

New Troop Leader Onboarding Manual



Fall 2022

WELCOME!



Thank you SO MUCH for volunteering as a Girl Scout troop leader! We're excited to have you on board! As a Girl Scout volunteer, you're building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

Big step, right? No fear – we created this guide just for new troop leaders, with helpful advice on getting your troop going, learning Girl Scout lingo, and leading with gusto! Plus, we have some tips from troop leaders who have been in your shoes.

Whether you've been a Girl Scout since Kindergarten or if this is your first contact with our organization, we hope this guide will provide you with useful information for your journey as a new troop leader.

You'll learn more about your local Girl Scout contacts in this training, but keep in mind that the southern Illinois council is also a great resource. We love to hear from you, so feel free to give us a call at (800) 345-6858 or email us at customercare@gsofsi.org. The Council office is open Monday through Thursday 8:00 am to 5:30 pm.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois

Corporate Service Center
Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois
4 Ginger Creek Parkway
Glen Carbon, Illinois 62034
Phone: 800.345.6858
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Office Hours:
Monday – Thursday
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GS Retail Store
4 Ginger Creek Parkway
Glen Carbon, Illinois 62034
Phone 618.307.3647

Shop Hours:
Mon. – Thurs.: 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Online shop-Open 24/7-gsofsi.org

New Leader Orientation Manual Outline



1. Learn about the Girl Scout program and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)
2. Learn about the southern Illinois Council and the resources available to troop leaders
3. Find out how proactive planning can help you and your troop stay safe
4. Learn the basics of opening a troop bank account and managing troop funds
5. Discover Girl Scout Journeys and how to incorporate earning badges to your troop activities
6. Find how to plan and facilitate a successful parent meeting and recruit volunteers to assist you with the troop
7. Learn the basic structure of a troop meeting, how to plan troop meetings, connect with parents/guardians and encourage their participation

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Our History



Girl Scouts is over 2.2 million strong –close to 1.5 million girls and over 700,000 adults who believe girls can change the world. We’re part of Girl Scouts of the United States of America (you’ll commonly hear it referred to as GSUSA).

It began over 110 years ago with one woman, Girl Scouts’ founder, Juliette Gordon “Daisy” Low, who believed in the power of every girl. In 1912, Juliette traveled to England to meet Sir Robert Baden-Powell (the founder of Boy Scouts). Upon her return to the United States, Juliette began the first Girl Scout troop to provide an environment to prepare girls to meet their world with courage, confidence, and character. This first troop of 18 girls played basketball, hiked, camped, swam, and learned about the world around them.

Today we continue the Girl Scout mission of building girls with courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

We’re the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. With programs for girls from coast to coast and across the globe, Girl Scouts offers every girl a chance to do something amazing.

Who was Juliette Gordon Low?

Juliette was born on October 31, 1860, which we celebrate yearly as Founder’s Day. She was a compassionate, curious, and independent woman and was interested in nature, art, animals, and athletics. Throughout her childhood and young adulthood, she experienced several ear injuries. This contributed to an almost complete loss of hearing for the rest of her life. These experiences and interests played a strong role in the development of the ideals and values of Girl Scouts.



“Scouting rises within you and inspires you to put forth your best”

**-Juliette
Gordon Low**

Girl Scouting Today



Today, Girl Scouting continues to be based on the principals set forth by our founder, Juliette Gordon Low. This is what Girl Scouting is all about:

Family Involvement - Girls want their families to be involved in the great things they are experiencing as Girl Scouts.

Belonging to a Big Sisterhood - Girls love having friends so close they call them “sisters” and they love being a part of something big. Girl Scouting is huge! It includes millions of girls who all share the same mission – making the world a better place.

Skill-building Through Badge Earning - Girls are proud to say, “See what I can do now” when they learn something new. Girl Scout badges focus on building new skills.

Leadership - Girl Scouts wants every girl to know how to be a leader in her own life and in the world around her.

Taking Action in our Communities - Through Girl Scouting, girls know they can make a difference in the world around them.

Girl-friendly - In Girl Scouting, it’s not just what our volunteers do for girls, but how they do it that makes the experience fun and meaningful. Plus, girls doing things together, apart from a co-ed experience, makes Girl Scouting that much more powerful.

Celebrating with Ceremonies and Traditions - Girl Scouts enjoy taking part in time-honored traditions and ceremonies. They also like to make up ceremonies that are especially meaningful to them. In fact, making up ceremonies is a Girl Scout tradition!

Earning and Learning Through the Cookie Program - When girls take part in the largest girl-led business in the world (a.k.a. The Girl Scout Cookie Program), they earn funds for their Girl Scout activities. They also learn 5 Skills – goal-setting, decision-making, money management, people skills and business ethics that will help them in business and in life.

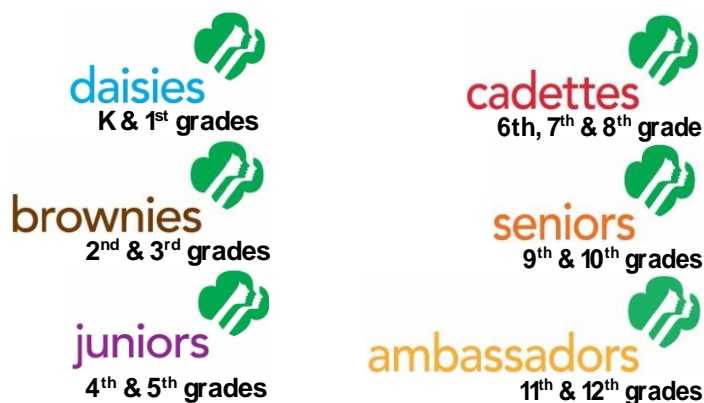
Expanding Her World View - As girls explore new ideas, go to new places and meet new people, their understanding of the world – and what is possible for them – grows.

Growing with Girl Scouts with progression - The Girl Scout program is built upon progression from one level to the next. Girls are more likely to stay involved when they know what lies ahead.

Girl Scout Grade Levels



Any girl in Kindergarten through 12th grade can join Girl Scouts and girls can sign up at any grade level. Girls will be considered at the next grade level after June 1. No matter what level a girl joins, Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship and power of girls and women together.



The Troop Experience



Joining a Girl Scout troop is traditionally the most well-known Girl Scout experience. Girls who are a part of a troop are given the opportunity to learn and develop leadership skills through a series of age-appropriate programs. In the event that there are no troops located in an area in which a girl can attend, she can still participate as a Juliette scout.

Girls love to participate in Girl Scouts troops because they make new friends, go camping, learn about things they didn't know about, and get to sell Girl Scout Cookies!

- **Troops normally consist of girls in the same grade level, but can be multi-grade.**
- **We recommend a minimum of 10 girls per troop to provide a diverse, interactive experience for the girls.**
- **Troops typically meet 1-3 times per month for 1-1.5 hours per meeting.**
- **Troops participate in troop meetings as well as Service Unit and council events.**
- **Most troops are active members of their community, clocking MANY service hours each year.**

The Foundations of Girl Scouting



The Girl Scout Promise and Law are the backbone of all things Girl Scouts. The Girl Scout Promise and Law is the way Girl Scouts agree to act every day toward one another and the world. When the Girl Scout Promise is said, girls and adults hold up three fingers, which symbolizes the three parts of the Promise.

The Girl Scout Mission

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

The 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



The 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
To be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Uniforms



Girl Scouts wear uniforms in ceremonies, when they officially represent Girl Scouts, and when they want to show their Girl Scout pride. We know girls go crazy about acquiring patches, badges, and insignia for their uniforms, and this is definitely one of the most memorable pieces of Girl Scouts for alumnae. Here are some basic tips:

- Sashes are worn from the right shoulder to the left hip
- The insignia tab is worn on the left chest, over the heart

- All unofficial awards go on the back of the uniform, including cookie, camp, and fun patches
- For formal events, sashes, vests, and tunics are worn with white shirts and khaki pants or skirts

Girl Scouts at each level are required to wear one required element of the Girl Scout uniform (tunic, sash, or vest) for the display of official pins and awards.

Uniforms aren't just for girls, we have a vest for you too! Girl Scout volunteers can proudly wear adult uniforms to troop, service unit, and council events to set an example for the Girls Scouts in their lives.

The Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois Girl Scout shop is your one-stop shop for all of your Girl Scout supplies and gifts. Our Girl Scout shop staff is awesome and they understand how confusing finding all the parts of a uniform can be! To make sure your Girl Scout is prepared, visit our shop at the Glen Carbon office or you can shop online 24/7 at gsofsi.org. The shop at the Glen Carbon office is open Monday - Thursday 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

If you have questions about uniforms, stop by or give the Girl Scout shop a call at 800-345-6858!



The Southern Illinois Girl Scout Council



Headquartered in Glen Carbon, IL, Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois with support from dedicated volunteers, parents, and staff, deliver the best Girl Scout experience to over 5,000 girls and over 2000 adults. Our jurisdiction includes 40, mostly rural, counties in Southern Illinois.

Southern Illinois Council Facts:

- Many girls participate in Girl Scouts through Girl Scout events, camp, and travel destinations
- The Girl Scout Extension Program provides a Girl Scout experience during the school day in a 9-month program designed to promote a healthy self-image, life skills and social skills for 1,300 girls in the St. Louis metro-east area.



Southern Illinois Resources



Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois Website – www.gssofsi.org

Customer Care

Our member support center is available to assist you during regular business hours (Monday-Thursday 8:00am-5:30pm) at (800)345-6858 or customer-care@gssofsi.org.

GSofSI Programs and Training

On the GSofSI website, click the “Events+” tab to locate and register for all of the programs and trainings available for our girls and volunteers. Details for programs can be found on the Event+ Calendar.

Volunteer Toolkit

The Volunteer Toolkit is a digital planning tool that provides troop leaders and co-leaders program content to plan your Girl Scout year. With this fully customizable digital tool, leaders can explore program activities, learn about Journeys and badge options, communicate with parents and track troop finances. Log into the VTK through the “My GS” tab on the council website.

gsLearn

gsLearn is our new e-learning platform. GS Learn is a resource for you to access courses and training that meet you where you are in your learning experience. To access gsLearn, log into your MY GS account.

Volunteer Essentials

This is the Volunteer’s go-to resource for answers to many of your questions as well as Southern Illinois policies and procedures. You can access Volunteer Essentials online at gssofsi.org by visiting “Members” on the main banner.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

This online resource provides safety guidelines for common Girl Scout activities. When preparing for an activity, start by reading the Safety Activity Checkpoints on our website - Members>Volunteer Essentials>Adult Training and Resources>VTK and Published Resources dropdown.

Blue Book of Basic Documents

This resource contains Girl Scouts articles of incorporation and bylaws by which the organization operates. It also contains national policies and procedures by which councils must adhere to. To view, go to Volunteer tab>Online Support for Volunteers>Publications.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience



Since its inception, Girl Scouts has always been an organization that empowers girls to become leaders and provides them with a safe, productive environment in which to develop their leadership skills. There is one constant at the core of every program, badge activity, service project, and decision made in Girl Scouts: the girls.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Delivering Fun with Purpose!

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) encourages girls to Discover themselves, Connect with others, and Take Action to make the world a better place. Guided by supportive adults and peers, Girl Scouts engage in age-appropriate activities that are girl-led, cooperative, and hands-on. Participating in the GSLE helps girls develop important leadership skills they need to become successful adults. Girls who engage in the GSLE are more likely to enjoy and attribute their leadership skills to Girl Scouts. The GSLE delivers “fun with purpose” by helping girls gain valuable life skills and amazing new experiences while having fun and building friendships!

The Girl Scout Program - Journeys, Badges, and Petals



National Leadership Journeys

The Girl Scout Journeys lay the foundation for girls to build leadership skills while learning about themselves and their world. Journeys are designed to be customizable, flexible, and tailored to a group’s interest. If you are curious about Girl Scout Journeys, check out the Journeys content on the Volunteer Toolkit! Girls and adults can determine together the format

for their Journey: how many sessions, what they'd like the Journey to be; and what field trips and experts they would like to add to make the Journey as personal, intriguing, and educational as possible. Journeys are a girl-led, girl-centered leadership experience! There are seven Journey series for girls.

It's Your World – Change It! empowers girls to make lasting change in their community by inspiring Take Action projects.

It's Your Planet – Love It! teaches girls about the environment and how their conservation actions can make a difference.

It's Your Story – Tell It! gives girls the opportunity to tell their own story through creative approaches.

These next four journeys you won't find in the store – because the new STEM and Outdoor Journey materials are totally free and available online in the VTK!

Think Like an Engineer – girls will learn to innovate, design and build through hands on challenges.

Think Like a Programmer – teaches girls problem solving through computational thinking activities.

Think Like a Citizen Scientist – encourages girls to undertake a real citizen scientist project and contribute to a research project.

Outdoor – Girls get outside to explore and enjoy nature while completing a sustainable Take Action project.

The activities in each Journey are girl led, focus on cooperative learning and learning by doing. Each Journey is designed to encourage girls to come up with their own ideas, build teamwork, realize their full potential and experience the joy of making a positive impact. Each Journey is completed with the implementation of a Take Action Project - done with the community, addresses the root cause of a community issue, and has long-term impact.

Note: Girls must complete a Journey(s) to earn Girl Scouting's highest awards; the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Award.

Program Materials

There are several great program materials to help you navigate badge requirements outside of the Volunteer Toolkit. Girls Guides to Girl Scouting include activities, songs, and ceremonies that coincide with earning a variety of awards and badges specific to each Girl Scout level. Girls and leaders love the fun activities and the all-in-one badge books inside each guide. There are also badge requirement pamphlets or handbooks which breakdown the specific steps needed to earn a single patch or badge. Visit our retail shop or shop the official Girl Scout store online to purchase these items.

Badges track proficiency in a progression of skill-building activities, and many compliment Journey activities. Girls earn badges in a variety of skill areas to help them grow into well-rounded adults, including STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math), Life Skills, Entrepreneurship and Outdoors.

In addition to badges, Girl Scout Daisies earn petals and leaves. Each petal correlates to a line from the Girl Scout Law and the leaves focus on Financial Literacy and Cookie Business.

Badges vs. Patches - What's the difference?

Badges are earned by girls through completed steps found in The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting. Badges are placed on the front of the uniform. Fun patches are given to girls for attending events or participating in non-Girl Scout program related activities. Patches should be placed on the back of the uniform.

All requirements for badges and Journeys listed in the Girls Guide to Girl Scouting can also be found in the Volunteer Tool Kit. Information and requirements for our National Leadership awards, Safety awards and Highest awards can be found in the Girls Guide to Girl Scouting.

Inclusivity



Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois 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
- Honor the **intrinsic value** of each person’s life
- **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

Creating an atmosphere of acceptance and inclusion means taking into consideration the special needs of any members who have physical or cognitive disabilities. Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois welcomes the participation of all girls and adults and will make reasonable accommodations for persons with disabilities. For more information on Girl Scout programs and resources for girls with disabilities or to discuss an accommodation, please contact Customer Care.

Girl Scout Progression



Program Level	Grades	What are they up to in Girl Scouts?	What are they like?
Daisies	K-1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes new friends in the troop • Learns the Girl Scout Promise & Law • Earns Petals + Leaves • Explores nature and the outdoors • Sells fall product and cookies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has lots of energy; full of excitement! • Understands basic number concepts • Learning to read and write • Begins to respect others by taking turns and using manners
Brownies	2-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns new skills and earns badges • Completes a community project as part of a Journey • Can attend overnight camps • Expands her circle of friends • Sells fall product and cookies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social; enjoys working in groups • Wants to help and can handle individual tasks • Likes to show off new things she’s learned • Loves to act in plays, create music, and dance

Juniors	4-5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willing to try new experiences • Chooses an issue she cares about and does something to make a difference • Earns the Bronze Award • Shares stories and personal experiences with her troop • Sells fall product and cookies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants to make decisions and express opinions • Is aware of expectations and sensitive to the judgements of others • Social; enjoys working in groups • Change-maker; big-idea thinker
Cadettes	6-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns new skills and earns badges • Earns the Silver Award • Sells fall product and cookies • Explores the outdoors (off trail) • Gains confidence as she mentors younger Girl Scouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spends more time with peers; concerned about friends and relationships • Express themselves with confidence • Curious; imagination fuels new experiences • Can be very self-conscious
Seniors	9-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joins with other girls to tackle an international issue • Sells fall product and cookies • Develops strong friendships and fights against bullying • Explores exciting careers in a variety of fields 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begins to clarify her own values and considers the view point of others • Strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills • Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures • Eager to spread their wings
Ambassadors	11-12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implements a Take Action project and earns the Gold Award • Increases knowledge of science and technology • Takes an international trip with her Girl Scout troop • Sells fall product and cookies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understands controversial issues • Willing to take chances to improve themselves and their world • Enjoys expressing her individuality • Feels more responsibilities and pressures

CHECKPOINT



1. Who founded Girl Scouts by starting the first troop in Savannah, Georgia in 1912?
2. True or False. Girl Scouts can display pins and awards on t-shirts if the t-shirts are designed by the girls in the troop.
3. The focus of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience encourages girls to _____ themselves, _____ with others, and _____ to make the world a better place.
4. What is the name of the publication that outlines Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois' guidelines, policies, and procedures?
5. True or False. Girl Scouts may attend programs, but only with their troop.
6. True or False. Girls must complete at least one Journey to earn any of Girl Scouts highest awards; the Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award.

1. Juliette Gordon Low 2. False 3. Discover, Connect, Take Action
4. Volunteer Essentials 5. False 6. True

Girl Scout Traditions



Traditions give Girl Scouts a sense of history—and inspire them to be the best they can be. Sharing traditions with millions of Girl Scouts—and the huge network of Girl Scout alumnae who came before them—helps remind girls they belong to a big, powerful sisterhood.

Here are a few traditions you can incorporate into your Girl Scout activities.

Girl Scout Sign: Girl Scouts make the Girl Scout sign—raising three fingers of the right hand with the thumb holding down the pinky—when they say the Girl Scout Promise. The three fingers represent the three parts of the Promise.

Motto: The Girl Scout motto is "Be prepared." In the 1947 *Girl Scout Handbook*, the motto was explained this way: "A Girl Scout is ready to help out wherever she is needed. Willingness to serve is not enough; you must know how to do the job well, even in an emergency." The same holds true today.

Slogan: The Girl Scout slogan, which has been used since 1912, is "Do a good turn daily." The slogan is a reminder of the many ways girls can contribute positively to the lives of others.

Greeting: Girl Scouts can greet one another with the Girl Scout handshake, used by Girl Scouts and Girl Guides all over the world. The handshake is made by shaking hands with the left hand and making the Girl Scout sign with the right. The left hand is nearest to the heart and signifies friendship.

Friendship Circle: Representing the unbroken chain of friendship among Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world, the Friendship Circle involves Girl Scouts standing in a circle, crossing their right arms over their left, and clasping hands with their friends on both sides. Everyone then makes a silent wish as a friendship squeeze is passed from hand to hand around the circle.

S.W.A.P.S: Building Friendships One Gift at a Time

SWAPS, or "Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere," are the tradition of Girl Scouts exchanging keepsakes, started long ago when Girl Scouts and Girl Guides first gathered for fun, song, and making new friends. SWAPS were first widely exchanged at national Girl Scout Senior Roundups in the 1950s and 1960s. Today, SWAPS are still the perfect

way for Girl Scouts to meet one another and promote friendship. Each one reflects a memory of a special event or Girl Scout sister.

Girl Scout Ceremonies



Here at the Girl Scouts we think ceremonies are a great way to celebrate different aspects of the Girl Scout year. From first joining the Girl Scout family to honoring achievements that are important to girls, like bridging into a new Girl Scout level, we love to celebrate our Girl Scouts!

Investitures: Investitures are a way to welcome new members into the Girl Scout family. During an investiture ceremony, new girls are presented with the Girl Scout pin in front of friends and families.

Rededication: Generally, investitures are tied to a rededication ceremony. Rededication is a time for current members to reconnect with the Girl Scout mission and their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Scouts' Own Ceremony: A Scouts' Own ceremony is completely girl-led and planned. The ceremony centers around a theme, such as nature, service, or sisterhood. These ceremonies can include, but are not limited to, spoken word, songs, poetry, or dance. It is important that it encompasses the girls' expression of their feelings on the topic picked out by the troop.

Court of Awards: Another common ceremony is the Court of Awards. This ceremony recognizes girls' accomplishments throughout the year. The Court of Awards includes both girls and volunteers.

Flag Ceremonies: Flag ceremonies are used to honor the American flag and occur at the beginning and end of an event and/or meeting. While not a required part of troop meetings, it is recommended for girls to have some familiarity with the process of the flag ceremony.

Bridging Ceremonies: Bridging ceremonies signify a girl's move from one level of Girl Scouting to another (for example, from Girl Scout Daisies to Girl Scout Brownies). It is a ceremony that provides girls an opportunity to reflect on their accomplishments and look forward to new adventures and responsibilities to come.

Fly Up: A special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies is called a “Fly Up”. In this ceremony, a girl will receive her Girl Scout pin along with her Brownie wings. Put this one on the back burner until girls are ready to bridge from Brownies to Juniors.

Girl Scout Special Days



Throughout the year, girls and adults celebrate some very special days in Girl Scouting.

World Thinking Day, February 22, celebrates the birthdays of Girl Guide/Girl Scout founder Robert Lord Baden-Powell (1857–1941) and World Chief Guide Olave Lady Baden-Powell (1889–1977). The day is also a time to donate funds to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund.

Girl Scouts’ Birthday, March 12, commemorates the day in 1912 when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the organization's first 18 girl members in Savannah, Georgia.

Girl Scout Week is celebrated each March, starting with Girl Scout Sunday and ending with Girl Scout Sabbath on a Saturday, and it always includes Girl Scouts’ birthday, March 12.

Girl Scout Sunday and Girl Scout Sabbath give girls an opportunity to attend their place of worship and be recognized as a Girl Scout.

Girl Scout Leader's Day, April 22, honors all the volunteers who work as leaders and mentors in partnership with girls. On this day, girls, their families, and communities find special ways to thank their adult Girl Scout volunteers.

Juliette Gordon Low's birthday or Founder's Day, October 31, marks the birth in 1860 of Girl Scouts of the USA founder Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia.

Our Organizational Structure



Members

Members are girls, adult volunteers, and lifetime Girl Scouts who are joined together in the pursuit of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Troops

Troops are the most common way girls participate in Girl Scouts. Troops are led by volunteers (often parents, friends, or family members). Troops allow girls to work as a team and build lasting friendships.

Service Units

Service Units are geographical areas consisting of groups of schools, churches, and/or community organizations where troops meet. Our council supports 40 Service Units. A Service Unit is managed by a group of volunteers who provide a vital layer of support to Girl Scouts at the local level.

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois is one of 112 councils in the U.S. and serves 40 counties in Southern Illinois.

Girl Scouts of the United States of America

GSUSA is the national organization to which GSofSI belongs. Headquartered in New York City, GSUSA develops Girl Scout program, delivers resources and provides overall support to Girl Scout councils.

W.A.G.G.G.S.

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts is a 146-member international organization whose mission is to “inspire girls and young women to reach their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world”. GSUSA is a member.

Your Service Unit Team



In addition to the resources available through council, there are also Girl Scout volunteers in your community to help leaders give girls the best Girl Scout experience possible. These community volunteers are referred to as the Service Unit Team. Each Service Unit Team is managed by a Service Unit Manager and a team of volunteers with specific functions.

Service Unit Managers hold Service Unit meetings throughout the year. Troop volunteers are encouraged to take advantage of these great opportunities to network with other volunteers and learn. This is also where leaders hear information shared from Council as well as upcoming events Council or the Service Unit has planned for the future. Leaders can request the Service Unit meeting schedule from the Service Unit Manager or Community Engagement Managers.

Our council is governed by a volunteer structure. Each Service Unit sends delegates to the Annual Meeting, usually held in the spring, where they give input to the Board of Directors, amend by-laws and articles of incorporation, and discuss issues affecting Girl Scouting. The Board of Directors and Board Committees formulate policy, make policy decisions, and govern the affairs of the Council.

Service Unit Team Positions & Main Responsibilities

SERVICE TEAM POSITION	MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES
Service Unit Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules, plans, and facilitates Service Unit Meetings • Recruits, trains, and recognizes Service Unit Team members and troop volunteers • Works with the Community Engagement staff member to address the needs and concerns of the Service Unit
Service Unit Registrar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes on-time membership registration and re-registration in the Service Unit area • Possesses a thorough understanding and takes ownership of the paper and online registration process and provides registration support to the Service Unit

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages weekly reports and works with the Community Engagement staff member, and Service Unit Manager (SUM) to ensure that each troop has the pertinent leadership roles assigned
Service Unit Treasurer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages the Service Unit bank account and provides regular treasury reports to the Service Unit • Reviews Troop Money Earning Applications for approval • Prepares the Service Unit Financial Report to council • Works with the Community Engagement staff member to ensure all troops submit a Troop Financial Report
Service Unit Fall Product Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates the Council’s Fall Product for the Service Unit
Service Unit Cookie Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates the Council’s Cookie Program for the Service Unit
Service Unit Trainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates the training efforts for the Service Unit
Service Unit Community Organizer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct recruitment, promotion, and organization of new girls and adults to join the Girl Scout movement by supporting a team of Service Unit Organizers within their Service Unit
Service Unit Troop Organizer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct recruitment, promotion, and organization of new girls and adults to join the Girl Scout movement in their designated area or schools

New Troop Leader Checklist



To get you started, here’s a list of to-dos to get you and your troop up and running.

- Become a registered Volunteer
 - List your role as the Leader of the troop
 - Complete your Background check, watch for email from theadvocates@sterlingvolunteers for instructions

- Become a Trained Leader

- Complete the New Leader Orientation Training Path assigned in gsLearn
 - This includes the required DCFS Illinois Mandated Reporter training needed to maintain a 'good standing' status with the Council.
- Plan your first meeting
- Find a place to hold your troop meetings
 - Provide Council with the Certificate of Insurance (COI) for your meeting location
 - Schedule a parent meeting (1st meeting for parents and girls)
- Recruit members for the troop
- Find a Co-Leader
 - Register girls for troop
 - Get parents/guardians registered and fill mandatory roles in troop
 - Treasurer, First Aider (person trained in Adult and Child/Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED), Product Program Manager for Fall Product and for Cookies, and Troop Helpers
- Open a Troop Checking account
- Contact your Service Unit Treasurer for help on choosing a bank
 - Must have three registered, approved, non-related signers
 - Sign up for CheckRedi
- Use the Volunteer Tool Kit (VTK)
- Explore and plan your year
- Suggested things to do next
- Attend the Service Unit Meetings monthly
 - Sign up your troop online for a Council program or event
 - Complete other training certification requirements, such as, Adult and Pediatric CPR/AED & First Aid through an approved provider to become your troops First Aider

Holding a Parent Meeting



How do I prepare for a parent meeting?

- First, choose a date, time, and location - Having a parent meeting is key to setting up a successful year of Girl Scouting!
- Typically, this meeting is held before the troop itself meets for the first time. The space should be where you plan to hold troop meetings throughout the year to give girls and families some familiarity with the location.
- Next, invite families and ask that they register online as soon as possible or bring a completed registration form along with the membership fee.
- Plan an activity, like a craft, that the girls can do quietly during the meeting while you chat with the families. This should be an activity that the girls can work on independently or with a partner. Plan for adequate supervision of the girls.
- Write A Parent Meeting Agenda

Detailed Example - Parent Meeting Agenda

Welcome

- Greet everyone and ask them to sign in
- Encourage girls to introduce themselves to one another and get acquainted
 - ***Girl Activity:*** Guide the girls to the activity you've planned for them so they can get settled in before the meeting starts. The activity can be a craft, make a SWAPS, coloring page or a simple game.

Introductions

- Introduce yourself and any other troop volunteers
- Have the adult attendees introduce themselves and share their experience with Girl Scouting or consider asking them to share a special skill or hobby that might interest the girls.
 - Note: Parents/guardians with special skills or interests may someday wish to share their knowledge with the girls!

Provide Girl Scout Program Information

- Share the Girl Scout program materials (Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting and Journeys specific to your troop's program level) and let families know that the Guide will

have information about Girl Scouts, as well as the badges and Journeys that will be the basis for their girl's leadership experiences. If you don't have the books on hand, show the parents a picture of the materials available for their age level.

- **Note:** Purchasing the Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting and/or Journey books is not mandatory. Also, with the Volunteer Tool Kit, the troop leader can print out a meeting outline to include step-by-step badge requirements and share it with the families.

Recruiting Volunteers

- In order to start a new Girl Scout troop, a minimum of two registered, approved (background checked) and unrelated volunteers must accompany the troop at all times. Share what you have learned about Girl Scouts so far. Look for ways to get other adults excited and involved with the troop.
- Explain that as a Troop Leader, you cannot "do it all." The most successful troops have a support network of adults who participate in various aspects of the troop. The parent meeting is the perfect opportunity to ask parents and guardians for their support throughout the year. Encourage parents and guardians to take an active role in the troop's success by volunteering to serve in one of the following ways:
 - Troop Helper
 - Troop Treasurer
 - Troop Cookie Manager
 - Fall Product Manager
 - Record Keeper
 - Snack Coordinator
 - Drivers

Registration

- Each girl must be registered to participate. Parents or guardians must also register if they will be helping the troop on a regular basis.
- Ask parents/guardians to complete a Parent Permission-Girl Health History form for each girl. It is imperative that leaders collect the completed forms for each girl before they can participate in Girl Scout meetings and activities.

Parent/Guardian Expectations

- Even with troop leadership in place, parents and guardians can still play a role and are important for the success of the troop. Ask for help transporting or chaperoning

girls on trips, bringing snacks, sharing talents, or attending troop meetings. For safety purposes, Girl Scouts USA requires that there be two registered, approved (background checked) and unrelated adults, one of which must be a female, attend each meeting and all activities. In addition, there is an adult-to-girl supervision ratio required to ensure the safety and health of all girls taking part in an activity. This is a good reason to have as many parents/guardians register as an adult volunteer.

- Learn to work closely with families, so together girls can benefit from leader/parent involvement in the troop. Here are some benefits of parent/guardian involvement that you can share with families:
 - Parents and guardians know their children better than anyone else. They can provide insight and help when it comes to planning and problem solving.
 - Involving caregivers can help keep girls interested in the troop and troop activities.
 - Involved caregivers become closer to their girls, develop an extended social network, and are actively contributing to the community.

Building a Troop Treasury

In the first year, families can expect that there may be some out-of-pocket expenses such as field trips, uniforms, and books.

- To help cover these expenses, troops may decide to collect troop dues from each family.
 - Explain to parents that membership dues pay for their national membership to GSUSA to provide liability insurance during Girl Scout activities and does not stay locally.
- Troop dues are paid directly to the troop and is used to cover the cost of project supplies, meeting expenses, badges, etc. New troops may want to collect dues in order to have funds to open a troop checking account.
 - There are two council-sponsored product sales programs offered by the southern Illinois council during the year, the Fall Product Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program.
 - Troops retain a portion of the proceeds to fund their activities and council uses the remaining portion to support the delivery of programs to girls, provide training to volunteers and to maintain local Girl Scout programs.

- Participation in the Girl Scout Cookie Program is required, but participation in the Fall Product Program is encouraged.
- If the troop decides that funds earned by participating in product programs will not be enough to meet troop expenses, with approval, they can organize additional money-earning activities that the troop carries out themselves. *Please note: These money-earning activities will not be approved if they occur during the United Way Blackout period (Sept-Oct) of each year.
- The direct solicitation of cash by Girl Scouts is not allowed.

Communication and Meeting Dates

- When compiling parent/guardian information, determine what will be the best means of communication for the troop (consistent communication between troop volunteers and parents is vital). Do they prefer to receive important information from you via emails through the VTK, texts, phone calls or a Facebook group?

Closing

Thank parents and guardians for coming and take any remaining questions.

Forms to have on hand:

- Parent Permission-Girl Health History forms
- Girl and Adult registration forms, financial assistance forms, and volunteer background check forms for those who do not have internet access

Girl Parent Permission-Girl Health History Form



Health histories must be completed annually at the beginning of the Girl Scout year by a parent or guardian. Troop leaders are responsible for maintaining these records throughout the year and should always have health histories with them when working with girls. This includes meetings, trips, and other outings. Please keep in mind that information from a health examination is **confidential** and may be shared only with people who must know this information (such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian, a First Aider, or a health professional). Disposing of a filled-out health form must be done by shredding in order to protect the confidential information listed on these forms.

Having each girl's parent/guardian complete the parent permission portion will save you time throughout the Girl Scout year. Rather than having to request written permission from parents/guardians for each Girl Scout activity outside the normal meeting time and place, having them complete one form each year is a huge convenience!

Written permission above and beyond the Parent Permission Form is required for certain high-risk activities, such as zip-lining and white-water rafting.

Permissions included on the Parent Permission Form:

- Troop and council-sponsored activities held within council jurisdiction and not considered high risk
- Participation in the council-sponsored Fall Product Program and Cookie Program, including any online programs
- Emergency medical treatment
- Participation in program evaluations and surveys

Planning Troop Meetings



Each Girl Scout meeting provides an opportunity to explore the world and learn new skills. As a troop leader, you can customize your year and the activities in each meeting with your girls. Flexibility is the key – based on the needs and interests of your girls, you might have a meeting where you do just one activity, and your next meeting may consist of three activities.

Don't forget about The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)! This comprehensive digital tool, available to troop leaders and assistant troop leaders, is accessible on your computer, smartphone, and/or tablet. The Volunteer Toolkit is a great support resource for volunteers working with K-12th grade troops. There is also support for Multi-level troops too. There are six tabs:

1. **My Troop:** Manage your troop contacts, renew membership, and communicate with parents.
2. **Explore:** To set the troop's calendar year, select the badges and awards your girls want to earn or try a pre-selected track. The Year Plan fills based on your selections. Easily make changes at any time.

3. **Year Plan:** Broadly manage your troop year based on what girls want to do. When you log into Volunteer Toolkit for the first time, you will see three-year plan options for your girls to choose from including one Girl Scout Badge year and two Girl Scout Journey year plans based on the It's Your Story–Tell It Journey and the It's Your Planet–Love It Journey. The first two meetings of each of these year plans will help you decide in partnership with the girls, which of the three year plans they would like to use based on their interests. This tab will also allow you to set your meeting calendar including meeting locations, date, and time.
4. **Meeting Plan:** View meeting details including activity descriptions, meeting aids, material lists and more. Here you can also customize activities, delete activities that your girls wouldn't enjoy and replacing them with new activities. You can easily create your own activity or replace it with an activity from within the toolkit.
5. **Resources:** Here you can find additional resources to support the activities that your girls choose to do. Here you will find the Safety Activity Checkpoints, all meeting aids, and other helpful resources. You can easily add the meeting aids to a specific meeting in your year plan.
6. **Finances:** The finances tab is currently not utilized by the council at this time.

Pre-Meeting

This is the period before the meeting officially begins. Troop leaders, parents, and girls can use this time to chat and greet one another. Since you will be talking to parents and setting up, the girls should have an easy, self-directed activity to engage them.

The Girl Scout signal for silence in a group situation is called the "Quiet Sign" demonstrated by raising the right hand, palm open. Everyone follows and falls silent as they raise their right hand also.

Opening (5 minutes)

The official start of the meeting. Opening activities:

- Focus the girls on the meeting
- Are chosen by the girls
- Often include the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- May include a simple flag ceremony, song, game, or story

Business Meeting (10-20 minutes)

This is the time for special announcements, dues, attendance, making plans, or voting on activities. During the business portion of the meeting girls will learn how to lead, communicate clearly with one another, and express their feelings and opinions. Little by

little, allow girls to take responsibility for more of the business of the troop. Consider developing a Kaper Chart so girls can take turns with business meeting tasks.

Kaper Chart: The Girl Scout term for a chore is called a “Kaper.” A Kaper Chart divides the chores within the troop. Typically, the chores rotate or can easily be changed so that everyone experiences each chore and has the opportunity for leadership.

Activities (20-40 minutes)

Here, girls get a chance to build skills, try new things, explore their interests, and work cooperatively with others. Girls help plan the activities they’ll do during troop meetings.

These can include:

- Ideas from Leadership Journeys or The Girls Guide to Girl Scouting
- Badge work
- Physical activity
- Outdoor time/field trip

Snack time (10 minutes; optional)

Clean-up (10 minutes)

Clean-up teaches girls to be responsible and allows them to practice the Girl Scout tenant: “Leave things better than you found them.” Use a Kaper Chart to split the tasks fairly among the troop.

Closing (5 minutes)

The official end of the meeting. During this time, you can remind the girls of what you reviewed during the meeting, what’s coming up in the next meeting or activity, and end on a positive note. Many troops like to close the meeting with a traditional **Friendship Circle**.

Virtual Troop Meetings

Holding virtual troop meetings creates an array of new challenges and exciting opportunities to deliver a powerful Girl Scout experience into the lives of girls. As with all the special experiences that Girl Scouts offer, meeting virtually creates not only the ability for girls to get comfortable and tech savvy but to gain character, confidence and courage by expressing themselves and learning leadership skills to take them into the virtual world. Before you opt to use this route for a meeting, make sure you will be able to include all the girls in the troop with this option before moving forward. Make sure all the girls take the Internet Safety Pledge. For

more information about holding a virtual troop meeting, review the Virtual Troop Meetings Safety Activity Checkpoint.

Community Service



Community service is an integral part of being a Girl Scout, providing girls with an opportunity to practice teamwork, build critical thinking skills, and empowering them to make changes in their community. What better way for girls to learn cooperation and build friendships than working together to accomplish a single goal. Sharing their time and resources helps girls increase their self-esteem and civic responsibility.

Have the girls get involved and learn more about their community. Attend a city council meeting, participate in a ribbon cutting ceremony, take part in local parade are just a few ways your troop can be present in their community and learn about civic responsibility. Take pictures of what your troop did and share them with Council to show others how your girls are getting involved in their community.

Some examples of community service projects are:

- Volunteer at an animal shelter or collect supplies for them.
- Collect items for the local food pantry.
- Visit a nursing home and do an activity with the residents.

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois offers Community Service “Take Action” Project throughout the year. Troops may purchase patches from the council shop upon completion of each project.

Girls can earn the Community Service Bar, Service to Girl Scouting Bar, and the Torch Awards. Search the GSofSI website or the Girls Guide to Girl Scouting for the requirements for each award.

CHECKPOINT



1. **Multiple choice.** What permissions does the Annual Parent Permission form include?
 - a) Permission for emergency medical treatment
 - b) Permission to participate in high adventure activities such as zip line and climbing wall
 - c) Media release
2. Name one way that a new troop can build their troop treasury.
3. A team of adult volunteers that support Troop Leaders at the local level are referred to as the _____.
4. True or False. To use the Volunteer Tool Kit, you must be registered as a Troop Leader or Co-leader and successfully complete a background check.
5. **Multiple choice.** The business part of the troop meeting usually includes which of the following?
 - a) A game
 - b) Friendship Circle
 - c) Taking Attendance
 - d) Collecting troop dues

1. a 2. Troop dues or start-up fee, participation in council-sponsored Product Programs, other money-earning activities organized by the troop 3. Service Unit Team 4. True 5. c) & d)

Camp!



Camping is a great way for girls to explore leadership, build skills, and develop a deep appreciation for nature. Whether for a day, a weekend, or longer, Girl Scout camp gives girls an opportunity to grow, explore, and have fun under the guidance of caring, trained adults.

Leaders or a designated registered volunteer from the troop must receive additional training in order to take their troop camping or for any overnight experiences. The additional trainings include: Adult and Child/Pediatric CPR/AED/First Aid, Camping In, Camping Out, and other specific outdoor experiences (archery, canoeing, and waterfront safety). The in-person trainings are offered by our council at various times throughout the year or are available year-round on gsLearn. For in-person sessions, check the “Events+” tab of our website for dates and to register for the training.

Product Programs



There are two council-sponsored product sales programs offered by the Southern Illinois council during the year: Fall Product Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. All money raised through Girl Scout Product Programs stay local and are used to support the delivery of programs to girls, provide training to volunteers, and to maintain local Girl Scout camps. Troops retain a portion of the proceeds of each product to fund activities such as field trips and community service projects. It is suggested that each troop have a Fall Product Manager and a Cookie Product Manager to help the leader and troop with these sales programs.

By participating in council-sponsored product programs like the Fall Product and Cookie programs, girls learn 5 skills:

1. Goal Setting
2. Decision Making
3. Money Management
4. People Skills
5. Business Ethics

Troop Finance



Opening a troop bank account

What?

Each troop needs to set up a bank account in the name of Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois, Troop XXXXX, using the FEIN for Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois and the address of a volunteer managing the account. Only **one** bank account per troop is permitted.

Where?

A troop can open an account wherever it is convenient but before you do, please check with your Service Unit Treasurer to see if there is a preferred bank used by the service unit. Your troop account may have up to two Debit cards per account, if available. Remember to document all debit card spending to be mindful of your troop account balance.

Who?

Individuals responsible for handling troop funds must be registered Girl Scouts who have successfully completed a background check. Signers may not be related by blood, marriage, or partnership. Each bank account requires **three registered, approved, unrelated signers**, one being the Service Unit Treasurer.

When?

Each troop should establish its bank account as soon as your two signers have a completed background check. You will need money from dues or money earned from product program to open the account. Remember to keep the initial deposit slip with your financial records.

It is important that each signer on the troop's checking account reviews the monthly bank statement. Please make sure the treasurer from your troop makes copies of the monthly bank statements and gives them to the other signers on the account, including the Service Unit Treasurer.

CheckRedi is a program we use that that will provide reimbursement to a troop account for any returned checks at no cost to the troop. In order for this guarantee, when accepting a written check, it must have the individual's name, address (no P.O. Box), phone number, and driver's

license included on the check. For information on how to sign up for CheckRedi, go to the GSofSI website, click on the forms tab, and search for CheckRedi.

Taking Over an Existing Troop Bank Account

If you are taking over an existing troop, you will need to change the signatures that were associated with that account. Because banks have many different policies and procedures for closing or changing the signers on an account, contact the bank directly and see what they require. Also contact your Service Unit Treasurer because their signature must remain on the account as well. If you have any questions or concerns about the process, contact your Community Engagement staff member.

How is money earned?

①

Participation in the Fall Product & Cookie Programs is the best way for troops to earn money. By participating in these programs, girls build real-life skills that benefit their troop, council, community, and themselves. All girl members, including Daisies, are eligible to participate in council-sponsored product programs, with volunteer supervision.

Note: Participation in the Cookie Program is required, but participation in the Fall Product Program is encouraged.

②

Troops may also choose to collect dues or assess a start-up fee per girl as the troop is organized. New troops have miscellaneous expenses and troop leaders often need to purchase supplies for meeting activities. Also, new troops need to open a troop checking account and will need some funds to get the account open. Until the troop has participated in the council-sponsored product programs, it will not have earned funds to spend on activities and supplies. Discuss with the parents about the possibility of the troop assessing a startup fee or collecting troop dues at the parent meeting.

③

Girl Scout troops may also request permission to organize their own troop money-earning activities. Certain policies and procedures apply and can be referenced in Volunteer Essentials. Types of approved money-earning activities include:

- Collections and Drives: Cell phones or used ink cartridges can be turned in for money; Christmas tree recycling; Recycle aluminum cans.

- Events: Host a theme meal (high tea, pancake breakfast, etc.); Sock Hop; Father-Daughter dance; game or face painting booth at a festival; badge workshop for younger troops; have a carnival.
- Services: Service-a-thon (people sponsor a girl doing service; funds to support a trip); Baby-sit for a holiday; yard work for hire like watering plants, weeding and raking, shoveling snow; walking pets, washing windows; Picking up litter after sporting event; Providing pet-sitting or plant-sitting services for vacationers; Taking photos at a dance or event.

Troop income should be used to serve all girls in the troop. Troop funds are shared by all members and cannot be given directly to any one girl in dollar or percentage amounts. Troop members and families may vote to use the proceeds for membership dues, training fees, girl program fees, Journeys, Girl Guides, etc. However, troop funds may never be used for volunteers' personal expenses such as fuel or apparel.

It's a good idea to be transparent with families about troop funds and their use throughout the year. We strongly encourage troop leaders to:

- Provide receipts for parents whenever money is exchanged.
- Provide parents with regular financial updates or notifications of how and when troop funds are spent.
- Allow parents to review the troop checking account register and/or the Troop Year-End Report.
- Keep receipts for all purchases for at least one year.
- Limit ATM/cash withdrawals for troop expenses and keep receipts to document cash purchases for the troop. Re-deposit any unspent cash shortly after the intended purchases.

Financial Assistance

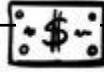
We strive to make certain that no girl is denied the Girl Scout Experience. Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois encourages girls and volunteers to contribute when able and to be active participants in their Girl Scout experience.

Girls and adults who are unable to pay the \$25 GSUSA membership dues can request financial assistance online through the membership community or by filling out a paper form and submitting it to GSofSI. For more information, contact Customer Care at (800) 345-6858.

Financial need-based activity scholarships are available to girls who do not have the funds to participate in a Girl Scout program. Scholarships are awarded on an individual basis, and are

not designed to underwrite dues or event costs for an entire troop. All details concerning financial assistance requests are kept confidential.

Year-End Reporting



We know that keeping track of everything that goes in and out of the troop bank account can be taxing to troop volunteers. To help with organization and simplify the process, we recommend using the Finance Tracking Spreadsheet available on the Southern Illinois website. This spreadsheet correlates directly to the report that will be used to submit your end of year Troop Financial Report. A Troop Financial Report is an annual report that must be submitted to Council every year (the last Thursday in June). The report includes information about your troop's income and expenses. Keep all receipts of any purchases made with troop funds.

Tax Exemption



Exemption from Illinois and Missouri State Sales Tax

Girl Scouts is classified as a non-profit organization. One of the benefits of this classification is that Girl Scout troops may be able to purchase goods and services for the use of the troop without paying Illinois or Missouri state sales tax. However, it is up to the merchant to decide if they will accept a state tax-exemption certificate. If you need an updated Tax-Exempt Certificate for Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois, contact your Community Engagement staff member to have one sent to you. If your troop travels to Indiana, Kentucky or Florida, we have the state's tax-exempt letters available upon request.

Safety First



In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is always a top priority. You, the parents/guardians of the girls in your troop, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. It's important that you are prepared for emergencies.

First Aid Kits

Make sure a first-aid kit is available at all troop meetings and accompanies the troop to all activities. In addition to basic first aid supplies, your kit should contain the **Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois' 24-hour emergency number (800)345-6858, option 3**. Your first aid kit should also include a few Standard Incident Report forms and a Parent Permission-Girl Health History form for each girl.

Health Histories

As you've read earlier, Parent Permission-Girl Health History forms must be completed annually at the beginning of the Girl Scout year. Troop leaders are responsible for maintaining these records throughout the year and should always have health histories with them when working with girls. This includes meetings, trips, and other outings. Please keep in mind that information from a health examination is **confidential** and may be shared only with people who must know this information (such as the girl herself, her parent/guardian, a First Aider, or a health professional).

It is important for you to be aware of any medications, allergies, and health histories a girl may have.

- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl's custodial parent or guardian. Some girls may need to carry and administer their own medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen, or diabetes medication.
- Common food allergies include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, and seafood. This means that, before serving any food (such as peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, cookies, or chips), ask whether anyone is allergic to peanuts, dairy products, or wheat! Even Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies should be aware of their allergies, but double-checking with their parents/guardians is always a good idea.

General Emergency Procedures

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgement. For many activities, Girl Scouts requires that at least one adult volunteer in your troop be certified in Adult and Child/Pediatric CPR/AED and Standard First Aid. Those volunteers are the Troop's "First Aider" and they must attend each meeting or event that occurs outside of the normal meeting location unless otherwise noted. **Note:** Any CPR/AED/First Aid certification classes that are 100% online only are **not** accepted by GSUSA. For that reason, if you can participate in council-approved training, do it!

Safety Activity Checkpoints will always state when a first-aider is needed. Activities can take place in a variety of locations, so first aid requirements are based on the remoteness of the activity.

Be prepared:

- Assemble a first aid kit that is always accessible.
- Always keep emergency contact information with the troop.
 - Council's 24-hour emergency contact number is (800)345-6858, option 3.
 - Names and numbers of parents/guardians.
 - Have the Parent Permission-Girl Health History form for each girl with you at each activity.
 - Contact information for local emergency services including police, fire department, and hospital.
- Review safety and emergency procedures prior to activities.
- Educate yourself as far as what to do in specific emergencies and severe weather situations.
- Develop an emergency action plan for possible situations, know who is responsible for what action in case of emergency, and share the plan with the girls and adult volunteers accompanying the troop.

Consult Volunteer Essentials for more specific information on managing emergency situations.

Choosing Activities

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate for Girl Scouts? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What's safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, call Customer Care with full details and don't proceed without approval. Remember, the safety of girls is your most important consideration.

When planning activities with girls, note the abilities of each girl and carefully consider the progression of skills from the easiest part to the most difficult. Make sure the complexity of the activity does not exceed girls' individual skills. Bear in mind that skill levels decline when people are tired, hungry, or under stress.

Prior to any activity, read the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints related to any activity you plan to do with girls. If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity, check with your council **before** making any definite plans with the girls.

If there are questions or concerns that remain after consulting Safety Activity Checkpoints, contact Council at (800)345-6858 to speak with a Customer Care team member. Provide full details and do not proceed with an activity before receiving council approval.

Consult Volunteer Essentials or the Safety Activity Checkpoints for information on activities requiring pre-approval and activities that are never allowed.

To standardize registration for all Girl Scout-sponsored activities, girls will be considered at the next grade level after June 1.

Certificates of Insurance

A Certificate of Insurance, or COI, is a form provided by the operator of a program or meeting site that identifies a specified amount of insurance coverage the insured holds in various categories, like commercial general liability, automobile, professional liability and workers compensation. Southern Illinois is responsible for ensuring that facilities, vendors, and program providers are safe for our members. One measure of ensuring safety is documentation of adequate insurance. Before meeting with your girls or going on a field trip or other activity, make sure that the site or facility carries the appropriate amount of insurance. COI's are not needed for the use of sites owned by Southern Illinois or for organizations that have already provided this information to council. You can find a list of organizations that have provided acceptable evidence of insurance coverage on the GSofSI website. If you have questions about if a COI is needed for any Girl Scout activity, contact Customer Care at (800)345-6858.

Mandatory Reporting

There may be times when you worry about the health and well-being of girls in your troop and volunteering as a leader puts you in a unique position to identify a situation where a girl may need help. Girl Scout Council staff and registered volunteers are mandated reporters by completing the required online training and will report all incidents of reasonable suspicion that abuse or neglect has occurred. Girl Scout volunteers and participants should ethically report any suspicions of abuse or neglect to the **Illinois State 24-hour hotline at (800)-25-ABUSE** then reach out to their Community Engagement Manager with their concern. This information will be taken to the executive staff for additional follow up. Suspicion means that it is understandable for a person to entertain such suspicion, drawing when appropriate on his or her training and experience to suspect abuse. The child protective agency will determine the accuracy of the report.

The Illinois Department of Social Services defines abuse as "...the mistreatment of a child under the age of 18 by:

- A parent or their romantic partner;

- An immediate relative or someone living in their home;
- A caretaker such as a babysitter or daycare worker; or
- Any person responsible for the child's welfare, such as a health care provider, educator, coach or youth program volunteer.

The mistreatment can either result in injury or put the child at serious risk of injury. Child abuse can be physical (i.e. bruises or broken bones), sexual (i.e. fondling or incest), or mental (emotional injury or psychological illness)."

If you believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred, or if a child self-reports, call **Illinois State 24-hour hotline at (800)-25-ABUSE** before calling Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois at (800) 345-6858. If you believe a girl is at risk of hurting herself or others, your role as a volunteer is to promptly bring that information to her parent, guardian, or council. In an emergency, if you feel that the authorities should be contacted immediately, please call 9-1-1.

GSofSI reserves the right to dismiss or to exclude from active involvement, any volunteer or employee implementing Girl Scout program who is found guilty of child abuse or neglect or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect.

GSofSI will consider any of the above-mentioned prohibitions as the basis for disciplinary action that can include dismissal or termination from the Council.

Insurance

Every registered Girl Scout and registered adult member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic plan upon registration. Non-member activity participation and overnight trips lasting longer than two nights are now covered under this basic plan as well. The entire premium cost for this protection is paid by Girl Scouts of the USA. This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred due to an accident while a member or non-member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity, after the individual's primary insurance pays out. Registered girls and adults as well as non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons are also covered by basic coverage.

Additional activity accident and sickness insurance coverage plans are available for Girl Scouts and non-members taking local and international trips. These plans are secondary insurance that a council may offer to cover participants taking part in any council-approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. You must purchase the secondary insurance two weeks prior to the trip or activity. You can find this information about the three secondary insurance options on the GSofSI website.

Traveling with Girls

Whether it be around town or around the world, travel can be one of the most enriching and educational Girl Scout pathways. Southern Illinois has standards, procedures and required training on gsLearn to make sure the experience is fun and safe for all!

Travel Guidelines

Traveling is an exciting way to teach girls new skills and introduce them to new experiences. Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois has defined four travel tiers.

Tier	Description
Tier 1	All troop activity outside regular meeting space (location and/or time)
Tier 2	Short overnight trips that include one or two nights.
Tier 3 (Juniors and older)	Longer overnight trips that include three or more nights.
Tier 4 (Cadettes and older)	International trips that allows girls to travel around the world

Before a troop can take a trip, it is required that the troop leader or a registered volunteer from the troop complete the Traveling with Troops training course in gsLearn and an “Intent To Travel” application by the required deadline. More information and resources shared in the training can also be found on our website.

For more information on planning your troop trip, please contact Customer Care at (800)345-6858 or email customercare@gssofsi.org.

How Many Volunteers Do You Need?



Whatever the activity, from camping to cookie sales, adult supervision is required regardless of the grade level of the girls. The table on the next page has been developed to show the minimum number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These adult-to-girl supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of all girls taking part in the activity. Adult volunteers must be 18 years old.

Remember, two registered, approved (background checked) and unrelated adults, one of which must be female, must always accompany the troop. So, if one adult responds to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand to watch over the rest of the girls.

PRO TIP – Use the buddy system. The buddy system is a safety practice in which two or three girls of approximately the same age and ability are grouped together to keep watch over each other. Under the buddy system, each pair is responsible for staying with her buddy at all times, warning her buddy of danger, giving her buddy immediate assistance and calling for help or going for help when the situation warrants it.

The buddy system does NOT relieve the leader of their responsibility for knowing the whereabouts of each member of the troop, but it does serve as a means of involving everyone in the group and having them share the responsibility.

Council Events
 All troops attending council events must meet required adult-to-girl ratios and have at least one approved female volunteer in attendance. Adult chaperones should not exceed the number of girls registered per troop.

Driving Safely
 Any adult who drives girls other than her/his daughter(s) for a Girl Scout activity must be a registered, approved adult volunteer at least 21 years of age and hold a valid driver’s license. If a driver is male, there must be a registered, approved, and unrelated female adult volunteer also traveling with the group. Leaders may want to request proof of insurance to keep on file for those who

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

CHECKPOINT



Let's talk through a couple real-life scenarios of when you will have to figure out how many adult chaperones are required.

1. If you're holding a troop meeting for 17 Daisies, how many registered, approved adults must be present?
2. What if you have 17 Cadettes attending a troop meeting? Then how many adults must be present?
3. You are planning to take 26 Juniors to Troop Round Up at Camp Torqua. How many registered, approved adults must accompany the troop?

1.3 2.2 3.4

Knowing Your Responsibilities



As a Girl Scout leader, you'll serve as a partner and role model to girls. One of your responsibilities 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 – whether you're volunteering at an event, working with girls who are traveling, or partnering with girls on a short-term series about a topic that interests you.

Role-model the right behavior

The volunteer code of conduct includes:

- Never use illegal drugs
- In the presence of girls:
 - Don't use alcohol, tobacco products, or foul language.
 - Don't carry firearms or ammunition.
 - Always wear your seatbelt, follow posted rules, and respect authority.
- Resolve conflicts directly and honestly; avoid indirect communication like social media, texting, or gossip.
- Be prepared for your part of each meeting/event. If you make a mistake, take ownership of it and explain your plan to fix it.

Pro Tip – Send an adult member of your troop, or plan to attend your local Service Unit meetings to receive important updates, reminders, and training.

As a troop leader, it is important to review and understand what you will be responsible for. These responsibilities will help guide your experience and ensure that you know what you will be held accountable for. No need to feel stressed out when reading through; many of these responsibilities are things you probably assumed already!

- Accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints and ensure a safe experience for every girl.
- Understand the Three Keys to Leadership and Three Girl Scout Processes that are the basis of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience: Discover, Connect, and Take Action.
- Share your knowledge, experience, and skills with a positive and flexible attitude

- Organize fun, interactive, girl-led activities that address relevant issues and match girls' interests and needs.
- Communicate effectively with fellow volunteers, girls, parents, and council staff.
- Manage registration forms and other paperwork, such as the Health History and Annual Permission form.
- Oversee with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping the funds that girls raise.
- Maintain a close connection to your Service Unit.

“Most girls learn from watching the ways women communicate and resolve conflict. Avoid indirect communication like texting or gossip to resolve your conflicts. Instead, model direct and honest communication with your peers and the girls.”

– [girlscouts.org/banbossy](https://www.girlscouts.org/banbossy)

Who is a Volunteer?

Every adult who helps the troop and:

- Has regular contact with girls and may intentionally or unintentionally be left alone with girls
- Will transport girls other than their own
- Will handle troop funds (including supervising Girl Scout Cookie booths)

Needs to:

- **Register as a member every year**

CHECKPOINT



1. **True or False. As a troop volunteer, you are a mandatory reporter required to report any suspected signs of abuse or neglect to council and/or the proper authorities.**
2. **Name the GSUSA publication that provides safety tips and guidelines to support many Girl Scout activities as well as general safety tips and guidelines for all activities.**
3. **True or false. All troop bank accounts are opened using the SSN of the Troop Leader and Troop Treasurer.**

1. True 2. Safety Activity Checkpoints 3. False

Service Unit and Council Contacts

Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois consists of 40 Service Units. Service Units are represented by team of dedicated volunteers working to build the Girl Scout experience in their immediate area. Service Team Members along with troop representatives meet several times throughout the year to share ideas, receive training, and talk about important announcements. By now, you've likely been in touch with your Service Team. If not, let us know and we will get you connected!

You are a member of the following Service Unit: _____

Service Unit# _____

My Community Engagement Manager (staff member) is: _____

Your Service Unit Team Contacts

<p>Service Unit Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedules, plans, and facilitates Service Team and Service Unit meetings. • Recruits, trains, and recognizes Service Team members and troop volunteers. • Works to address the needs and concerns of the Service Unit 	<p>Name of Service Unit Manager:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Contact Info:</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Service Unit Treasurer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manages the Service Unit bank account and provides regular treasury reports to the Service Unit • Prepares the annual Service Unit Financial Report • Reviews Troop Money Earning Applications • Prepares the Service Unit Year-End report to council 	<p>Name of Service Unit Treasurer:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Contact Info:</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Service Unit Registrar</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotes on-time membership registration and re-registration • Works with Service Unit, council staff and Customer Care to place members into troops • Provides membership goals and updates 	<p>Name of Service Unit Registrar:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Contact Info:</p> <p>_____</p>
<p>Service Unit Fall Product Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinates the Council Fall Product Program for the Service Unit 	<p>Name of Service Fall Product Manager:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>Contact Info:</p> <p>_____</p>

<p>Service Unit Cookie Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates the Council Cookie Program for the Service Unit 	<p>Name of Service Unit Cookie Manager:</p> <hr/> <p>Contact Info:</p>
<p>Service Unit Community Organizer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct recruitment, promotion, and organization of new girls and adults to join the Girl Scout movement by supporting a team of Service Unit Troop Organizers within their Service Unit. 	<p>Name of Service Unit Community Organizer:</p> <hr/> <p>Contact Info:</p>
<p>Service Unit Troop Organizer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct recruitment, promotion, and organization of new girls and adults to join the Girl Scout movement in their designated area or schools. 	<p>Name of Service Unit Troop Organizer:</p> <hr/> <p>Contact Info:</p>
<p>Service Unit Trainer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates the training efforts for the Service Unit. 	<p>Name of Service Unit Trainer:</p> <hr/> <p>Contact Info:</p>

Acronyms

AM	Annual Meeting
ATG	All That Glitters
BFF	Be a Friend First
BOD	Board of Directors
CC	Customer Care
CEI	Customer Engagement Initiative
CE	Community Engagement
CEM	Community Engagement Manager
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFAO	Chief Finance and Administrative Officer
CIT	Counselor-In-Training
COI	Certificate of Insurance
	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation/Automated External Defibrillator/First
CPR/AED/FA	Aid
FA	Financial Aid
FD	Fund Development
FLL	First Lego League
FP	Family Partnership
G.I.R.L.	Go-Getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader
GSofSI	Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois
GSUSA	Girl Scouts of the USA
ISS	In School Scouting
JGL	Juliette Gordon Low
MD	Mission Delivery
PA	Program Aide
PE	Program Engagement
PEM	Program Engagement Manager
SF	Salesforce
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering & Math
SU	Service Unit
SUM	Service Unit Manger
UW	United Way
VIT	Volunteer-In-Training
VTK	Volunteer Tool Kit
WAGGGS	World Association of Girl Guides & Girl Scouts

Important Form List

The list below is our most used forms list that leaders should be familiar with and may be used throughout the year. They are located on the Girl Scouts of Southern Illinois website and can be found by clicking on the “Forms” tab or can be searched for by using the “Search” bar.

Girl Scout Membership form

Parent Permission-Girl Health History

Adult Health History

Troop and Service Unit Bank Account Form

ACH Electronic Authorization form

CheckRedi Information and forms

Money-Earning Application form

Girl Scout Activity Insurance Overview

Secondary insurance enrollment forms

Safety Activity Checkpoints