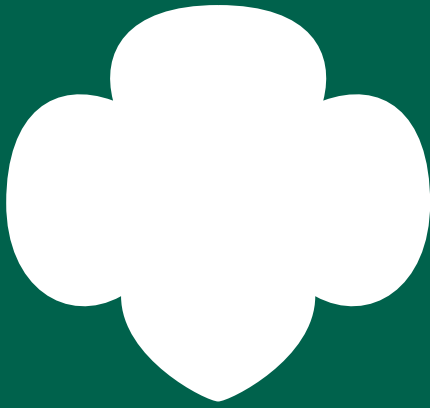




Welcome to Girl Scouts!

A guide for new volunteers



girl scouts 
of ohio's heartland

Welcome to Girl Scouts!

Our Mission

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

Girl Scout Promise

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

*Members may substitute for the word God in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.

Girl Scout Law

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

Dear New Troop Leader,

First, I'd like to express how grateful I am to you for taking on such an important leadership and mentoring role in Girl Scouts and in girls' lives. It takes a special person to join Girl Scouts on the journey as they develop courage, confidence, and character and grow into their potential and their unique selves.

As the saying goes, it really does take a village to raise capable and confident women. You are now an important part of these girls' development and the impact they will make on the world. You will show girls they belong right here in Girl Scouts. That no matter who they are, where they're from or where they are going, Girl Scouts will always be there for them.

As you lead your troop through all kinds of life-changing Girl Scout experiences and lessons, please know we as an organization are here to support you on your journey as a leader. This guide is designed to act as a compass for your Girl Scout leadership journey and will help you lead the next generation of female leaders with courage. We appreciate all you do for our girls, organization, and community and can't wait to see the impact you'll make.

Yours in Girl Scouting,



Tammy H. Wharton
President & CEO, Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland

Girl Scout Shops

To make sure your Girl Scouts are prepared, stop by one of our Girl Scout Shops for uniforms, recognitions, badges, and more! Visit our website at gsoh.org/girlscoutshop to see our hours of operation for each location.

Council Headquarters

1700 Watermark Drive
Columbus, OH 43215

Chillicothe Service Center

1130 Western Ave.
Chillicothe, OH 45601

Mansfield Service Center

24 W. Third St. – Suite 110
Mansfield, OH 44902

Zanesville Service Center

3230 Bowers Lane
Zanesville, OH 43701

Get Connected With Us!

Instagram and X: @girlscoutsoh
Facebook, Youtube & LinkedIn:
Girl Scouts of Ohio's Heartland

Our Customer Care Team is Here to Help!

Mon.-Thurs.: 8:30 a.m.–6:00 p.m.

Fri.: 8:30 a.m.–4:30 p.m.

Email: customercare@gsoh.org

Phone: 614-487-8101

The Girl Scout Program

As Girl Scouts, youth members discover the fun, friendship, and power of working together. They grow courageous and strong through a wide variety of enriching experiences, such as field trips, skill-building sports clinics, community service projects, cultural exchanges, and environmental stewardship.

Badges are a key part of the Girl Scout program. Girl Scouts earn badges by learning new skills and doing activities that demonstrate their accomplishments and understanding.

When Girl Scouts earn badges they:

- **Build skills.** As they earn badges, Girl Scouts develop new skills and explore their interests.
- **Show their accomplishments.** When worn, badges show the world what a Girl Scout can do.
- **Make a difference.** Badge work helps Girl Scouts discover ways to make a difference in their community.

To find the badges available for each age level visit [girlscouts.org](https://www.girlscouts.org) and search for the badge explorer and/or log into the Volunteer Toolkit found in your myGS portal.

Girl Scouts Explore in a Fun and Safe Environment

Girl Scouts typically complete activities as part of a troop. A troop is a group of Girl Scouts and volunteers who meet regularly to have fun, learn new skills, and improve their community. Troop involvement allows Girl Scout members to grow their confidence, explore new interests, and find their voice. Troops can either be single-level or multi-level.

- A **single-level troop** is made up of Girl Scouts from a single program level, such as Daisies. This structure allows activities and experiences to be tailored to the group's age and developmental stage.
- A **multi-level troop** includes Girl Scouts from more than one program level—such as Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors—together in the same troop. This setup lets older Girl Scouts mentor younger ones, supports diverse learning, and balances shared activities with age-specific needs.

Both troop types offer unique benefits! The choice depends on leader preferences, community needs, and available resources.



Badge Levels

Badge Line for Cookie Business I

Daisy (Grades K-1)



Brownie (Grades 2-3)



Junior (Grades 4-5)



Cadette (Grades 6-8)



Senior (Grades 9-10)

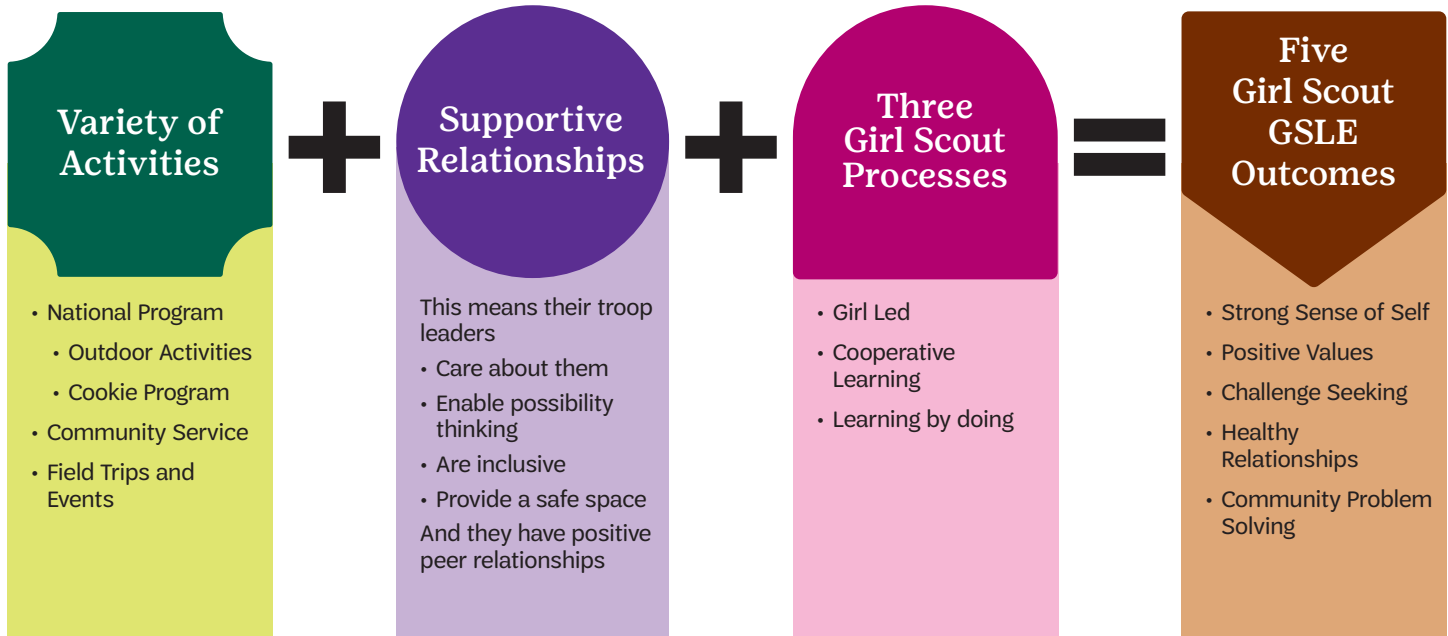


Ambassador (Grades 11-12)



The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Girl Scouts look at the world and take action to change it for the better. They make friends, challenge themselves with new experiences, write their own stories, and develop the skills and confidence to say, “I know I can do this!” As a volunteer, use the GSLE to support girls as they grow in this process.



Putting the GSLE into Practice

It's time to put the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to work! Implementing it is simple. Just remember these tips, and you're good to go:

Tip: Use the Girl Scout Experience Box (GSEB) as a starting point, plan a variety of activities. Get out and experience the world through field trips, council-run events, community service, participate in the cookie program, and more. All badge requirements can be found in the Volunteer Toolkit.

Tip: The main ways you can support girls in your troop are to make them feel welcomed and included, acknowledging their ideas and feelings, keeping them safe, and encouraging respect and teamwork among them.

Tip: When girls **lead**, they grow in confidence and skills. Let girls help make choices, **collaborate** on projects, and above all, learn that they CAN work through details to get things done they didn't think possible as they **learn by doing**.

Tip: Girl-led looks differently at each age. Younger girls may practice leading by choosing the badge, while older girls lead by leading specific activities!

Proven Results: Studies have shown that Girl Scouts are more likely to develop a strong sense of self when they are given a chance to experience all the elements of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

An Experience for the Whole Family

Participation in Girl Scouts isn't just for youth members. Everyone in the family can have fun and benefit—Girl Scouts, their adults, and troop leaders, too! There are lots of ways for families to get involved, both big and small.

As a troop leadership volunteer, you can engage families by:

- Communicating with them about what their Girl Scouts are doing
- Including them in Girl Scout celebrations
- Encouraging their participation in Girl Scout activities
- Enlisting their help with specific group support roles (outlined below)

Multi-level tip: Facilitating a multi-level troop is a great way to include the whole family in the Girl Scout experience, since siblings of different program levels can attend the same troop meetings.

When families feel engaged, they're more likely to help out. And their involvement results in the best possible experience for troop members. Family support also helps your troop members stay connected over time.

Building a Troop Team

Each troop relies on volunteers who take on different roles to help the troop run smoothly. When volunteers register with Girl Scouts, they choose a role: either Troop Leadership or Troop Support.

The main difference between these two positions is the level of communication received. Messages from the council or service unit typically go to Troop Leadership.

Meeting with parents and caregivers gives the troop an opportunity to divide responsibilities and learn about each person's skills and interests. Here are some possible troop roles:

Volunteer Roles:

- **Treasurer (need 2)** - signers on the bank account who maintain the financial records and complete the troop finance report annually on May 10.
- **Cookie Coordinator** - takes training and manages the Cookie Program for the troop.
- **Fall Product Sales Coordinator** - takes training and manages the Fall Product Program for the troop.
- **Program Presenter** - receives and presents the Girl Scout Experience Box.
- **Troop Communicator** - Ensures all members of the troop are kept informed of the troop's activities.
- **Other roles** - First Aider, Logistics, Foodie, Service Projects, Travel Coordinator, Arts and Crafts.



Multi-level tip: Parents/caregivers with multiple Girl Scouts in a troop may especially enjoy volunteering. Getting involved lets them embrace the Girl Scout experience together as a family.

Family/Caregiver Meeting Agenda

Communication with families is key and it all starts at the Family/Caregiver Meeting. Here's a meeting agenda for you to follow to make sure to cover the most important points with all the families/caregivers.

1. Welcome and introductions

- ☐ Volunteer introductions
- ☐ Family/caregiver introductions
- ☐ Troop meeting logistics

2. Discover the Girl Scout difference

- ☐ Mission; Promise and Law
- ☐ What Girl Scouts do
- ☐ How Girl Scouts do it (GSLE)
- ☐ Troop Year Plan

3. Family as part of the formula

- ☐ Why family engagement?
- ☐ Communication methods

4. Getting families involved

- ☐ Troop volunteer opportunities
- ☐ Other ways to help

5. Money matters and more

- ☐ Uniforms, supplies, and other costs
- ☐ How troops pay for things
- ☐ Paperwork

6. Wrap it up

- ☐ Close with intention
- ☐ Q&A

For more family/caregiver meeting content, check out the Family Engagement training on [gsLearn](#).

Note: If Girl Scouts will be attending this meeting, consider starting out by having the families/caregivers and Girl Scouts introduce themselves and discuss their hopes for their Girl Scout experience. Then provide a short craft activity for Girl Scouts to do while the parents/caregivers attend their part of the meeting.

Multi-level tip: Encourage older Girl Scouts to lead a simple activity for younger Girl Scouts while the meeting takes place.



Keep Girls Safe

Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

From camping weekends to cookie booths, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure their girls have fun and stay safe, no matter their grade level.

Not sure just how many adults you'll need for your activity? The helpful chart below breaks down the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls.

	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two approved registered, trained, unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional approved, registered and trained adult for each additional number of this many girls:	Two approved, registered, trained unrelated adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional approved, registered adult for each additional number of this many girls:
GS Daisies (grades K-1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
GS Brownies (grades 2-3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
GS Juniors (grades 4-5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
GS Cadettes (grades 6-8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
GS Seniors (grades 9-10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
GS Ambassadors (grades 9-10)	30	1-15	24	1-12

Planning Safe Activities

When preparing for any activity with girls, check Girl Scouts' Safety Activity Checkpoints at go.gsoh.org/checkpoints for required guidelines on where to do the activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear for the activity, and the specific steps to follow on the day of the activity. Safety Activity Checkpoints will also note if a first-aider is required.

If a safety activity checkpoint doesn't exist for an activity you and your girls are interested in, contact Customer Care at customercare@gsoh.org or 614-487-8101 before making definite plans.

What to Do in an Emergency

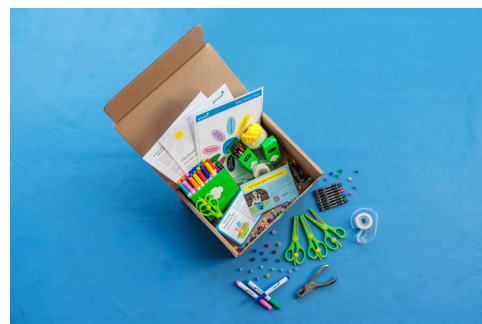
Although we all hope the worst never happens, you should know and follow GSOH's procedures for handling emergency incidents. Remember, at the scene of an incident, safety is your first priority. Provide care for the injured person and/or obtain medical assistance, then immediately report the emergency to 614-447-7092.

Volunteer Resources

Girl Scouts provides a selection of useful tools—both in print and online.

Girl Scout Experience Box (go.gsoh.org/JuniorGSEB)

New Daisy (Grades K–1) or Brownie (Grades 2–3) troops can receive monthly Girl Scout Experience Boxes™—delivered to your door! Each box includes simple scripts, easy instructions, and ready-to-use supplies for fun, stress-free meetings. Troops will start with a Welcome Box, followed by up to seven themed boxes, depending on when the troop begins.



myGS (mygs.girlscouts.org)

The Girl Scout member account management system, myGS, is your go-to portal for managing the troop's Girl Scout experience. Here is membership information and additional troop management tools, including gsEvents, the Volunteer Toolkit, and gsLearn. Families also have access to myGS to manage memberships in their household.

Volunteer Toolkit

This tool is available on any device and can be found on your myGS portal in your account.

gsLearn

gsLearn is packed with indispensable volunteer trainings and courses, including new leader onboarding material, program training, and advice for guiding Girl Scouts at every grade level. Access both national and council-specific courses through gsLearn, which is found on the myGS navigation bar.

Multi-level tip: Be sure to check out Leading a Multi-Level Troop and other training courses designed for multi-level troops.

Girl Scout Shop (go.gsoh.org/girlscoutshop)

Girl Scout uniforms are a great way for Girl Scouts to show their pride and display their achievements! Find uniforms, badges, leader resources, apparel, outdoor gear, gifts, and more—all in one place. Plus, every purchase at GirlScouts.org supports Girl Scouts everywhere and helps power our mission. Shop online or visit a local council store today!

gsEvents

gsEvents is a tool that lets you search for Girl Scout-affiliated events by title, date, location, topic, age range, and other criteria. Instructions to access gsEvents can be found at go.gsoh.org/find-activities or by clicking My Events on the myGS navigation bar.

Volunteer Essentials (go.gsoh.org/essentials)

This detailed guide to volunteer policies and procedures is designed to support troops.

Safety Activity Checkpoints (go.gsoh.org/checkpoints)

Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) is a comprehensive collection of safety guidelines for GSUSA- and council-approved activities. The resource lays out standards that ensure the physical and emotional safety of youth. It also guides leaders in considering equity, diversity, and inclusivity when planning activities, making sure that all Girl Scouts who want to participate are included.

Girl Scout Handbooks (girlscoutshop.com/handbooks)

Handbooks are available for Girl Scouts at each program level, Daisy through Ambassador. These serve as guides for the Girl Scout experience, meeting Girl Scouts where they are and introducing them to the programming and other foundational aspects of being a Girl Scout. Handbooks are not required, but they're a helpful resource. Each Girl Scout can get her own or troops can obtain one copy to share.

Multi-level tip: Consider getting a handbook for each program level represented in your troop.

Family Connection (girlscouts.org/familyconnection)

A guide for families as they begin their Girl Scout adventure! Packed with background info, family activities, and places for Girl Scouts to write down their favorite memories from the year, Girl Scout Family Connection is a go-to guide to the year ahead for families.



Get Ready!

Follow these easy steps to kick off a great Girl Scout year.

To get started...

- Register as a volunteer with the council, if you haven't already.
- Complete a background check. The link will be sent directly to you from Asurint. Please check your spam folder if you can't find it.
- Invite friends to join the troop. (Talk to a council representative for recruitment support, if needed.)
- Visit [myGS](#) to access the Volunteer Toolkit to understand badges and gsLearn to take training courses. ([girlscouts.org/gslearn](#)).
- Meet with team, once established, to plan an initial family/caregiver meeting.

In your first month...

- Hold a meeting
- Make sure the troop has been signed up for a Girl Scout Experience Box (GSEB). While you wait for it to come, check out:
- Check out [GSOH's Troop Year Plans](#) as you start planning for the first troop meeting.
- Confirm the troop roster by logging into [myGS.girlscouts.org](#).
- Determine where the meetings will be and host your first troop meeting. (If you're having trouble finding a location, reach out to a council representative for help.)
- Open your troop bank account. Visit [go.gsoh.org/openaccount](#).
- Access gsLearn ([girlscouts.org/gslearn](#)) and make sure you take the following courses:
 - Learning Path 1 (within first three months)
 - Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention
 - Troop Safety
 - What Girl Scouts Do
 - New Volunteer Orientation 1

Family/Caregiver Meeting: Holding a family/caregiver meeting is a key part of starting your troop year. It helps set expectations for families and shows them how they can support the troop. You can use the Family/Caregiver Meeting Checklist on page 6 to plan your troop's meeting.

Multi-level tip: Troop Year Plans are available for both single-level and multi-level troops. The multi-level Troop Year Plans are designed with badges that are easy to facilitate simultaneously across levels.

Service Units: Your service unit is an organized network of Girl Scout youth, family members, and volunteers (including all current troop leaders) in your area. It is a source of peer-to-peer advice and support. Service units typically hold regular troop leader meetings to share details on upcoming events, product/cookie sales, and other timely topics.

In your first three months...

- Complete first aid/CPR/AED training. (Check the schedule on gsEvents.)
- Follow up with the council if you have any additional questions.

Plan a Great Girl Scout Year

It's go time! Get started with the ready-to-use **Troop Year Plans**. Then use the calendar below to build out a Girl Scout year packed with fun, friendship, learning, and so much more.

The Girl Scout Membership Year

The Girl Scout membership year runs from October 1 through September 30. Current Girl Scouts can renew their membership for the next year starting on April 1. New Girl Scouts can start at any time.

Fall milestones:

- New membership year starts October 1
- Fall product program

Winter milestones:

- Prepare for cookie season
- Attend cookie rallies
- Cookie program begins

September

9/24 Fall Product Program begins

December

Happy holidays!

October

10/11 International Day of the Girl

10/18 Fall Product Program ends

10/31 Juliette Gordon Low's birthday/Founder's Day

January

Happy New Year!

1/12 Cookie Program begins

November

February

2/22 World Thinking Day

Spring milestones:

- Consider planning a trip or service project
- Early Girl Scout registration begins for next membership year
- Celebrate Girl Scout Week

Summer milestones:

- Hold closing/bridging ceremonies
- Provide optional activities for families to complete together over the summer (such as [Girl Scouts Love the Outdoors](#))

March

3/7-13 Celebrate Girl Scout Week!

3/7 Girl Scout Sunday

3/12 Girl Scout Jummah

3/12 Girl Scouts' birthday

3/13 Girl Scout Sabbath Shabbat

3/27 Cookie Program ends

June

April

Happy Volunteer Appreciation Month! (Thank you!)

Early Renewal

4/22 Earth Day

4/22 Leader Appreciation Day

July

Enjoy your summer!

May

5/10 Finance Reports Due

August

You're on a Roll

Now that you have all the tools you need for a strong start, below is easy access to the useful information that will help you soar together with your Girl Scout Troop.



Girl Scout Experience Box



Girl Scout Promise and Law



Make New Friends



What Do Girl Scouts Do?



Uniform Insignia Placement



Troop Year Plans



Volunteer Resources

