



of eastern washington  
and northern idaho

## Quick-Start Guide

Welcome to the great adventure of Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world.

We know you're busy and need to be efficient with your time. For that reason, this Quick-Start Guide to *Volunteer Essentials* gives you the nitty-gritty—what you need to know now, as you plan for your first meeting with girls. We encourage you to read through these tips as soon as you can.

The rest of the *Volunteer Essentials Resource Guide*, located on the GSEWNI website, [www.gsewni.org](http://www.gsewni.org), is a reference for you to use. When you have a question, simply look up the topic in the Table of Contents, and you'll find your answer. Think of *Volunteer Essentials Resource Guide* as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering.

### **GSEWNI Corporate Office & Program Center -**

1404 N Ash

Spokane, Washington 99201

(509)747-8091

[customercare@gsewni.org](mailto:customercare@gsewni.org)

8 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday

### **Camp Four Echoes-Resident Camp**

22177 S Camp Four Echoes Rd.

Worley, ID 83876

### **The Martin Scout Camp**

Partnership with Girl Scouts Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho and the Blue Mountain Boy Scout Council.

Pilot Rock, Oregon

### **GSEWNI Store:**

**1404 North Ash Street, Spokane, WA**

**9 am to 5 pm, Monday through Friday**

**10 am to 2 pm, Saturday**

# We Are Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts was founded in 1912 by trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low. We are the largest girl-serving organization in the United States and a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a sisterhood of close to 10 million girls and adults in 145 countries.

## Our Mission and Vision

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

## Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God\* and my country,

To help people at all times,

And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

\*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word “God” in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word “God.” **Note:** This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the girls’ books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it’s your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the girls in your group and to make sure that everyone in the group feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with girls’ families.

## Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,

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.

## More than 3 Million Strong

We are urban, rural, and suburban. We are in schools, churches, temples, mosques, public housing, foster homes, and detention centers. We are in virtually every zip code and in 90 countries around the world.

- **2.3 million** girls 5 to 18 years of age
- **16,800** Girl Scouts overseas
- **888,000** adult volunteers
- **59** million alumnae
- **112 councils** throughout the United States

At any given time, approximately 10 percent of girls are Girl Scouts, and it's interesting to know that:

- 80 percent of women business owners were Girl Scouts.
- 69 percent of female U.S. Senators were Girl Scouts.
- 67 percent of female members of the House of Representatives were Girl Scouts.
- Virtually every female astronaut who has flown in space was a Girl Scout.

## The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

We have identified Three Keys to Leadership: girls **Discover** themselves and their values; **Connect** with others; and **Take Action** to make the world a better place. At Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl: activities are **girl-led**, which gives girls the opportunity to **learn by doing** in a **cooperative learning** environment.

### ToGetHerThere

At Girl Scouts, we know that when girls are given the opportunity, they change their world. Every girl has an important role to play, and every girl deserves the confidence to achieve anything she sets her sight on. But we need help to ensure that girls in every U.S. zip code develop the confidence that Girl Scouts nurtures. That's why we've launched ToGetHerThere, the largest fundraising campaign for girls in history.

ToGetHerThere is a Movement wide fundraising campaign with the goal of raising \$1 Billion for girls by 2020. Every gift to every Girl Scout Council counts toward the goal. Together, we will get her there - to help lead her troop, her family, her community, her company, her country, and her world. To learn more about joining the largest campaign for girls visit [girlscouts.org/invest](http://girlscouts.org/invest).



## G.I.R.L

While some people still think of us as just cookies, badges, campfires, and friendship bracelets, Girl Scouts are so much more. Girl Scouts are groundbreakers, big thinkers, and role models. Girl Scouts design robots, start garage bands, and improve their communities—and yes, they sell the best cookies on the planet.

When she's a Girl Scout, she's also a G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™.

### **G. Go-getter**

She's bold, honest, and determined to succeed. Goal oriented and ambitious, she's also a life-long learner who believes no challenge is too difficult!

### **I. Innovator**

Thinking outside the box is her specialty, so she's always looking for a creative way to take action. She definitely knows how to get things done.

### **R. Risk-taker**

Courageous and strong, she's keen to try new things and to embrace the unfamiliar. She's ready to step up and break the mold if that's what it takes.

### **L. Leader**

She's confident, responsible, and committed to changing the world for the better—and she's happiest when others join her in taking the lead!

These are the traits that define girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. This is the Girl Scout DNA.

# DNA of a G.I.R.L.

She's a *go-getter, innovator, risk-taker, leader!*



 POWERED BY GIRL SCOUTS

# Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and power of girls and women together. Any girl—from kindergarten (or 5 years old) through 12th grade—can join Girl Scouts. Girl Scout volunteers are also a diverse group—you may be a college volunteer working on a community-action project, a parent volunteer ready for an outdoor adventure with your daughter’s group, or any responsible adult (female or male, who have passed the necessary screening process) looking to help prime girls for the day when they’ll lead—however and wherever they choose.

What all members share, both girls and adults, are the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues of \$25 (adults have the option to purchase a lifetime membership).

## Girls at Every Grade Level

After girls join, they team up in the following grade levels:

- Girl Scout Daisy (grades K–1)
- Girl Scout Brownie (grades 2–3)
- Girl Scout Junior (grades 4–5)
- Girl Scout Cadette (grades 6–8)
- Girl Scout Senior (grades 9–10)
- Girl Scout Ambassador (grades 11–12)

## Flexible Ways to Participate

Across the country, the Girl Scout community is hard at work on a whole new approach to make sure that everyone can participate in Girl Scouting in the ways they want to. As a volunteer, you can choose from flexible ways to participate that can be tailored to fit your schedule and lifestyle. You can also volunteer behind the scenes, in your council office, instead of volunteering directly with girls.

Girls can choose any one, all, or some of the options—camp, events, series, troop, travel— within a single membership year. As a volunteer, you, too, have the option of partnering with girls throughout a membership year or committing to an opportunity for only a few weeks or months. Based on independent research and extensive surveys with thousands of council staff members from around the country, we have a good sense of which options will interest girls, based on their grade levels. These are reflected in the chart on the right.



GRADES												
K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
TROOP												
CAMP												
SERIES												
EVENTS												
TRAVEL												
VIRTUAL												

### Tip!

**Who needs to be a registered member?** Any girl participating in Girl Scout activities as well as any adult acting in a leadership role. An active leadership role is defined as someone who is a troop co-leader, any troop volunteer who is handling finances or product (ie. Cookie Manager or Fall Product Manager), or is chaperoning a trip or event and is one of the adults necessary to meet the adult-to-girl ratios. The number of “ratio adults” needed for your specific level is detailed later in this guide. Please note: GSEWNI runs background checks on all volunteers, ensuring the safety of the girls and our finances.

# Membership and Volunteer Standards

## Girl Membership

Membership as a Girl Scout is granted to any girl in grades K (of 5 years old)-12 who has made the Girl Scout Promise and accepted the Girl Scout Law and has paid annual membership dues of \$25 + \$5 Council Service Fee (\$30 total). Financial assistance is available for members. As girls participate in Girl Scouts, they have the opportunity to fund their future Girl Scout experience by participating in the fall product sale and the cookie sale. The funds troops earn can pay for memberships, uniforms and programs for the following year. A girl who meets membership requirements shall not be denied admission to any troop or group because of race, creed, religion, sexual orientation, citizenship, ancestry, physical or mental disability, health status, socio-economic/public status, or national origin.

## Adult Membership

Membership as a Girl Scout adult is granted to any person who accepts the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution, has made the Girl Scout Promise, accepted the Girl Scout Law and has paid the annual membership dues of \$25 for adults (financial assistance is available), or paid the lifetime membership dues. Adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement who meet GSUSA membership standards, shall agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and the Girl Scouts of Eastern WA & Northern ID, and register as a Girl Scout. An adult who meets membership requirements shall not be denied admission to any troop or group because of race, creed, religion, sexual orientation, citizenship, ancestry, physical or mental disability, health status, socio-economic/public status, or national origin.

Lifetime membership as a Girl Scout adult is granted to any person 18 years of age or older or a high school graduate or equivalent who: accepts the principles and beliefs as stated in the Preamble of the Constitution; has made the Girl Scout Promise and accepted the Girl Scout Law; and has paid lifetime membership dues. Lifetime membership shall be offered at a reduced rate to any girl who is a registered Girl Scout Ambassador at the time of her high school graduation or equivalent, and be available to her before the girl's current membership expires.

## Registration Policies

All girls and adults planning to participate in Girl Scout activities including troop meetings must be registered members. Registrations must be completed online no later than the first troop meeting or activity they attend. Any adult in a leadership role must be registered before meeting with or chaperoning girls. All registrations for returning members need to be completed online no later than September 30.

The membership year is from October 1 to September 30. Girl Scouts welcomes new members year round. Registrations are due before a girl or adult participates in Girl

Scouting. Registration can be completed online.

## Council Service Fee (CSF)

The Council Service Fee (CSF) helps generate funds dedicated to providing the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to GSEWNI Girl Scouts. All Girl Scouts (girls and adults) pay the annual \$25 membership fee that goes directly to Girl Scouts of the USA to support national programs, girl research and training, and insurance. Though collected locally, none of the annual membership fee stays at the council level. The Council Service Fee is \$5, and is used to update technology including the Volunteer Toolkit. **Total Girl membership dues are \$30.** Parents/guardians and/or troops make a convenient single payment for girl membership dues.

Badgerland Council Service Fee Breakdown:

\$25	Girl Scouts USA Membership Fee (supports nationwide program initiatives)
+ \$ 5	GSEWNI Service Fee
<b>\$30</b>	<b>Total Annual Girl Scout Membership for Girls</b>

*The Council Service Fee only applies to girl registrations because our service is to the girls. Adult registration dues are \$25.*

## Becoming a Volunteer

It is easy to complete the steps you need to become an adult volunteer. Go to [gsewni.org](http://gsewni.org) homepage and click on the “Volunteer Now” button. This will take you to our volunteer systems database where you will enter your contact information, get an opportunity to select the volunteer role that fits your needs best and become a registered member of Girl Scouts. The adult registration fee is \$25. When you complete these steps you will receive a link that invites you to complete a free, confidential background check online. All volunteers are required to have a current background check on file with GSEWNI. This criminal history is done to ensure the safety of our girls. Depending on the outcome of a background check, some volunteers may have volunteer limitations, such as not being able to handle finances or drive girls other than their own. In those instances, someone may still volunteer with Girl Scouts, but with restrictions that will be clarified by GSEWNI Council staff.

After an initial Volunteer Background Check has been submitted, background checks are required every 2 years. Volunteers must notify GSEWNI immediately of any legal or criminal actions brought against them. In addition, GSEWNI reserves the right to perform background checks as necessary during a volunteer’s time. Failing to adhere to the responsibilities outlined in the *Volunteer Essentials Resource Guide* may result in termination as a volunteer with Girl Scouts of Eastern WA & Northern ID and/or possible legal prosecution.

## Male Volunteers

These policies and procedures are designed for the protection of the adult male volunteers as well as the girls. Girl Scouts of Eastern WA & Northern ID recognizes and supports the



essential role men play in the lives of girls. Men are encouraged to participate as co-leaders and/or as support to the troop at program events.

- Males serving in the role of troop co-leader must have an unrelated female co-leader. If a husband and wife are serving as leaders, there must be a third, unrelated female co-leader as well.
- On overnights, males are not allowed to sleep in the same space with female members.
- A male volunteer should never be alone with an unrelated girl.

Males may participate in overnights only if separate sleeping quarters and bathrooms are provided. If a male is sleeping in an area totally removed from the group, the adult-to-girl ratio will need to be adjusted. Any requests for exceptions to this policy must be submitted the Badgerland CEO or designee.

## Adult Volunteer Responsibilities

Girl Scout volunteers agree to:

- If position requires it, register as a member of Girl Scouts and comply with membership requirements
- Provide updated contact information to GSEWNI
- Participate in GSUSA and Council trainings, position-related courses and learning opportunities
- Leaders attend council-wide and local membership area leader meetings for ongoing support
- Devote sufficient time and energy to fulfill the volunteer position requirements
- Support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and the National Program Portfolio
- Remain informed about and comply with current policies, procedures and guidelines of GSEWNI and Girl Scouts of the USA
- Affirm that Girl Scouts welcomes members of diverse demographics (race, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, veterans etc.)
- Handle all Girl Scout funds appropriately and understand that the misuse of Girl Scout funds is a serious offense and will be treated as such, including but not limited to criminal prosecution and/or termination as a volunteer
- A background check, which is required and must be redone every two years
- Immediately inform GSEWNI of any legal or criminal actions brought against him or her
- Be a positive role model in the Girl Scout community

## Volunteer Positions

Position Name	Description	Background Check & Registration Requirements
Troop Leader	Troop Leader work directly with girls; may handle finances and/or product sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Background Check</li> <li>✓ Registered member</li> </ul>
Fall Product Sale Manager	Manage a troop's fall product sale. Ideal for a volunteer who enjoys working with numbers and spreadsheets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Background Check</li> <li>✓ Registered member</li> </ul>
Troop Cookie Manager	Manage a troop's cookie sale. Ideal for a volunteer who has excellent communication skills and enjoys managing schedules, inventory etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Background Check</li> <li>✓ Registered member</li> </ul>
Troop Committee	<p>The Troop Committee encompasses many different roles. Some of those could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Troop Treasurer               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Maintain accurate troop financial records. Open and maintain the troop's bank account. Provide the troop and GSEWNI with financial reports as requested</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Troop Chaperone and Driver               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Assist with driving to events and helping troop co-leaders during off-site Girl Scout outings</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Background Check</li> <li>✓ Registered member</li> </ul>
Program Helpers	Help run a Girl Scout program; time commitments can be as little as 4 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Background Check</li> <li>✓ Registration Requirements vary based on role and involvement</li> </ul>
Service Unit Leadership Team Members (SULT) / Adult Facilitator	SULT (Service Unit Leadership Team) members or adult facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Background Check</li> <li>✓ Registered member</li> </ul>

# Girl Scouts' Organizational Structure

Girl Scouts is the world's largest organization of and for girls, currently encompassing 2.3 million girl members and nearly one million volunteers! Three core structures support all these members: the national headquarters, your council, and your support team.

## National Organization and Worldwide Sisterhood

The national office of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), located in New York City, employs roughly 300 employees. GSUSA is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). (Visit [www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) where you'll find a wealth of resources for both girls and volunteers.)

Global Girl Scouting ensures that girls have increased awareness about the world, cross-cultural learning opportunities, and education on relevant global issues that may inspire them to take action to make the world a better place. Visit [Global Girl Scouting online](#) for additional information.

Since 1925, USA Girl Scouts Overseas (USAGSO), a division of Global Girl Scouting, has helped ease the transition for American families relocating overseas by offering the familiar traditions and exciting opportunities of Girl Scouting to girls abroad. USAGSO now serves thousands of American girls living overseas, as well as girls attending American or international schools. Through Global Girl Scouting, members participate in World Thinking Day on February 22, visit the four WAGGGS world centers (see the "For Travel Volunteers" appendix), participate in international travel, promote global friendship and understanding by supporting the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, and take action on global issues.

## GSEWNI Council

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

Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington and Northern Idaho serves more than 4,000 girls and 1,900 adult volunteers. The council region encompasses 67,000 miles that includes 20 counties in central and eastern Washington and 10 counties in northern Idaho.

In an atmosphere of fun and friendship, Girl Scouting promotes discovery, encourages leadership and drives girls to take action in their own lives and for the benefit of their communities.

## Service Unit Structure

GSEWNI is made up of 28 Service Units (SU) that help with the administration of Girl Scouts within the council. Each SU has a team of staff supporting volunteers. Recruitment Staff are out in the community getting the word out about Girl Scouts and generating excitement about everything Girl Scouts has to offer girls and adults. Internal Recruitment staff work behind the scenes connecting girls with troops and troops with co-leaders and other support. Troop Support/Retention Specialists provide ongoing support to volunteers once troops have been established. And work with the SU Leadership Teams or SULT's for the specific membership areas they are assigned to. SULT's organize local leader meetings for each SU. These meetings are typically held monthly and are used to distribute information, conduct trainings, provide leader support and plan Girl Scout activities in each area.

## Service Unit Leadership Team

Your local Service Unit Leadership Team (SULT) is a geographically-based team of volunteers who can provide you with assistance and support. This support team is the one you can look to as your experts in all things Girl Scouting. If you have questions about the Girl Scout program, resources in the National Program Portfolio (leadership Journeys and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*), working with girls, planning events, or selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products you can go to this team of volunteers for the answers and the ongoing support you need. Your Troop Support Specialist will give you contact information for volunteers in your area who are part of the SULT.

### **Tip!**

#### **What positions are on the SULT?**

Most Membership Areas have at least one volunteer in the following positions:

- SU Manager
- Community Events Coordinator
- Treasurer
- Recruitment Coordinator
- Product Sales Manager
- Troop Leader Mentor

Contact customer care to learn more about these positions and to find out who is on the SULT in your area.

# Getting Started with the National Leadership Program through Journeys

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

At the core of the GSLE is **The National Program Portfolio** which includes leadership Journeys at every level of Girl Scouts and one Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting at every level of Girl Scouts. Regular troop meetings will be guided by Girl Scout traditions and working on activities found in the National Program Portfolio pieces. The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting has replaced the traditional Girl Scout handbook and includes so much more. At the Daisy level the instructions for completing Daisy petals are in the Girl's guide. Starting at the Brownie level and continuing all the way through Ambassadors, instructions for completing badges and awards at that level are in the Guide.

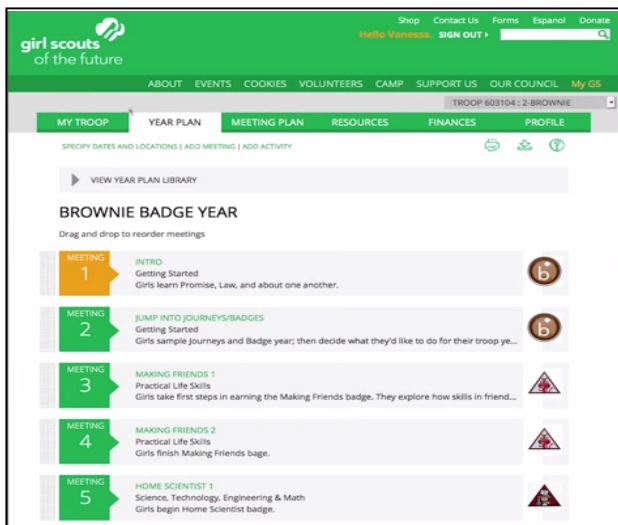


## One Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting for every level:

These binders are divided into three sections: handbook, badges and awards and My Girl Scouts. The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting complements the Girl Scout Journeys by helping girls build skills through petal and badge work to become successful and gain the confidence to do amazing things!

## Journeys for every level:

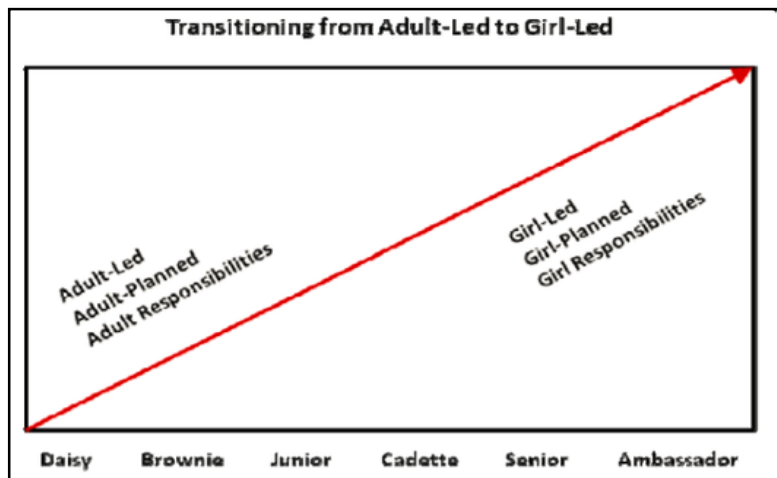
Journeys help girls understand what it means to be a leader who makes a difference in the world through unique leadership and advocacy challenge activities. In a Girl Scout journey, awards link the experiences, discussions, and ideas that girls explore together. As girls progress through the levels from Daisy to Ambassador, their awards signify attaining new and higher levels of knowledge and skills, and ultimately a deeper understanding of what it means to be a leader who makes a difference in the world.



**Volunteer ToolKit:** Troop co-leaders will have access to an online tool called the Volunteer ToolKit (VTK). VTK is a digital resource which troop co-leaders will be able to access across devices— including smart phones, tablets or computers. For troop co-leaders and key volunteers the toolkit will streamline on-boarding and simplify troop management, meeting planning, and program experiences. Phase One of Volunteer Toolkit has badge requirements at Daisy, Brownie and Junior level. New features are planned and will be added to VTK including resources for troops with older Girl Scouts.

# Planning in a Girl Led Environment

The girl led concept is a very important facet of the Girl Scout program. Troop Co-leaders and adult volunteers should always be working toward the larger goal of turning over leadership to the girls. This is a progression and a learning process for everyone. Girl led will look very different with a group of Kindergarten Daisies than it will look with a group of Girl Scout Seniors or even Brownies. For Daisies girl-led might mean giving the girls a choice between two options you have planned as the leader whereas a group of Girl Scout Seniors might plan all their Girl Scout activities from start to finish. The important part is that, as a troop co-leader or an adult volunteer, you always have girl-led as a goal and are looking for age-appropriate opportunities with every activity for girls to lead.



As girls grow and mature and move through the Girl Scout levels, Girl Scout activities will move away from adult-led and adult-planned to girl-led and girl-planned.

## Progression in Girl Scouts

Progression is the key to the way Girl Scouts learn about the world around them. In practice, progression means using common sense in preparing for an experience - one step at a time. Girls have challenging but developmentally appropriate experiences that prepare them for the next step. A number of safeguards are built into the Girl Scout program to ensure girl readiness.

The chart at the right shows a typical outdoor/travel experience progression for Girl Scouts.

Progression is also important for adults. Whether an adult is learning to take a group on a hike, stay overnight at a council property or prepare a meal over an outdoor stove, some basic safety considerations require that she/he be trained.

### Girl Scout Travel Progression

Short trips to local points of interest

(Daisies and up)

Full Day Trips (Brownies and up)

Overnight and two-night trips\* (Brownies and up)

Extended overnights (Up to 3-4 nights)  
(Juniors and up)

National Trips (Cadettes and up)

International Trips (Cadettes and up)

\*Note: A Daisy troop may participate in an occasional one-night camping experience, if ready.

# GSEWNI Year at a Glance

There are so many exciting events during the Girl Scouting year, here's a glance at some highlights. Be sure to check the GSEWNI E-Newsletter for up-to-date information.

## **August:**

- On-Time Registration
- Attend Camp Four Echoes Resident Camp or Summer Day Camp

## **September:**

- Update your Opportunity Catalog
- Troop Committee Member Selection
- Recruitment/Parent Meeting
- VTK Year Plan
- Fall Product Sales Training

## **October and November:**

- Girl Scout membership year officially begins (membership years run Oct. 1-Sept. 30)
- Fall Product Sale
- October 31: Founder's Day (Juliette Gordon Low's birthday)
- SU Delegate Vote
- Investiture/Rededication

## **December:**

- Attend GS Day Camp (Spokane Program Center)

## **January:**

- Cookie Program trainings for adult volunteers
- Super fun Cookie Rally events for girls

## **February:**

- Booth Sale Sign Up and Cookie Pre-Sale
- Feb. 22: World Thinking Day: a great opportunity to celebrate with the worldwide Girl Scout community. More information about World Thinking Day at [girlscouts.org](http://girlscouts.org)

## **March:**

- Cookie Booth Sales
- March 12: Girl Scout's Birthday
- Girl Scout Week

## **April:**

- April 22: Volunteer Appreciation Day
- Annual Meeting
- Spring Break Day Camp (Spokane Program Center)

## **May:**

- Bridging Ceremonies: Are your Girl Scouts moving to the next level? See tips on planning ceremonies in the *Volunteer Essentials Resource Guide*.
- Early Bird Registration for the new Girl Scout Year. The year isn't over yet, but now is the time to get your Girl Scouts re-registered for the next year so they're ready to go in the fall.

## **June-August:**

- Camp Season! How about planning a troop camp weekend. Or attend day camp all together. Lots of troops meet over the summer, you can too!

# Hold a Troop Planning Meeting

A Troop Planning Meeting is a meeting for all the parents and volunteers associated with a troop intended to address big picture troop issues for a certain period of time such as scheduling, product sales etc.

You should have at least three Troop Planning Meetings per year even if you are an established, continuing troop. Generally you should have a Troop Planning Meeting in the fall before your first official troop meeting, again in winter/spring to plan for the cookie sale, again in late spring/early summer to assess cookie sale, plan an end of year ceremony and discuss the future of the troop.

If parents and adults can meet without the distraction of the girls that is ideal but this cannot always happen. If girls are attending the troop planning meeting, one technique is to engage an older Girl Scout or other adult volunteer to lead a simple activity with the girls in a separate space. Co-leaders can also switch off: one co-leader works with the adults and one works with the girls and then they switch halfway through meeting.

Important topics to cover at your Troop Planning Meeting:

1. **Introductions:** Co-leaders should introduce themselves and any other troop volunteers. Parents can introduce themselves by answering a few basic questions like: names, name of girl, what their hopes are for their daughter's Girl Scout year.
2. **REGISTRATION:** The troop planning meeting is a great time to make sure all the girls in your troop are registered with GSUSA. If possible, provide a device (laptop, tablet etc.) where adults can register their daughters on the spot if they haven't already. If parents feel confused about how to register refer them to GSEWNI Customer Care Team: 509.747.8091.
3. **Health Histories:** The troop planning meeting is a great place for parents to fill out each girl's pink health history form. If you need health history forms you can print them off of the "Forms" section of gsewni.org. If you are a continuing troop you should have parents review, make any changes and initial their daughter's health history forms once a year.
4. **Potential Schedule:** Present parents with the broad sketch of your Girl Scout year. Propose a schedule of when, where and how often you plan to meet and any goals or activities you have in mind for the year.
5. **How Will You Keep in Touch:** Discuss your plans for keeping in touch between meetings. Volunteer ToolKit, available to all co-leaders on gsewni.org, has some options for staying in touch. Other ideas: a private Facebook page or Shutterfly account, emails, text messages, phone trees, printed newsletters etc.
6. **Program Pieces and Uniforms:** Discuss what each girl needs for the year and where to purchase it. Alert parents to the Starter Kit option provided by GSEWNI store.
7. Make sure families know about the **Financial Aid Application available through GSEWNI**. Parents can fill out a financial aid form on gsewni.org. If parents need help with this refer then to GSEWNI Customer Care Team: 509.747.8091.
8. Inform the adults that a **parent/guardian permission form** is needed for any activity outside normal meeting times. GSEWNI has a standard permission form on the website



or you can create your own form. [http://www.gsewni.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsewni/documents/Troop%20and%20Service%20Unit/Parent\\_Permission\\_Form.pdf](http://www.gsewni.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsewni/documents/Troop%20and%20Service%20Unit/Parent_Permission_Form.pdf)

9. **Product Sales:** Inform parents when Girl Scout cookies (and other products) will go on sale and how participation in product sales teaches life skills and helps fund group activities throughout the year and how parents/guardians can support their Girl Scout throughout the sale.
10. **Troop Volunteers:** Tell adults you are looking for adult volunteers to help out with the troop. There are several official troop roles that parent/guardian volunteers can take: troop chaperone/driver, troop cookie coordinator, fall product sale coordinator and treasurer. Recruit for these roles with special emphasis on the troop cookie manager (you can have more than one volunteer in each role too). If adults step up into these roles, they will need to be background checked and registered with GSUSA. If possible, provide a device (laptop, tablet etc.) where adults can register themselves on the spot if they haven't already. If adults feel confused about how to register and get themselves in the correct volunteer role, refer them to GSEWNI Customer Care Team: 509.747.8091.

## Holding Troop Meetings

The sample sessions in the Leadership Journey adult guides and the badge and petal packets in the Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting and the resources available to co-leaders on Volunteer ToolKit will give co-leaders ideas about how to plan and hold successful troop meetings that allow girls to Discover, Connect, and Take Action as they have fun with a purpose. Many volunteers find it helpful to think of meetings having six parts, as outlined below, but feel free to structure the meeting in a way that makes sense to co-leaders, adult volunteers and the girls.

Co-leaders and other adult volunteers at troop meetings should communicate who is leading each part of the meeting, and what supplies are needed. It’s also a good idea for co-leaders to have a game or two in their back pockets when Girl Scouts need to let some energy loose. Simon Says and Freeze Dance are often favorites among Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies!

In general, troop meetings last between 60-90 minutes.

<p><b>As girls arrive</b> <b>5-10 Minutes</b></p>	<p>Start-up activities are planned so that when girls arrive at the meeting they have something to do until the meeting begins. For younger girls, it could be coloring pages, or snack if you meet right after school; teen girls might jot down a journal entry or just enjoy a little time to talk.</p>
<p><b>Opening</b> <b>5-10 Minutes</b></p>	<p>The opening focuses the meeting. Each troop decides how to open their own meeting—all should begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and then add a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other ceremony designed by the girls. Ceremonies, even when brief or humorous, make Girl Scout time special.</p> <p><b>Tip!</b> Check out YouTube for more information and visual examples of Girl Scouts performing Girl Scout ceremonies or songs. Simply search for “girl scout ceremonies” or “girl scout songs.”</p>
<p><b>Business</b> <b>5-10 Minutes</b></p>	<p>Troop business may include taking attendance, collecting dues, making announcements, and planning an upcoming event or trip or deciding on the kapers (jobs) for each girl that day. This is a good time for girls to take turns leading, especially as they grow up!</p> <p><b>Tip!</b> Google “kaper charts for Girl Scouts” and you’ll find lots of great ideas online!</p>
<p><b>Activities</b> <b>30-40 + Minutes</b></p>	<p>Activities will depend on what the girls want to do in their troop and how they want to spend their collective time. Outdoor time is important, so encourage the girls to do an activity in a park or forest. If girls are interested in animals, encourage the girls to plan a visit to a zoo or animal shelter. As you engage in one of the National Leadership Journeys, review the “Sample Sessions at a Glance” in the adult guide (now also available on Volunteer ToolKit for Daisy, Brownie and Junior co-leaders) for Journey activity ideas. You’ll also find the Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting a great way to guide your activities depending on the badges the girls are most interested in earning.</p>

	<p>If your troop chooses to include snacks, guide them to consider the health of a potential snack, as well as possible food allergies. Enlist the help of parents or guardians by asking them to sign up and bring a snack.</p> <p><b>Tip!</b> Be sure to get prior permission from your Girl Scout families if you're doing an activity outside of your regular troop meeting time and location.</p>
<p><b>Clean-up</b> <b>10 Minutes</b></p>	<p>Clean-up is a great habit for girls to get their meeting space back to the way it was when they arrived—maybe even cleaner! Kaper charts should include any clean-up jobs that are needed.</p> <p><b>Tip!</b> To learn more about the age level you're working with, take a look in the <i>Volunteer Essentials Resource Guide</i> at the chapter Engaging Girls at All Grade Levels. You might be surprised at what Juniors are ready for, or what Daisies aren't ready to do on their own yet.</p>
<p><b>Closing</b> <b>5-10 Minutes</b></p>	<p>The closing lets the girls know that the troop meeting is ending. Many girls close with the friendship circle, in which each girl stands in a circle, puts her right arm over her left, and holds the hand of the girl standing next to her. The friendship squeeze is started by one girl, and then passed around the circle until it comes back to the girl who started it. When the squeeze is finished, girls twist clockwise out of the circle lifting their arms and turning around and out of the circle.</p> <p><b>Tip!</b> Many troops will also sing a song as part of their closing. Make New Friends is always a favorite. YouTube and <a href="http://songsforscouts.com">songsforscouts.com</a> are great resources for learning Girl Scout songs.</p>

Co-leaders and other adult volunteers help each troop member do her part to ensure the meeting and activities are enriching and fun. Based on their grade levels and abilities, girls may decide and plan opening and closing activities, bring and prepare treats, teach songs or games, and clean up. As girls grow, they can show and teach younger members about Girl Scouting. As long as you pay attention to grade level and maturity, what girls can do is endless!

Here are some additional online resources to use in your planning:

[www.gsewni.org](http://www.gsewni.org) - GSEWNI Council information and resources

[www.girlscouts.org](http://www.girlscouts.org) - GSUSA National site

[www.girlscoutcookies.org](http://www.girlscoutcookies.org) - Where to find cookies in your area

[www.juliettegordonlowbirthplace.org](http://www.juliettegordonlowbirthplace.org) - Information on Juliette Gordon Low, the founder of Girl Scouts, and her birthplace in Savannah, Georgia

[www.songsforscouts.com](http://www.songsforscouts.com) - Interactive site to see lyrics and hear songs

[www.worldthinkingday.org](http://www.worldthinkingday.org) - Resources and ideas for the yearly celebration in February

[www.gsswaps.net](http://www.gsswaps.net) - Photos and information from Girl Scouts all over the world on making and sharing SWAPS (**S**pecial **W**hatchamacallits **A**ffectionately **P**inned **S**omewhere)

# Following the Girl Scouts Safety Guidelines

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

1. **Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, available at [gsewni.org](http://gsewni.org). Read the checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls before engaging in activities with girls.
2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** Your group must have at least two unrelated, background checked and registered adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18) and must be screened by GSEWNI before volunteering. One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
3. **Get parent/guardian permission.** When an activity takes place that is outside the normal time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the details of the activity and obtain permission for girls to participate.
4. **Report abuse.** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with girl members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of girls is also forbidden. Follow GSEWNI Council guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting.
5. **Be prepared for emergencies.** Work with girls and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, girl health histories, and contact information for girls' families.
6. **Travel safely.** When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be a registered, background checked adult volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle. Insist that everyone is in a legal seat and wears her seat belt at all times, and adhere to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
7. **Ensure safe overnight outings.** Prepare girls to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. Avoid having men sleep in the same space as girls and women. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in program areas. When parents are staffing events, daughters should remain in quarters with other girls rather than in staff areas.
8. **Role-model the right behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by Badgerland Council for group marksmanship activities.
9. **Create an emotionally safe space.** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where girls are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of girls by creating a team agreement and coaching girls to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
10. **Ensure that no girl is treated differently.** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
11. **Promote online safety.** Instruct girls never to put their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers. Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies and only with the approval and accompaniment of a parent or designated adult. On group websites, publish girls' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.
12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** Girl Scout cookies and other council-sponsored product sales are an integral part of the program. During Girl Scout product sales, you are responsible for the safety of girls, money, and products.

# Using Safety Activity Checkpoints



When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. You can find these on [www.gsewni.org](http://www.gsewni.org) under “Volunteer > Training & Support > Safety Resources.”

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

In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can email or print them for co-volunteers, parents/guardians, and the girls themselves. The checkpoints are formatted as checklists, so that you, your co-volunteers, and the girls can check off each step that has been accomplished.

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

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

## Understanding Which Activities Are Not Allowed

In an exciting, learning-by-doing environment like Girl Scouting, it’s only natural that girls will sometimes want to take part in activities not covered in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). When activities involve unpredictable safety variables, they are not approved as Girl Scout program activities. These include but are not limited to:

- Hot air ballooning
- Bungee jumping
- Flying in small private planes, helicopters, or blimps
- Hang gliding
- Knife throwing
- Tomahawk throwing
- Stunt skiing
- Motor biking
- Parachuting
- Riding all-terrain vehicles
- Riding motorized personal watercraft like jet-skis
- Outdoor trampolining
- Hunting

- Simulated skydiving and zero-gravity rooms (see note below on indoor skydiving)
- Parasailing
- Zorbing

Marksmanship activities require council permission, and volunteers need to transport weapons separately from girls. The minimum age for girls using firearms in highly supervised activities is 12 years of age. If your council expressly approves, indoor skydiving, because it is contained, low-impact, and adjustable to size and skill-level of participants, is the only freefall activity not prohibited by Girl Scouts. Indoor skydiving is not recommended for Girl Scout Daisies or Brownies. In addition, there are some activities in which girls and volunteers may not engage when representing Girl Scouts. These include:

- Endorsement of commercial products or services
- Solicitation of financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting
- Participation in political campaigns or legislative activities, unless the legislative activity has been council-approved

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

# Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

Girl Scouts’ adult-to-girl ratios show the **minimum** number of background checked and registered adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls.

Please note, the ratios are different for troop/group meetings and events/travel.

	Troop/Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	<i>Two</i> unrelated, background checked, registered adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus <i>one</i> additional background checked, registered adult for each additional number of this many girls:	<i>Two</i> unrelated, background checked, registered adults (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus <i>one</i> additional background checked, registered adult for each additional number of this many girls:
<b>Girl Scout Daisies (K–grade 1)</b>	12	6	6	4
<b>Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2–3)</b>	20	8	12	6
<b>Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4–5)</b>	25	10	16	8
<b>Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6–8)</b>	25	12	20	10
<b>Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9–10)</b>	30	15	24	12
<b>Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11–12)</b>	30	15	24	12

Here are some examples: If you’re meeting with 17 Daisies, you’ll need three background checked and registered adults, at least two of whom are unrelated (in other words, not your sister, spouse, parent, or child), and at least one of whom is female. (If you follow the chart: For a troop/group meeting, you need two adults for

12 Daisies and one more adult for up to six more girls. You have 17 girls, so you need three adults.) If, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated background checked and registered adults, at least one of whom is female.

**Helpful Notes:**

- Additional Adults, after the adult-to-girl ratio has been met, who are attending meetings\events and are responsible for other girls beside their daughter, need to be background checked and registered members.
- If you are attending an event as a group with a mix of Girl Scout levels, we recommend that you meet the adult-to-girl safety ratio requirements for the youngest members of your group. So if you were going in a group with Daisies and Cadettes, meet the safety ratio requirements for the Daisy level not the Cadette level.
- When a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, background checked and registered adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the adult-to-girl safety ratios must be met. Care should be taken so that a single car is not separated from the group for an extended length of time. So troop co-leaders and adult volunteers can each drive a separate car with girls (taking care that all the vehicles make a reasonable attempt to remain together during the trip) as long as when the troop arrives at the event and reassembles the adult-to-girl ratios are met.
- A male volunteer cannot drive a car alone with girls unless accompanied by an unrelated, background checked and registered female volunteer.



# Glossary of Terms

**There are words or phrases specific to the world of Girl Scouts. Here are some of the most common terms used in Girl Scouts today.**

**Badge** - Embroidered recognition patches for Girl Scouts at all levels to indicate increased knowledge and skill in a particular subject. Official badges earned through *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* and the Journeys are displayed on the front of the uniform.

**Badge Activity Sets** - There are 3 sets of additional badge requirements available for Brownie through Senior Girl Scouts, and can be inserted into *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. Badges earned through the Badge Activity Sets are displayed on the front of the uniform.

**Bridging** - The move from one program level of Girl Scouting to the next (e.g. from Girl Scout Junior to Girl Scout Cadette).

**Buddy System** - A safety practice in which girls are paired to help and keep track of each other.

**Court of Awards** - A ceremony that can be held any time during the year at which badges, recognitions and awards are presented.

**Day Camp** - Camping by the day; may be a single day program or a multiple day program.

**Destinations** - Girl Scout travel opportunities that take girls outside their own troop or council.

**Dunk Bag** - A mesh cloth bag with a drawstring, used to sterilize and hang dry eating utensils when washing dishes.

**Fly-Up** - The ceremony in which a Girl Scout Brownie "graduates" to Girl Scout Junior.

**Founder's Day** - Juliette Low's birthday, October 31.

**Friendship Circle** - A symbolic gesture in which Girl Scouts form a circle by clasping each other's hands and pass around a silent, gentle squeeze. It is often used at a closing ceremony.

**Girl Guides** - The original name for Girl Scouts, a term still used in many countries; name originated in England.

**Girl Scout Birthday** - March 12 marks the first meeting of Girl Scouts in Savannah, Georgia, in 1912.

**Girl Scout Handshake** - A formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts by shaking left hands while giving the Girl Scout Sign with the right.

**Girl Scout Leader's Day** - April 22, a special day to honor Girl Scout leaders and volunteers.

**Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)** - Girl Scouts centers around three keys to leadership. Girls **Discover** themselves and their values, **Connect** with others and **Take Action** to make the world a better place. These three keys make up the GSLE.

**Girl Scout Sign** - The official Girl Scout sign to be used as the Girl Scout Promise is being recited and may be used as the Girl Scout Law is recited (optional). It is also used during Girl Scout handshake. The right hand is raised shoulder high with the three middle fingers extended and the thumb crossing over the palm to hold down the little finger.

**Girl Scouts' Own** - A quiet inspirational ceremony that has a theme and is planned by Girl Scouts and their leaders.

**Girl Scout Week** - An annual celebration during the week of March 12th, the Girl Scout birthday.

**Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting** – Along with the Journeys, this is part of the National Program Portfolio and is the heart of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. Inside each guide are badge requirements, stories and activities for all levels of Girl Scouts.

**GSUSA** - Girl Scouts of the United States of America; our national organization.

**Investiture** - A special ceremony in which a new member makes her Girl Scout Promise and receives her membership pin.

**Journey** – Part of the National Program Portfolio. There are at least three Journey choices for every level of Girl Scouting. Journeys help girls understand what it means to be a leader who makes a difference in the world through unique leadership and advocacy challenge activities.

**Juliette Gordon Low** - (nicknamed Daisy) - Founder of Girl Scouting in the United States, she formed the first troop that met in Savannah, Georgia on March 12, 1912.

**Kaper Chart** - A chart that shows the delegation of tasks and rotation of responsibility day-by-day and/or meal-by-meal.

**Membership Area** - A geographic subdivision within Badgerland Council.

**Membership Area Leadership Team (MALT)** - A group of adult volunteers responsible for organizing and delivering service to Girl Scouts in a geographic area.

**Motto** - "Be Prepared."

**National Program Portfolio** - This is the leadership experience for Girl Scouts using the Journey books and *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting* together.

**Participation (fun) patches** - Optional patches worn on the back of a uniform. These patches are for activities or outings that are not part of earning an official badge through the Journeys or *The Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. Examples of these activities are bowling, pumpkin patches or hay rides.

**Petal(s)** - Petal-shaped embroidered recognition patches for Girl Scout Daisies to indicate increased knowledge and understanding of the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Suggested activities to earn the petals can be found in *The Daisy Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*.

**Program Aide** - Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors who have been trained to assist younger Girl Scout groups with songs, games, crafts, ceremonies or outdoor skills.

**Quiet Sign** - The Girl Scout signal for silence in a group situation. The person in charge raises her/his right hand and the Girl Scouts present fall silent and raise their right hands.

**Rededication** - A formal ceremony when girls or adults, previously invested, can renew her Girl Scout Promise.

**Resident Camp** - A sustained camping experience with an overnight sleeping experience.

**Safety Activity Checkpoints** – GSUSA's safety program standards and guidelines found on [www.gsbadgerland.org](http://www.gsbadgerland.org).

**Sit Upon** - A "cushion" often made by Girl Scouts to use when the ground is damp or to keep their clothes clean.

**Slogan** - "Do a good turn daily."

**SWAPS** - **S**pecial **W**hatchamacallit **A**ffectionately **P**inned **S**omewhere, a keepsake exchanged as a way for Girl Scouts to meet each other and promote friendship.

**Trefoil** - The international symbol of Girl Scouting; the three leaves of the Trefoil represent the three parts of the Promise.

**World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS)** - An international educational association for girls with a membership of eight million.

**World Thinking Day** - Celebrated by Girl Guides and Girl Scouts throughout the world, February 22 is the birthday of Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Baden-Powell. This is the day for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides to think about their sisters around the world, through special projects, international programs, activities or pen pal projects.

**World Trefoil Pin** - A pin worn by all Girl Scouts and Girl Guides.

**World Centers** - Four program activity centers owned by WAGGGS. The centers are located in Mexico (Our Cabana), England (Pax Lodge), India (Sangam) and Switzerland (Our Chalet).

# Managing Troop Finances: Finance Guide

This Finance Guide walks you through all aspects of a Girl Scout troop's finances.

As you move through the Girl Scout year and have questions regarding Girl Scout finances, refer to the *Volunteer Essentials Resource Guide*, located on the GSEWNI website. Another great resource is the staff at GSEWNI – we're here to support you and your troop!

Girl Scout troops are financed by monies earned through council-sponsored product sales (the Girl Scout Cookie Program in the spring and the nut and magazine sale in the fall), through council-approved money earning activities, and any dues your troop may charge.

Troops should budget for their activities based on the amount raised through council-sponsored product sales. IF additional troop money earning is needed for a Take Action project or travel opportunity, troops must comply with GSEWNI's guidelines as well as submit a completed Money Earning Application form that is available on our website.

Community members, parents and sponsors can help ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Parents, community organizations, businesses, religious organizations and individuals may be donors or sponsor, and may provide group meeting places, monetary donations, volunteer their time, offer in-kind donations, provide activity materials or loan equipment.

For information on working with a sponsor or processing a donation, contact GSEWNI and a staff member can give you guidance on any council policies or practices that must be followed.

It is important to remember that all volunteers listed on troop bank accounts are ultimately responsible for troop finances. Misuse of Girl Scout funds is a serious offense and will be treated as such, including but not limited to termination as a Girl Scout volunteer and criminal prosecution.

## Opening a Troop Bank Account

1. Choose two adults to have debit cards for the troop account. These adults must be registered Girl Scouts, unrelated to each other and reside in separate households, with current Criminal Background Checks on file with GSEWNI. They also should have internet access.
2. Complete the [Bank Request and Financial Agreement Form](#)
3. Once all required forms are submitted and approved, we will open your account and order the debit cards. Debit cards will be mailed directly to you from the financial institution.
4. You will receive an email from the Troop Banking Coordinator with instructions for your account and debit card.
5. When you receive the debit cards in the mail you can activate your debit card using the instructions from the email you received and your account is open!

## Banking Reminder & Tips:

- Girl Scout accounts are set up as corporate accounts. Your troop account is a sub account, which means you are a “user” but not a signer. Therefore you can only make deposits inside the bank, but must use online banking or your debit card for all other business.
- Bank statements will be available online. GSEWNI office does not receive paper statements.
- It is the debit card holder’s responsibility to make sure troop funds are spent appropriately.
- Keep all receipts. You may be requested to turn your receipts at any point within 2 years.
- Withdrawals from your troop account are only allowed when there is no other payment method available. For clarification contact [customercare@gsewni.org](mailto:customercare@gsewni.org).
- Please notify the [customercare@gsewni.org](mailto:customercare@gsewni.org) if your debit card is lost or stolen so we can cancel the card and have the bank issue a new one.
- If your Service Unit provides troop start up funds, request them from the Service Unit Treasurer.
- Be organized and keep good records of your troop finances from the beginning.

## Troop Banking Policies

### IV. FINANCE

Policy 5: All money raised or earned and other assets received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be authorized by GSEWNI or GSUSA and used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Such monies and other assets become the property of and are administered by GSEWNI or GSUSA. Such assets are not the property of an individual girl or adult, service unit, troop, group, or communities within the council. Any person who misuses council assets will be removed from their Girl Scout position(s) and is subject to prosecution.

Policy 6: All service units, troops, groups, and day camps shall safeguard all funds and make timely deposits of monies collected. Funds exceeding \$25.00 must be deposited in an account at a GSEWNI-approved financial institution. Accounts will be maintained in the name of “Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington & Northern Idaho – Service Unit/Group/Troop/Day Camp # \_\_\_\_\_” utilizing the council tax identification number. All authorized users of each bank account(s) must be registered Girl Scouts, unrelated and reside in separate households. All Girl Scout funds are to be maintained in a fiscally responsible manner and practice.

Policy 7: Should a troop/group/service unit/day camp disband or fail to re-register, the balance of any funds will revert to the Girl Scouts of Eastern Washington & Northern Idaho and placed in the GSEWNI Opportunity Scholarship Fund.

Policy 8: GSEWNI is incorporated as a nonprofit 501 (c) 3 by the Internal Revenue Service; as such, a contribution may only be tax deductible when the primary beneficiary is GSEWNI, not an individual girl, adult, troop/group, or service unit. Funds contributed for specific troops/groups, service units, and day camps (t/g/su/dc) will be forwarded by GSEWNI to the identified t/g/su/dc. For a single cash donation to a t/g/su/dc that exceeds \$250, the excess above \$250 shall be contributed to the GSEWNI Opportunity Scholarship Fund if no prior council approved plan exists for those funds.

## Troop Banking Standards

### Standard(s) - Policy 6

Each service unit, troop, group, and day camp shall set a budget annually. Budgets are to be based on realistic needs and estimated income. Money-earning projects may not exceed the amount of money needed to support group activities. Service units, troops, groups and day camps must submit proposed plans and budgets for review and approval to GSEWNI prior to engaging in money-earning activities to support major projects.

A Bank Account must have a minimum of 2 unrelated, current Girl Scout members, with current approved background checks as debit card holders on the account.

ATM withdrawals are not allowed without documentation (receipt) of what the money is being spent for. ATM withdrawals require submission of this documentation to the council office at the time of the annual reporting.

A Bank Account overdrawn two (2) times in a three (3) month period will be frozen. To remove the freeze on the account, the balance must be brought up to positive and a new account holder must be in place. The offending account holder will be removed from account management and the debit card for that person closed.

If a troop chooses to donate troop funds to another nonprofit, the troop will provide a copy of the agency's 501(c)(3) documentation from the Internal Revenue Service to Council. Donations over \$250.00 are not allowed.

# Budgeting

Girls in troops are encouraged to participate in council-sponsored product sales to earn troop money to pay for membership dues, uniforms, badges, supplies, activities, service projects, etc. Troop co-leaders should work with the girls to create a budget for troop activities that ensures the cost to all families is reasonable. Girl Scouts of GSEWNI offers financial assistance to girls for the following: membership dues, uniform pieces, books, programs and camp assistance (camperships). Financial assistance is generally available for new members. As girls participate in Girl Scouts, they have the opportunity to fund their future Girl Scout experience by participating in the fall product sale and the cookie sale. The funds troops earn can pay for memberships, uniforms and programs for the following year.

Budgeting is a great way to facilitate girl-led financial planning. It's great for girls to have opportunities like the product sales to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals as part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with the opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on spending and earning money. Take Action projects, for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money.

If you're not sure where to start, check out the *Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting*. The financial literacy badges have age-appropriate activities for learning about money and the cookie business badges also involve finances and goal setting around the cookie sale. Each level has these badges and they can be a great starting point for your troop planning.

## Basic Budgeting Steps

- Brainstorm what the troop wants to do for the year, keeping in mind that troop funds must cover all needed activities and events.
  - a. What does the troop want to do?
  - b. What will cost money?
- Discuss what things the troop will need money for.
  - a. Membership Renewal
  - b. Pins, patches and recognitions
  - c. Take Action projects
  - d. Activities
  - e. Field trips
  - f. Ceremonies
- Estimate costs and compute a grand total.
- Discuss low-cost activities and ways to make the total smaller.
  - a. What can the troop do that will not cost money?
  - b. What can the troop do to save money or cut costs?



- c. Where will the money come from?
  - d. Where will it be spent?
  - e. Will the troop have any funds carried over from last year?
- Set goals for council-sponsored product sales.
  - a. What did we sell last year?
  - b. What can we sell this year?
- Decide if the troop will collect dues to help supplement product sales profits, and if so, how much they will be and how often they will be collected.
- Reassess to see if your planned product sales and dues will cover the budget for the year.
  - a. Is there a big trip planned that will need a couple of years to save towards?
  - b. Does the troop need to do additional fundraising?

## Troop Dues

Troop dues are for troop program activities and supplies. The amount of dues and frequency of payment should be determined by the girls, their families and the troop volunteers, and should reflect the troop's plans for the year, as well as the families' ability to pay. Consideration should be given to: product sales earnings, parents' financial situations and what activities the girls want to do. Younger girl dues average \$.25-\$.50 per meeting and older girl dues may average \$1.50-\$2.00 per month. The troop and/or parents should decide whether these dues are collected at each meeting or if they will be paid in lump sums during the year. Troop dues are generally a first-year cost for new troops to establish a financial base for the troop. After the troop participates in the council sponsored product sales, dues are not usually necessary.

## Money Earning

Monies earned from the council-sponsored product sales and troop dues should be budgeted to cover the majority, if not all, troop activities' expenses. If additional funds are needed for a travel opportunity or Take Action project, troops have the opportunity to do additional money earning. Troops must comply with GSUSA policy and submit a money earning application for council approval. All money earning activities must be submitted to the council using the Money Earning Application, and approved, before taking place. Contact GSEWNI if you have questions about specific money earning ideas.

## Financial Aid

Girl Scouts is open to all girls and adults regardless of their ability to pay. To encourage participation, GSEWNI has budgeted money to help girls and adults who need financial assistance. Troops should budget for renewing membership dues, event registrations, uniforms and supplies. Troop co-leaders should work with girls to create a budget for

troop activities that ensures the financial burden on families is not prohibitive, understanding all families' abilities to contribute financially will vary. Financial Aid can be requested for Membership Dues (Girl & Adult) Store Items (Tunic/Sash, Girl Journey Book, Adult Journey Leader Guide) Programs Council Sponsored Program Events and Council Provided Required Adult Training Sessions.

Financial Aid is approved on a case-by-case basis as our budget allows. Applying for assistance does not ensure approval.