Funding for Girl Scout Gold or Silver Award projects.
- Volunteer recognition.
- Startup funds for a new troop.

IMPORTANT:
- Service units do not keep disbanded troop money.
- If a service unit pays for a meeting space or storage unit, that cost is not passed on to the troops.
Financial Assistance

Membership Registration Financial Assistance

Financial assistance is available to pay a portion of the annual membership fee so that every girl can benefit from a Girl Scout experience. Limited funds are assigned yearly to give girls the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new friends and become our leaders for tomorrow regardless of their ability to pay. In every instance the council expects that the amount requested reflects the true need of the family. The troop leader is prohibited from making the request on behalf of the parent/guardian.

Limited financial assistance is also available for volunteers serving in the troop leadership position. Again, the amount requested should truly reflect the need of the volunteer.

Financial assistance is not granted to entire troops.

Girl Scout troops are encouraged to designate a portion of their troop treasury for the renewal of their annual membership registration fees.

The signed Financial Assistance Request form, partial payment (if applicable) and completed paper membership registration form are to be returned to the membership manager for your area or mailed to the council office.

Girl Scout Program Financial Assistance

Some funds are available for registered members who need financial assistance to participate in Girl Scout program activities. Applications and guidelines are printed in the council publication myGSOH.

Forms also are available online. Application for financial assistance for a specific event does not serve as event registration.

Financial Assistance is available for:
- Girl membership fee
- GSOH sponsored programs/camp fee (minus deposit where applicable)
- Uniform essentials
- The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting
- Journey books
- Destinations
- Camperships

Financial Assistance is determined by:
- Completed application
- Participation in the GSOH Fall Product Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program
- Number of family members and multiple Girl Scouts in the immediate household
- Family income bracket and employment
- Previous financial assistance

Application Process
- Download the Financial Assistance Application or request to have one mailed.
- Complete and return the Financial Assistance Application.
- Notification of financial assistance status will be emailed or mailed to the applicant.

Limited funds are available.
Money-Earning Basics

“Troop money-earning” refers to activities organized by the troop (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with adults) and that earn money for the troop.

Product programs are a great way to earn the funds necessary for girls to travel, camp, or carry out Take Action Projects. If income from product programs isn’t enough, however, girls can participate in money-earning activities to help raise additional funds needed.

Please note: A troop may only participate in additional money-earning projects AFTER they have participated in both the council product programs. In addition, troops are not permitted to participate in any other money-earning projects while a council product program is taking place or during the local United Way blackout period.

To participate in money-earning activities troops MUST:

- Participate in both product programs (fall product and cookie programs).
  New troops that form after one or both product programs may conduct limited money-earning activities if needed to fund planned troop activities.
- Have written permission from each participating girl’s parent or guardian before any money-earning activity occurs.

Examples of money-earning activities:

Collections/Drives:
- Cell phones for refurbishment
- Used ink cartridges turned in for money
- Christmas tree recycling
- Recycling

Entertainment:
- Talent show
- Flock of Flamingos traveling yard décor

Food/Meal Events:
- Bake sale
- Themed meals like high tea, Mexican dinner (depending on girls’ destination)
- Spaghetti dinners or pancake breakfasts

Service(s):
- Raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, shoveling snow, walking pets
- Gift wrapping
- Car wash

Sales:
- Garage/yard sale
- Book re-sale
- Sale of crafts made by the girls
Money-earning activities CANNOT:

- **Increase revenue for another business.** This include in-home product parties (example: Tupperware, Pampered Chef, or Mary Kay) and all restaurants. **Any business using the Girl Scout trademark must seek authorization from GSUSA.**
- **Raise money for another non-profit including walk-a-thons and telethons.** Girl Scouts may elect to support another organization through a Take Action or service project that do not involve fundraising or by making a donation from the troop’s treasury.
- **Be retained by individuals.** Funds acquired through troop money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the troop, while following council procedures.
- **Check with your membership manager with questions about whether an activity is acceptable.**

Guidelines when participating in money-earning activities:

There are a few specific guidelines — some required by the IRS — that ensure that troop money-earning activities are conducted with legal and financial integrity.

**Girls’ participation in both the council sponsored product program activities and troop money-earning projects is based upon the following:**

- Voluntary participation
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed
- An understanding that money-earning **should not exceed** what the group needs to support its activities
- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities, as well as health and safety laws
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

Reminders and cautions:

- All rewards earned by girls through the product program 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 other council product sales.
- Obtain written approval from your council before a group money-earning event.
- Girl Scouts discourages the use of games of chance. Any activity which could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo) must be approved by the local Girl Scout council and be conducted in compliance with all local and state laws.
- Girl Scouts of the USA Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash. Girls can collect partial payment towards the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and Girl Scout Fall Product Program products through participation in council approved product sale donation programs.
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the GSLE.

It is recommended to end your cookie program with zero unsold inventory. In a situation where this isn’t possible, all girls, volunteers and parents can make the decision to donate up to 1% of their total troop sales (in packages) to a charity of their choice. Please note this donation would directly impact the amount of proceeds that would remain available in the troop account for the girls to spend. Additional remaining unsold inventory above this 1% is the personal financially responsibility of the signers of the Troop Responsibility Form to the troop.
Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals

The Girl Scout Cookie Program is so well known in communities, it's likely that your girls will already know a bit about it and want to get out there to start selling as soon as possible. But it's important that the girls have a clear plan and purpose for their product-sale activities. One of your opportunities as a volunteer is to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps for the girls:

1. **Set goals for money-earning activities.** What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities present themselves?

2. **Create a budget.** Use a budget worksheet that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, and so on) and available income (the group’s account balance, projected cookie proceeds, and so on).

3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.

4. **Make a plan.** The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans. Will cookie and other product programs — if approached proactively and energetically — earn enough money to meet the group’s goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference in anticipated expense and anticipated income? Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group’s financial goals? In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.

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

**Remember:** It's great for girls to have opportunities, such as the Girl Scout Cookie Program, to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals as part of the GSLE. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and spending money. Take Action projects, for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money!
Ways to support Girl Scouts
We rely on donations from individuals, local businesses, organizations, corporations, foundations, United Ways, and government agencies to ensure Girl Scouting remains available and affordable for all families. Contributions support programs and ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouts.

There are many ways that you can come together to support the Girl Scout mission.

Annual Campaign
Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland relies on the generosity of the community to provide financial support to continue programming that develops the skills girls need to discover themselves, connect with other girls, and take action. Gifts to the Annual Campaign are unrestricted and used as needed to support Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland. Gifts can be made to the annual fund throughout the year by sending a donation to 1700 Watermark Drive, Columbus OH 43215 or on-line at www.gsoh.org/donate.

Memorial & Tribute Fund
When making a gift please indicate the type of gift you are making and the name and address of who and where you wish to have an acknowledgment sent. The acknowledgement, which does not include the amount of the contribution, will be sent in your name.

- Memorial remembrances are monetary gifts in memory of a friend or relative.
- Tribute gifts honor an important event or person in your life. They are appropriate for a birthday, anniversary, graduation, the Girl Scout Gold Award, recognition of a Girl Scout leader or volunteer, holiday gift, or other special occasion.

Kroger Rewards
Link your Kroger rewards card to Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland and by simply shopping at Kroger you can support Girl Scouts. Visit the Kroger Community Rewards website and link your account/card to Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council (NPO number JY710).

Amazon Smiles®
Link your Amazon account to Amazon Smiles and designate Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland and amazon will donate .5 percent of the price of your eligible purchase to GSOH! Simply shop, link your account, and support Girl Scouts.

Pearl Society
The Pearl Giving Society recognizes and honors individuals who have made a commitment of $1,000 cumulative within a 12-month period.
Pearl Giving Society members receive the following benefits:
- Exclusive invitation to tour a GSOH camp facility during the summer months
- 10 percent discount at any GSOH Girl Scout Shop
- Invitation to GSOH special events
- Acknowledgement in our annual Impact Report

Planned Gifts
Planned gifts include bequests, life insurance, charitable trusts, charitable gift annuities and other deferred gifts. Planned gifts ensure that the values of Girl Scouting, as identified in the Girl Scout Promise and Law, are available to future generations of girls. In addition to extending the donor’s own values to future generations, a planned gift can offer significant tax benefits to the donor. The Juliette Gordon Low Society of Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland recognizes donors who have identified themselves as planned givers. If you have considered making a planned gift or already have made the commitment, please contact us at give@gsoh.org or 614-487-8101.
Alumni Engagement
Are you a Girl Scout Alum? If so, join us on Facebook and stay connected at: www.facebook.com/groups/GSOHAlum.

You can also become part of the GSOH Alum group, and receive GSOH newsletters, hear about volunteer opportunities, and receive other alum information by completing the Girl Scout Alum form at: www.gsoh.org/alumni.

Special Events
Urban Campout, State of the Girl and other special fundraising events bring in needed funds to support girls in Girl Scouts. By attending fundraising events, and encouraging others to attend, you help build awareness about the importance of Girl Scouts in the community.

For more information, questions regarding donations policies, or to make a contribution contact the Philanthropy Department at 614-487-8101 or give@gsoh.org.

Collaborating with other Organizations
Organizations help Girl Scout councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations, and individuals may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, provide activity materials, or loan equipment.

When collaborating with any other organization, follow these guidelines:

Do not participate in fund raising for other organizations: Girl Scouts are not allowed to solicit money on behalf of another organization. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. You and your troop can, however, support another organization through Take Action projects or by making a donation from your group’s account. Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose, as long as they’re not wearing anything that officially identifies them as Girl Scouts.

Do not participate in 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.

Do not sell or endorse commercial products or services: A “Commercial product or service” is any product/service sold in a retail establishment. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell such product or service.
Third Party Fundraising:
Third-party fundraisers are any fundraisers/events that are conducted and staffed by someone not affiliated with Girl Scouts and funds raised support Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland. All Third-party fundraising activities must go through council and be approved.

Donations & Grants

As a not-for-profit organization, Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland must follow all IRS guidelines for a 501(c)(3) organization. All Girl Scout troops and service units are an extension of the council’s IRS not-for-profit status. To ensure compliance with IRS and audit guidelines, Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland has the following policies regarding donations and grants from individuals and organizations to Girl Scouts troops/groups or service units.

Donations

- Girls may not directly solicit funds from individuals or organizations.
- Girl Scouts are not allowed to solicit money on behalf of another organization. Girl Scouts may elect to support another organization through Take Action or service projects that do not involve fund-raising, and by making a donation from the troop’s treasury.
- Troops and service units may receive a donation from any one individual or company for no more than $250 during the membership year (single donation or cumulative). If a donation is made that meets these requirements, your group or service unit can recognize them by sending thank-you cards composed by the girls, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or Court of Awards, or working together on a service project. The contribution should also be reflected in the troop/group’s financial records and report.
- If a donor is requesting a letter of acknowledgement for any amount, the funds must be turned into the council and used to serve all girls.
- Any donation amount more than $250 must be turned into Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland and will be directed to the general fund to support program delivery for all Girl Scouts.
- All donations kept at a troop level must be reported on the Troop/Group/Service Unit annual financial report.

Grants

Due to strict IRS standards girls and volunteers may not apply for grant funding of any kind or ask for financial donations. If an organization or corporation asks for a tax deduction or requests a tax ID number, the donation must be sent to Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland and benefit all girls in Girl Scouts.

In-Kind Support

Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations, and individuals may provide group meeting space, volunteer their time, provide activity material, or loan equipment.

Troops, service units, and individuals acting on behalf of Girl Scouts must have approval from the GSOH philanthropy department before contacting any organization, business, corporation or foundation for in-kind support.

The sponsor’s contribution can be recognized by sending thank-you cards composed by the girls, inviting the sponsor to a meeting, or working together on a service project. Please note that soliciting cash donations is not allowed. Should you have any questions please contact the philanthropy department at 614-487-8101 or give@gsoh.org.
Volunteer Rewards Troop Donation Programs

Many corporate partners donate monetarily on behalf of their employee’s volunteer time. Each corporation has a different name of their program. Troops and service units may receive volunteer matching grants from companies that offer these. These funds are to be used for special service projects conducted by the service unit, day camp or troop. Volunteers who wish to receive these donations fill out the Volunteer Rewards Application found on our website gsoh.org. Funds will be sent to troop leaders pending approval by your membership manager and payment by your corporate partner.

Directions:
1. Complete the GSOH Volunteer Rewards application form found on the website under Forms.
2. Attach the corporate partner’s volunteer application. (If this application is online, indicate that when mailing.)
3. Email the form(s) to give@gsoh.org or mail to:
   Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland
   Attn: Volunteer Rewards
   1700 Watermark Drive, Columbus, OH 43215

Please note:
• Corporate names not listed may be added
• It may take five to seven months from application submission to check receipt.
• Applications are processed in the order they are received. You will receive a confirmation email when we receive your completed form.

If you have questions on the status of your Volunteer Reward Troop Donation, please contact:
Philanthropy and Marketing Coordinator: 614-487-8101 give@gsoh.org

Online Fundraising

Online fundraising in any form is not allowed for girl and troop money-earning except for as approved by GSUSA within the fall product program and digital online cookie program.
Girls may not set up fundraising sites for the purpose of soliciting money as the policy states that girls may not engage in direct solicitations for cash donations at any time. Girls are encouraged to “earn money” through the annual cookie program and fall product/magazine program.

Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions in the Girl Scout name, brand or image without prior written approval from the GSOH council office.
Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by their Girl Scout council and in which the local council is a beneficiary. The National CEO in consultation with the National Board Chair may give permission to raise money in times of a major national or international emergency, with prior written notice to the National Board. Councils will be notified of this action in writing.

If you have further questions, please contact the Philanthropy Department at 614-487-8101 give@gsoh.org.
Safety
In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is always a top priority. Here’s what you need to know. For complete information see the Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Knowing Your Responsibilities
You (the volunteer), the parents/guardians of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. The next three sections provide more details on everyone’s responsibilities.

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

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

2. Points common to all Safety Activity Checkpoints include:
   - **Girls plan the activity.** Keeping their grade-level abilities in mind, encourage girls to take proactive leadership roles in organizing details of the activity.
   - **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary (this is dependent upon the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls). Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by your state, if it is older than 18), and must be screened by your council before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
   - **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.
     - Communicate with council and parents. Follow council procedures for activity approval, certificates of insurance, and council guidelines about girls’ general health examinations. Make arrangements in advance for all transportation and confirm plans before departure.
   - **Be prepared for emergencies and compile key contacts.** Work with girls and other adult volunteers to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults and site security. Give an itinerary to a contact person at home; call the contact person upon departure and return. Create a list of girls’ parents/guardian contact information, telephone numbers for emergency services and police, and council contacts —keep on hand or post in an easily accessible location. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories and contact information for girls’ families. Check activity-specific Safety Activity Checkpoints to determine the type of first aider needed.
   - **Get a weather report.** On the morning of the activity, check weather.com or other reliable weather sources to determine if conditions are appropriate. If severe weather conditions prevent the activity, be prepared with a backup plan or alternate activity, and/or postpone the activity. Write, review, and practice evacuation and emergency plans for severe weather with girls. In the event of a storm, take shelter away from tall objects (including trees, buildings, and electrical poles). Find the lowest point in an open flat area. Squat low to the ground on the balls of the feet, and place hands on knees with head between them.
• **Use the buddy system.** Using the buddy system, girls are divided into teams of two. Each girl is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance if safe to do so, and seeking help when the situation warrants it. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two, so in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

3. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching and sexual activity of any kind with girl members, as well as physical, verbal and emotional abuse of girls is strictly forbidden. Follow your council’s guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.

4. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be an approved adult volunteer, age 21 or older and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears their seat belt at all times and adheres to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.

5. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.

6. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don’t consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls, unless given special permission by your council for group marksmanship activities.

7. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Volunteers are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior and discrimination.

8. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, planning and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

9. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers, or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. On group websites, publish girls’ first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.

10. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product programs are an integral part of the Girl Scout experience. During Girl Scout product programs, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money and products. In addition, a wide variety of organizations, causes and fundraisers may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or are not Girl Scout–approved product program and efforts.
Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians
You want to engage each parent or guardian to help you work toward ensuring the health, safety and well-being of girls. Clearly communicate to parents and guardians that they are expected to:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats and chartered flights. Each driver of motorized private transportation must be at least 21 years old and hold a valid operator’s license appropriate to the vehicle. In addition, state laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here.
Anyone who is driving a vehicle with 12 or more passengers must follow all state laws regarding driving these vehicles. Note, you must check with your council to determine specific rules about renting large vehicles. Fifteen passenger vans are not permitted for use to transport girls.

Please keep in mind the following non-negotiable points regarding private transportation:

- Even though written agreements are always required when renting or chartering, you are not authorized to sign an agreement or contract, except for rental car agreements, even if there is no cost associated with the rental. Such agreements must instead be signed by the person designated by your council.

- Check with your council to make sure you are following accepted practices when using private transportation. This ensures that both you and your council are protected by liability insurance in the event of an accident.

- If your council has given permission to use a rented car, read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. For example, in many cases the minimum age of drivers is 25, and the maximum age is often under 70. In addition, make sure the car is adequately insured and you know who is responsible for damage to, or loss of, the vehicle. Finally, ensure you have a good paper trail that shows the vehicle rental is Girl Scout-related.

- Obtain parent/guardian permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.

Checklist for Drivers

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

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

Check with Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland for any other specific guidelines or requirements.
Girl Scout Activity Insurance

Every registered Girl Scout and registered member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic plan upon registration. The entire premium cost for this protection is borne by Girl Scouts of the USA. The basic plan is effective during the regular fiscal year (October to the following October). Up to 14 months of insurance coverage is provided for new members who register in the month of August. This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred because of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity, after the individual’s primary insurance pays out. This is one reason that all adults and girls should be registered members.

Non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons are not covered by basic coverage.

This insurance coverage is not intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. When $135 in benefits has been paid for covered accident medical or dental expense, any subsequent benefits will be payable only for expenses incurred that aren’t compensable under another insurance policy. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available.

An optional plan of activity insurance is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These plans are secondary insurance that a council may offer to cover participants taking part in any council-approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. Optional insurance coverage is available for any Girl Scout activity that involves non-Girl Scouts, lasts longer than three days and two nights, or involves extensive traveling. Contact your council to find out how to apply. Your council may make this mandatory, in some cases, particularly for overseas travel.

Bills submitted to United of Omaha remain the ultimate responsibility of the patient or her parent/guardian. Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council is never responsible for payment of medical expenses incurred by a member. The council’s only role is to verify insurance coverage for any member’s claim by checking active membership status or coverage under a supplemental policy. After that, the claim is forwarded to United of Omaha for processing and whatever payment will be made.

When giving insurance information to the health care provider, you must provide your primary health insurance coverage information to that provider. The secondary coverage will be United of Omaha. Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council is never a responsible party for payment. Be sure to inform the health care provider that it will take 30 days for United of Omaha to receive and review your claim, so they might need to delay billing until that time has passed. If United of Omaha has not received claim information from the council, it will reject the claim, and the provider will look to the patient for payment. Be sure to file claims in a timely manner to avoid being sent to a collection agency by the health care provider.

Review the Girl Scouts insurance plan description at mutualofomaha.com.

Questions regarding insurance should be directed to: riskmanager@gsoh.org
PLAN 1
Accident Insurance/Basic Coverage
Every registered Girl Scout and registered adult member has this insurance. Coverage is automatic upon registration in the Movement and payment of dues. This coverage is for any approved and supervised Girl Scout activity except those events lasting more than two consecutive nights (three nights when one of the nights is a federal holiday, such as Memorial Day or Labor Day).

PLAN 2
Accident Insurance for Activities or Events Excluded Under the Basic Plan
This plan has been designed for Members during activities/events lasting more than two nights (three nights when one of the nights is an official federal holiday). It also covers non-members as participants regardless of the length of the activity/event. The premium cost is $0.11 per participant, per day or a minimum premium of $5.00. (Most common use of this plan is accident coverage for non-members and for members on events lasting more than two nights).

PLAN 3E
Accident and Sickness Insurance for Activities or Events Excluded Under Plan 1
Plan 3E covers members and non-members as participants. It provides accident and sickness coverage in addition (secondary) to the family coverage (primary). This coverage is for any approved and supervised Girl Scout activity lasting more than two consecutive nights (three nights when one of the nights is a federal holiday). The premium cost is $0.29 per participant, per day or a minimum premium of $5.00. (Most common use of this plan is for accident and sickness excess coverage on events lasting more than two nights).

PLAN 3P
Accident and Sickness Insurance for Activities or Events Excluded Under Plan 1
Plan 3P covers members and non-members as participants. It provides accident and sickness primary coverage. This coverage is for any approved and supervised Girl Scout activity lasting more than two consecutive nights (three nights when one of the nights is a federal holiday). The premium cost is $0.70 per participant, per day or a minimum premium of $5.00. (Most common use of this plan is for accident and sickness primary coverage on events lasting more than two nights).

PLAN 3PI
Accident and Sickness Insurance for International Trips
Plan 3PI includes essentially the same coverage found in Plan 3P (for events lasting more than 2 nights and not covered under the Basic Plan 1), but with a Travel Assistance Service feature added. The premium cost is $1.17 per participant, per day or a minimum premium of $5.00. (Most common use of this plan is for accident, sickness and Travel Assistance primary coverage).

Activity insurance should be purchased for all Girl Scout sponsored events and activities when non-members will be in attendance.

Examples of events for which activity insurance should be purchased:
1. Daddy-Daughter dances
2. Registration events
3. Skating parties
4. Swim parties
To purchase the insurance, the following information is required:

1. Insurance plan number (Plan 2, which offers basic accident coverage, is the most widely selected plan)
2. Name and location of event
3. Beginning date
4. Ending date
5. Number of participants
6. Total number of days

The information may be emailed to riskmanager@gsoh.org. You will receive a reply verifying the information and amount due. When paying the premium, all checks must be made out to United of Omaha Life Insurance Company and then sent to:

Risk Manager
1700 Watermark Drive
Columbus, OH 43215.

For the insurance to be in effect, your payment must be post marked prior to the event date, so please allow a minimum of one week prior to the event date when purchasing insurance. Please include an email address so that we may email confirmation of your insurance purchase.

If you have any questions regarding this process, please email riskmanager@gsoh.org.

Reporting Requirements for Accidents or Injuries

A. Regardless of injury or treatment, always report auto accidents that occur while traveling to, from, or in conjunction with, Girl Scout activities or events. This reporting should include both a phone call to the risk manager during the next business day and a completed Accident/Incident Report forwarded to the manager’s attention as soon as possible. Any accident that results in serious injury or death should also follow the procedure outlined above.

B. If medical treatment providers are involved, the following insurance information should be given to them:
   1. The injured person’s primary health coverage (i.e. Anthem, United Health, etc.)
   2. The party responsible for payment. If it is a child, it would be the parent/guardian. If an adult is injured, it would be the patient. Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council is never responsible for payment.
   3. If the person is eligible for coverage by Girl Scout Activity insurance, either by membership or a special policy being purchased, then provide United of Omaha as secondary insurance coverage (unless you purchased it as primary coverage). That address is United of Omaha Life Insurance Company, Special Risk Services-GS, P.O. Box 31156, Omaha, NE 68131

C. Forward the written accident report to the Risk Manager immediately at riskmanager@gsoh.org. She will contact the parent/guardian/injured party with the proper forms to facilitate the claims process, if desired.

D. The ultimate responsibility for collision damage to borrowed or rented vehicles remains with the individual(s) who rented it, not the council. Accidents in rental vehicles may, however, trigger physical damage coverage under the council’s Vehicle Physical Damage Insurance, but only if the coverage was verified by the risk manager at least four weeks prior to the rental or borrowing of the vehicle. Physical damage coverage to Girl Scout member-owned vehicles is not available.
After receiving a report of an accident, council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance, if needed, at the scene, and will notify parents/guardians, as appropriate. If a child needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially regarding notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, let council-designated staff member discuss the incident with these representatives.

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

In Case of Serious Accident, Emergency, or Fatality
This information is also provided in the registration packet to be kept in the troop first aid kit, and emergency cards are provided to each troop to be carried in volunteer’s wallets.

A. Care for any injured or ill persons and obtain emergency personnel, such as police, fire, or emergency squads.
B. If any children are injured, contact their parent or guardian immediately. Inform them of their child’s condition, the nature of the injury and where the child has been transported for emergency care. If the child does not require emergency transport, follow the parent’s instructions regarding care. When in doubt, call for an emergency squad.
C. In the event of a fatality, call the police immediately. Secure the area and see that no one disturbs the victim or his or her surrounding. A responsible adult should remain at the scene until the police have taken over.
D. Contact council personnel at the following number: (614) 487-8101 or (800) 621-7042, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday
E. If it is after hours and council offices are closed, call the emergency number: (614) 447-7092
F. Do not discuss questions of responsibility or liability. Cooperate with law enforcement and medical personnel - DO NOT TALK TO MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES.

Girl Scout adult volunteers should get safety wallet cards from their service units.
Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

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

Inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, about all girls being offered the same opportunities, about respect and dignity, and about honoring the uniqueness of and differences among us all.

You’re accepting and inclusive when you:

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

As you think about where, when, and how often to meet with your group, you will find yourself considering the needs, resources, safety, and beliefs of all members and potential members. Remember to include the special needs of any members who have disabilities, or whose parents or guardians have disabilities. But please don’t rely on visual cues to inform you of a disability:

Approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population has a disability — that’s one in five people, of every socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and religion. As a volunteer, your interactions with girls present an opportunity to improve the way society views girls (and their parents/guardians) with disabilities.

Focus on the person’s abilities — on what she can do rather than on what she cannot. If you want to find out what a girl with a disability needs simply ask her or her parent/guardian. If you are frank and accessible, it’s likely they will respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone.

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

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

According to Feeling Safe: What Girls Say, a 2003 Girl Scout Research Institute study, girls are looking for groups that allow connection and a sense of close friendship. They want volunteers who are teen savvy and can help them with issues they face, such as bullying, peer pressure, dating, athletic and academic performance, and more. Some of these issues may be considered “sensitive” and parent permission should be obtained before covering these topics.

Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive — even for some — put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from your council. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult volunteer who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position.

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

Parents/caregivers make all decisions regarding their girl’s participation in Girl Scout programs that may be of a sensitive nature. As a volunteer leader, you must get written parent/caregiver 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 your council’s guidelines for obtaining written permission.

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

- Contact a staff member at your Girl Scout council and 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.

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
- 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

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

For additional information please check the following resources:

- Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect: https://www.childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm

**Working with Parents and Guardians**

Most parents and guardians are helpful and supportive and sincerely appreciate your time and effort on behalf of their daughters.

Don’t feel nervous asking parents to assist in any aspect of the troop. Just because you’re the troop leader does not mean you have to be the cookie mom, the treasurer, the person planning the campouts, etc. Look to see what unique gifts and talents the girls’ parents have.

Maybe a mom is really crafty, or a dad works in the finance department of a Fortune 500 company. Those two individuals can definitely step up as troop volunteers in some capacity. Learn more below in the appendix about forming a troop committee, and always keep your eyes open for those who can assist. You all almost always have the same goal, which is to make Girl Scouting an enriching experience for their girls. Encourage them to check out [www.girlscouts4girls.org](http://www.girlscouts4girls.org) to find out how to expand their roles as advocates for their daughters and for them to think about how they can also become involved in the troop.

**Advocating for Girls**

The Girl Scouts Public Policy and Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., builds relationships with members of Congress, White House officials, and other federal departments and agencies, continuously informing and educating them about issues important to girls and Girl Scouting. The office also supports Girl Scout councils, at the state and local levels, as they build capacity to be the voice for girls. These advocacy efforts help demonstrate to lawmakers that Girl Scouts is a resource and an authority on issues affecting girls. Visit the Advocacy office at [girlscouts.org](http://girlscouts.org).
Using “I” Statements
Perhaps the most important tip for communicating with parents/guardians is for you to use “I” statements instead of “you” statements. “I” statements, which are detailed in the aMAZE Journey for Girl Scout Cadettes, tell someone what you need from her or him, while “you” statements may make the person feel defensive.

Here are some examples of “you” statements:
- “Your daughter just isn’t responsible.”
- “You’re not doing your share.”

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

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

If a Parent or Guardian . . .

Is uninvolved and asks how she can help but seems to have no idea of how to follow through or take leadership of even the smallest activity, Constantly talks about all the ways you could make the group better,

Tells you things like, “Denise’s mother is on welfare, and Denise really doesn’t belong in this group,”

Shifts parental responsibilities to you and is so busy with her own life that she allows no time to help,

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

Say . . .
- She has a learning disability.
- She has a developmental delay.
- She uses a wheelchair.

Instead of . . .
- She is learning disabled.
- She is mentally retarded; she is slow.
- She is wheelchair-bound.

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

**Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities**

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

Girl Scout council-sponsored product programs, which include magazines and nuts, as well as cookies, give girls proven opportunities to earn money and/or credits for their Girl Scout program activities. These sales also contribute significantly to the girls’ local councils and communities through take action projects. To ensure the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls, which is always a top priority in any activity, you need to read and understand the following guidelines.

Communicate with Parents
Ensure that the parents/guardians of all girls participating in the product program are fully informed about the activity including the:

- Safety precautions in place
- Need for appropriate clothing and/or supplies
- Need for advance arrangements for all transportation and confirmation of these plans
- Need for written permission from them for their daughter to participate
- Location of designated sale areas, which are also communicated to council

Communicate with Your Local Police Department
Establish a relationship with your local police department to determine any support they may be able to provide during product program, especially those related to cookie booths, and any safety precautions they might suggest. While police departments vary from state to state and city to city, many of them have resources such as:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Volunteer supervision for all Girl Scouts extends to any online activity. Consult the Computer and Internet Use section of the Safety Activity Checkpoints for specific information about safe online practices for all activities, and to obtain a copy of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge.
Plan for Safeguarding Money
Girls should always have a plan for safeguarding money, which includes such things as:

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

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

Be Streetwise and Follow Your Instincts
To ensure the safety of girls while participating in product programs, you and the girls should become familiar with the areas and neighborhoods in which girls would like to sell. In addition, girls should:

- Participate in door-to-door activity only during daylight hours
- Wear a membership pin, uniform, or Girl Scout clothing (e.g., Girl Scout T-shirt) to clearly identify themselves as Girl Scouts.
- Avoid a house or person that makes them uncomfortable. They should walk away and find the next person/place that does not make them uncomfortable.
- Call 911 if they see someone that seems to be acting in a way that makes them feel unsafe. This could include, but is not limited to, any person who is staring at them for long periods, seems to be following them for no apparent reason or takes pictures of them.
- Use safe pedestrian practices, such as crossing at corners and obeying walk signals.
- Not enter the home or vehicle of a stranger, and avoid approaching people in vehicles (except at drive-thru cookie booths) or going into alleys.
- Not carry large amounts of money (see “Plan for Safeguarding Money,” above).

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

When setting up booth sales, it’s important that:

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

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

- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie packages.
- Having an adult volunteer keep the money by, for example, securing it in a front-facing pouch tied around her waist.
• Reduce cash transactions by offering credit card payment options per council guidelines. If someone takes money or cookies from your booth, do not attempt to physically recover the stolen items and do not allow the girls to do so. Instead, get a good description of the offender(s), call 911, and alert local security (if applicable). Make sure girls know what to do in case of theft. Report any incidents to your local council according to its guidelines.

For additional information about setting up a booth and safety and security suggestions, consult your council guidelines.

**Troop Cookie Money**

When a volunteer signs the volunteer responsibility form (VRF) for a troop they are accepting personal financial responsibility for all cookies and money that comes into the troop. Be sure to:

- Write receipts when giving cookies to parents of girls within the troop. You sign and they sign, each getting a copy for records.
- Use eBudde to track payments received by each girl to understand which girl owes what amount.
- Ensure that troop leaders understand at the end of the program any remaining cookie inventory becomes the personal responsibility of the signer of the volunteer responsibility form. Be sure to note this remaining, unsold inventory on your troop finance report.

Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland recommends that you end your cookie program with zero unsold inventory. In a situation where this isn’t possible, all girls, volunteers and parents can make the decision to donate up to 1 percent of their total troop sales (in packages) to a charity of their choice. Please note this donation would directly impact the amount of proceeds that would remain available in the troop account for the girls to spend. Additional remaining unsold inventory above this 1 percent is the personal financial responsibility of the signers of the Volunteer Responsibility Form to the troop.
Computer/Online Safety

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

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

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

Girl Scouts use the internet for a variety of reasons including the online marketing and sale of approved Girl Scout related products. Below are some key points to keep in mind for all online activities:

- Girls must read, understand and accept the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge, prior to conducting any online sales or marketing activities, which is available at the end of the Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Girls may send email messages to alert friends and family about product programs and accept customer orders via email.
- Social media sites may be used to market product program to friends and family, however, all applicable GSUSA and council guidelines must be followed.
- Girls writing product emails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name and their council name.
- Personal emails or street addresses of girls should never be used. Instead, use one of the following:
  - A blind return address account where the girls' name or personal email is not revealed to the customer and is instead hosted on a secure site.
  - A group account monitored by a volunteer.
  - A volunteer's email account, which is supervised by that volunteer.
- Marketing on the internet for the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Girl Scout Fall Product Program should be to friends and family only.
  - For clarity purposes friends and family are people who the girl or her family knows personally.
  - Marketing on the internet should always be girl-led with supervision and oversight of parents or caretakers.
  - The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl-led program, friends and family of the girl should not market or share girl contact information and sales links.
- Internet sales transactions are approved for friends and family only on the following platforms:
  - Fall Program Vendor Sites (QSP, M2, Trophy and Ashdon)
  - Digital Cookie Program (LBB and ABC)

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

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

Health Histories (Including Examinations and Immunizations)

Girl Scout health histories and records may be handled differently by each council. For example, the staff at your council office may take care of obtaining and storing girl health histories, including a physician’s examination and list of required immunizations. In other councils, you may be asked to maintain these records for your group. Either way, keep in mind that information contained in a girl’s health history is confidential and protected by law. This information may only be shared with people who have a need to know this information such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian and a healthcare provider.

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

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

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl’s custodial parent or guardian (your council can provide the necessary form).
- Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, EpiPens or diabetes medication. You must have documentation from the girl's parent or guardian that it is acceptable for the girl to self-administer these medications.
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts and seafood. This means that before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies or chips), ask whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products or wheat. Do this even if you are aware of which girls have specific allergies! Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies but double-checking with them and their parents/guardians is always a good idea.

See Safety Standards and Guidelines in Chapter 1 of Safety Activity Checkpoints for more on Health History forms.
**First-Aid/CPR**

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. For many activities, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer be first-aid/CPR-certified. For that reason, if you have the opportunity to get trained in council-approved first-aid/CPR, do it! You can take advantage of first-aid/CPR training offered by chapters of the:

- ASHI
- American Red Cross (As a partner of GSUSA, American Red Cross offers discounts on certification courses. Ask your council for details.)
- National Safety Council/EMP America,
- American Heart Association
- Other sponsoring organizations approved by your council.

**Caution:** First-aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy Girl Scouts’ requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If you’re taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous paragraph, or any course that has online components, get approval from your support team or council prior to enrolling in the course.

**First-Aider**

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

The Safety Activity Checkpoints always tell you when a first-aider needs to be present. Because activities can take place in a variety of locations, the presence of a first-aider and the qualifications they need to have are based on the remoteness of the activity. For example, if you take a two-mile hike in an area that has cell phone reception and service along the entire route and EMS (Emergency Medical Services) is no more than 30 minutes away at all times the first-aider will not need to have knowledge of wilderness first aid. If, on the other hand, you take the same two-mile hike in a more remote area with no cell phone service and where EMS is more than 30 minutes away, the first-aider must have knowledge of wilderness first aid (see the chart below).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Access to EMS</th>
<th>Minimum Level of First Aid Required</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Less than 30 minutes</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 30 minutes</td>
<td>Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder (WFR)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

**Note:** The presence of a first-aider is required at resident camp. For large events — 200 people or more — there should be one first-aider for every 200 participants. The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders: physician; physician’s assistant; nurse practitioner; registered nurse; licensed practical nurse; paramedic; military medic; and emergency medical technician.
First-Aid Kit
Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its Anatomy of a First Aid Kit (note that the Red Cross’s suggested list includes aspirin, which you will not be at liberty to give to girls without direct parent/guardian permission). You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites and the like.

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain your council and emergency telephone numbers (which you can get from your council contact). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms and health histories may also be included.
Girl Scout Lingo

**Autumn Adventure** - An adult event that the council organizes in the fall in which volunteers can participate in enrichment, make contacts, find new resources and network.

**Booth Sale** - A cookie product program that is organized through the service unit for troops to sell cookies at local businesses.

**Bridging** - Ceremony for when girls move from one age level to the next.

**Camporee** - An educational camping trip. Adult Camporee is planned for adult Girl Scouts only and is held in the fall. Service unit camporees are planned by and for the service unit and may involve all age levels of girls.

**Campfire Connections** – A publication that is emailed on the first and third Wednesdays of every month. Be sure to watch for this informational newsletter filled with updates on the latest events, programs, new opportunities and GSOH news.

**Cookie Cupboard** - A location where cookies can be picked up when your troop runs out of its initial order or wants to have a cookie booth.

**Court of Awards** - A ceremony to recognize girls’ achievements usually held to distribute awards that have been earned.

**Customer Care** - The Customer Care team is available to help get your questions answered quickly and get access to information you need to make working with girls easier!

**Destinations** - Girl Scout activities that fall into one of five different categories — international, outdoor, science, people or getaways.

**Fly-up** - A bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies who are bridging to Girl Scout Juniors.

**Friendship circle** - Girls and volunteers stand in a circle, crossing the right arm over the left and holding hands. A friendship squeeze begins when one girl (designated by the volunteer) uses her right hand to gently squeeze the hand of the girl beside her, then that girl squeezes with her right hand, passing the squeeze around the circle. The circle is broken by everyone, while still holding hands, turning to the right at the same time so everyone in the circle faces out.

**Gift of Caring** - A community-service project that could be a part of the cookie product program; troops designate a charitable organization to be the recipient of their Gift of Caring cookies.

**Highest Awards** -
- **Girl Scout Bronze Award** - The highest award a Girl Scout Junior can earn.
- **Girl Scout Silver Award** - The highest award a Girl Scout Cadette can earn.
- **Girl Scout Gold Award** - The highest award a Girl Scout Senior or Ambassador can earn.

**GORP** - A traditional snack in which various ingredients (such as dried fruits, nuts, cereals, pretzels and candies) are combined.

**Insignia** - Pins and emblems that represent a facet of Girl Scouting. These are typically worn on an official Girl Scout uniform, sash or vest.

**Investiture** - Ceremony welcoming someone into Girl Scouting for the first time.

**Journeys** - Part of the Girl Scout Program Portfolio that explores girl’s leadership potential.
Juliette Low World Friendship Fund - A fund established in honor of Juliette Gordon Low to help bring Girl Guides from other countries to the United States and send Girl Scouts to other countries.

Kaper chart - Used to assign chores or troop activities to girls on a rotating basis. Kaper charts can be used at troop meetings and/or during camping.

Membership profile – You can get to your profile by choosing My GS in the right corner of the website gsoh.org. This profile will contain family member’s GS registration information.

myGSOH (My Girl Scout Opportunity Handbook) - A Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland Council publication published and mailed one per Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland household twice a year. It contains listings of program events and information.

Opening ceremony - Brings all into focus at the start of a meeting; can simply be stating the Pledge of Allegiance and the Girl Scout Promise or may include a more formal flag ceremony.

Opportunity catalog - The opportunity catalog is a comprehensive online display of all the troops in Girl Scouts of Ohio’s Heartland. It enables quick and accurate registration to troops for girls, adults and troop leadership volunteers.

P.A.L. (Program Aide Link) – A Girl Scout Cadette, Senior or Ambassador who volunteers at day camp, for example.

Potlatch/SWAP - A small craft made to commemorate a Girl Scout event, e.g. camping trip or camporee. It can be pinned to a special hat or jacket. Swaps are the same as potlatches — usually used to “swap” at camporees or other events.

Proficiency badges - Part of the Girl Scout Program Portfolio found in the Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting and the VTK.

Rededication - Ceremony that helps girls think about the meaning of their Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Reward cards - Reward cards earned by girls as the result of their participation in the Girl Scout Fall Product Program or the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Reward cards can be used toward any council sponsored program, activity, camp, or in council resource stores.

Safety Activity Checkpoints - The GSUSA online publication that defines health and safety standards for program and camping. Found both on GSOH’s website and as a resource on the VTK.

Safety Essentials - All volunteers working with girls are required to take this course. This course provides an introduction to: Chapter 4: Safety-Wise in the Volunteer Resource Guide and accompanying Safety Activity Checkpoints. (How to register for the course and accompanying documents are located at gsoh.org.)

Service team - A team of volunteers who are involved with Girl Scouts to help run the service unit and give support to the volunteers.

Tagalong - Younger or older siblings of a girl member or non-member children of adult volunteers.

The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting - Girl Scouts of the USA’s book available for each grade level that holds the skill building activities and badges that are part of the Girl Scout Portfolio.

Thinking Day – Feb. 22, the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Baden-Powell; Girl Scouts and Girl Guides celebrate this day in international friendship and world peace; many service units and troops celebrate Thinking Day by holding an “International Festival.”
**Troop Camp Certification** – Two courses: Planning and Prep and Outdoor Skills which are offered separately or All-in-One. Troop Camp Certification (both parts) is required for at least one troop volunteer before the troop can go camping.

**Troop committee** - Persons with specific tasks needed to actively support a particular troop.

**Volunteer Essentials** – A document produced by GSUSA to provide information that is consistent nationwide!


**Leadership Essentials Course** - This course will prepare you to effectively facilitate the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. All volunteers who will have care, custody, or control of a girl other than his or her daughter and/or handle funds and/or be counted in the girl to adult volunteer ratio are required to complete the Leadership Essentials Course.

**Volunteer Toolkit** - The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) gives registered troop leadership volunteers the tools and features they need for troop management and program delivery. Parents have their own view of VTK as well.

**Website** – gsoh.org