VOLUNTEER ESSENTIALS 2018-19
People & Info to Know

Service unit manager

Troop support specialist

Others:

Important notes to remember:

Please Note:
We would like to thank everyone who has shared their feedback with Girl Scouts of the USA and Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana through recent surveys. Your suggestions are helping us to transition this resource into a more helpful tool, especially for new troop leaders.

As of August 2018, content in this printed document is up to date. GSGCNWI continuously reviews programs, procedures and forms; content is subject to change. Please see the most up-to-date version of Volunteer Essentials at online/mobile version at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/vol-resources.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quick-Reference Guide</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connect with GCNWI</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways to Connect</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Invite Others to Join You</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Mission and Vision</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Membership: Access to Amazing Experiences</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understand Who We Are</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scouts of the USA: A Worldwide Sisterhood</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our Local Council: GCNWI</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn About Our Program</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why We Advocate Girl-Led Process</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare for Your Girl Scout Year</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage Families to Get Involved</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troop Meetings</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensure that Girls Stay Safe</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Guidelines</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety Activity Checkpoints</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have the Required Girl-to-Adult Ratios</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy Getting Started</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Reminders</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 1: Sharing Your Unique Gifts</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Your Role as a Volunteer</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Responsibilities</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your Volunteer Support Team</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer Training at a Glance</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing How Much You’re Appreciated</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 2: A National Experience</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What Girl Scouting Does for Girls</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun with Purpose</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The National Program Portfolio</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Leadership Journeys</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting and National Proficiency Badges</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Service Progression</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emblems and Patches</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scouting’s Highest Awards: Bronze, Silver and Gold</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhancing the Girl Experience at the Council Level</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Programming</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ways to Engage</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troop Resources</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Traditions and Celebrations</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Calendar</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time-Honored Ceremonies</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signs, Songs, Handshake and More!</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 3: Engaging All Girls</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arranging a Time and Place for Girl-Led Meetings</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Healthy Development in Girls</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating a Safe Space for Girls</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl-Adult Partnership</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Parents and Guardians</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter 4: Safety-Wise</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing Your Responsibilities</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities of the Volunteer: Girl Scout Safety Guidelines</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibilities of Girls</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need........................................................................56
Transporting Girls .........................................................................................................56
Checklist for Drivers .......................................................................................................57
Ensuring Product Program Safety ..................................................................................57
Prepare Early ....................................................................................................................57
Computer/Online Safety ..................................................................................................60
Preparing for Activities ...................................................................................................61
Health Histories (Including Examinations and Immunizations) ..................................62
Girl Scout Activity Insurance ..........................................................................................63
Providing Emergency Care ...............................................................................................64
First-Aid/CPR ....................................................................................................................64
You Witness or Suspect Abuse ........................................................................................66
Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances .............................................................................67
Establishing a Bank Account .............................................................................................67
Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program ................................................................70
Money-Earning Basics ....................................................................................................75
Additional Group Money-Earning Activities .....................................................................76
Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations ..................................................77
Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals.....................................................................78
Appendix: Travel ..............................................................................................................81
Traveling with Girls .........................................................................................................81
Visiting Your Council’s Properties: Local Trips ...............................................................86
Reserving Council Property .............................................................................................87
Trip and Travel Checklist ................................................................................................88
Trip and Travel Overview .................................................................................................89
Volunteer Policies & Procedures .......................................................................................91
Welcome! Think of this guide as your encyclopedia to Girl Scouts: it’s here when you need it, but there’s no need to read it all at once.

Here are the Quick-Reference Guide topics that will help you jump start your adventures as a volunteer:
- **CONNECT** – Know where to look and whom to call/email
- **INVITE** – Invite other adults to help; fill your troop with girls who can’t wait to be Girl Scouts
- **UNDERSTAND** – The core elements that unite all members in our movement
- **LEARN** – Become familiar with basic resources and our overall program
- **PREPARE** – Log in to the online Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) to access curriculum that’s ready to go
- **ENSURE SAFETY** – Know our time-tested safety protocols to ensure girls stay safe
- **ENJOY** – Using our tools, resources and girl input, enjoy your year with the girls

**Connect with GCNWI**

You are a member of Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana (GCNWI), often referred to as your “council.” We serve as your main point of contact and provide the local activities that complement your experience as a member of a worldwide movement.

**Ways to Connect**

**Website:** Your first stop should be [girlscoutsgcnwi.org](http://girlscoutsgcnwi.org). Connect to your online member community, Volunteer Toolkit, trainings in the Learning Portal, volunteer resources, and find programs and events. **Note:** All forms can be downloaded from [girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms](http://girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms).

**Shop Online:** Our local site, [shopgirlscouts.com](http://shopgirlscouts.com), features everything from uniform essentials to fun apparel. Order in advance for free in-store pickup or delivery to your service unit meeting or event; shipping is also available.

**Enewsletter:** Read The Buzz, our council’s biweekly enewsletter that’s filled with upcoming events and stories. (Hint: check your spam folder if you are not receiving it in your inbox.)

**Social Media:**
- Facebook: [Facebook.com/GirlScoutsGCNWI](http://Facebook.com/GirlScoutsGCNWI)
- Twitter: @GirlScoutsGCNWI
- Instagram: @GirlScoutsGCNWI
- Snapchat: @GirlScoutsGCNWI
- Blog: [gsgcnwiblog.org](http://gsgcnwiblog.org)
- YouTube: [youtube.com/girlscoutsgcnwi2010](http://youtube.com/girlscoutsgcnwi2010)
- Pinterest: [pinterest.com/GSGCNWI](http://pinterest.com/GSGCNWI)

**Customer Care:**
Our customer care team is ready to assist you! We will do our best to answer questions, connect you to specific staff members and help you find important resources. Email us at customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org or call 1-855-ILOVEGS (855-456-8347) ext. 6313.

*Exception for After-Hours Emergency Assistance: To inform us of an emergency situation after regular business hours, please call 877-870-5823. (See back cover of this publication for complete details.)*
**Visit Us in Person:**
During regular business hours, please visit our regionally located Gathering Places. You can ask questions and shop for all your essential Girl Scout gear. We also operate several camps and program centers to ensure that girls have amazing program experiences to complement their troop meetings.

Parents tell us that girls love a variety of experiences, and learning about activities that the council offers can help volunteers give the girls lots of choices for their activities, including outings, and community service projects for a well-rounded, fun year for all!

**Girl Scout Gathering Places & Shops**
1. 20 S. Clark Street, Suite 200, Chicago, IL 60603
2. 1005 175th Street, Homewood, IL 60430
3. 1551 Spencer Road, Joliet, IL 60433
4. 3155 W. 71st Street, Naperville, IL 60450
5. 8699 Broadway, Merrillville, IN 46410
6. 650 N. Lakeview Parkway, Vernon Hills, IL 60061

**Camps/Program Centers**
7. Camp Butternut Springs, Valparaiso, IN
8. Camp Greene Wood, Woodridge, IL
9. Camp Juniper Knoll, Elkhorn, WI
10. Camp Palos, Palos Park, IL
11. Camp Pokanoka, Ottawa, IL
12. Camp River Trails, Sheridan, IL
13. Friendship Center, Country Club Hills, IL
Invite Others to Join You

You are part of a worldwide movement founded in 1912 by visionary trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low.

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.

At any given time, approximately 10 percent of girls are Girl Scouts. In addition:

- 1 out of 2 businesswomen in the U.S. were Girl Scouts.
- 75 percent of current female U.S. Senators were Girl Scouts.
- Nearly all of the 40 women to have flown in space were Girl Scouts.
- Each year, Girl Scouts provide 75 million hours of service to improve their communities.

The Girl Scout Promise and Law unites us as a membership.

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

Girl Scout Membership: Access to Amazing Experiences

Every participant (girl or adult) in Girl Scouting must register and become a member of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). GSUSA membership dues are valid for one year. Membership dues (currently $25) are sent by the council to GSUSA; no portion of the dues stays with the council. Membership dues may not be transferred to another member and are not refundable.

Our spring renewal campaign offers incentives for girls and volunteers who renew in the spring for the following membership year. Renewing is very easy online, especially for troop leaders who wish to renew their entire troop at once.
Welcome All Girls as Members
Any girl—from kindergarten through 12th grade—can join Girl Scouts, and we hope you welcome them with open arms. Girl Scout groups/troops are designed to be large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow for development of individual girls. The following group sizes are recommended:
• Girl Scout Daisy (grades K–1): 5–12 girls
• Girl Scout Brownie (grades 2–3): 10–20 girls
• Girl Scout Junior (grades 4–5): 10–25 girls
• Girl Scout Cadette (grades 6–8): 5–25 girls
• Girl Scout Senior (grades 9–10): 5–30 girls
• Girl Scout Ambassador (grades 11–12): 5–30 girls

Adult Membership
Our adult members are also a diverse group—we welcome college students, parents, grandparents, or any responsible adult (female or male, who has passed the necessary screening process) to volunteer within any number of capacities, especially as troop volunteers working directly with girls.

Know someone who would make a great troop leader? Give them our info! You may not realize it, but there are tens of thousands of girls on waiting lists across the country.

Lifetime Membership
A lifetime member must be at least 18 years old (or a 17-year-old high-school graduate) and agree to the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Graduating high school seniors can purchase a lifetime membership at a discounted rate; please contact us for details.

Opportunity Catalog: How You Add New Members!
Through our awesome online Opportunity Catalog, or Opp Cat for short, every girl has the opportunity to be a Girl Scout, and any adult who wishes to empower girls has an opportunity to volunteer. It is easy to match new girls and adult volunteers to openings using this online tool which shows all of the troops with openings for new members. New troops are automatically added to Opp Cat listings, and renewing troops may “opt in” to fill open spots.

Refresher for Registering Online
With the help of our online Membership Community, registration can be done in the blink of an eye! Visit our website and select “Join” for girls or “Volunteer” to register yourself as an adult in a volunteer role. Should you need guidance, visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/reghelp. Once you’ve registered, “sign in” at the top of our homepage to:
• Renew your annual membership each spring or opt for lifetime adult membership
• Update your contact information 24/7
• Manage your “family profile” - must be an adult, parent or guardian 18 years of age or older
• Manage your troop profile, if you are a troop leader

Need assistance? Contact reghelp@girlscoutsgcnwi.org or customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org or call 855-ILOVEGS(456-8347), ext. 6720.
Understand Who We Are

Girl Scouts is the world’s largest organization for girls, in virtually every zip code and 92 countries.

- 1.8 million girls 5 to 18 years of age
- 14,400 Girl Scouts overseas
- 800,000 adult volunteers
- Over 50 million alumnae
- 112 councils throughout the United States

Our members are supported by three core structures: the national organization, our local council and neighborhood/community support teams.

**Girl Scouts of the USA: A Worldwide Sisterhood**

Girl Scouts of the USA, [girlscouts.org](http://girlscouts.org), is headquartered in New York City. GSUSA is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and offers Global Girl Scouting opportunities to ensure that girls have an increased awareness about the world.

Through Global Girl Scouting, members may participate in World Thinking Day on Feb. 22, visit the four WAGGGS World Centers (see the Travel Appendix), participate in international travel, promote global friendship and understanding by supporting the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund, and take action on global issues. Visit [girlscouts.org/who_we_are/global/](http://girlscouts.org/who_we_are/global/) for 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 Girl Scouting’s familiar traditions to thousands of American girls living overseas and girls attending American or international schools.

**Our Local Council: GCNWI**

Councils are chartered by GSUSA to deliver a nationally consistent program to girls in a very localized way. Our board of directors oversees the governance of our council with directors elected by volunteer delegates from across our jurisdiction. The board sets strategic direction, provides oversight and ensures resources. It monitors and evaluates the organization’s progress in achievement of goals, priorities and the Girl Scout Mission. The board ensures that appropriate resources exist to carry out the strategic priorities. The chief executive officer reports to the board and oversees the daily operations of the entire council, guiding the operational work of the staff on a fiscal year cycle from Oct. 1 – Sept. 30 each year.

**Your Service Unit Team: Your New BFF**

Each community belongs to a “service unit” which includes a network of experienced volunteers who have “been there, done that,” and can help you be successful in your role as a volunteer.

The volunteer SUM (service unit manager) is your go-to Girl Scout guru. An SUM leads a team of other volunteers with expertise in working with girls, cookies, fall product, planning events, and managing money. She convenes local volunteer meetings. Find out who your SUM is by contacting customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org or call 855-ILOVEGS(456-8347) ext. 6313.
Learn About Our Program

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

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

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

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

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

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

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

The inclusive, all-female environment of a Girl Scout troop creates a safe space where girls can try new things, develop a range of skills, take on leadership roles, and just be themselves.
Girl Scouts takes the potential of girls, combines it with robust skill-building programming, and adds caring adult mentors and strong female role models.

Our Program

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

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

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

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

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

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

WHAT GIRLS DO matters.

Our Three Keys to Leadership: girls DISCOVER themselves and their values, CONNECT with others and TAKE ACTION to make the world a better place.

HOW they do that is through three processes: activities are GIRL-LED, which gives girls the opportunity to LEARN BY DOING in a COOPERATIVE LEARNING environment. Building in progressive experiences relative to their ages is important.
Journeys and Badges:
At the core of the GSLE are National Leadership Journeys, fun and challenging experiences grouped around a theme and spread over a series of sessions. Girls also earn age-appropriate badges on an ever-increasing spectrum of subjects. Girl Scouts of the USA provides digital troop tools just for you!

- Volunteer Toolkit is available for troop leaders and parents of all troop levels with resources and activity plans for badges and journeys, as well as troop management tools.
- Journey maps offer specific ideas to incorporate badges, trips, and traditions into a Journey.
- The Badge explorer will also help you see the broad range of topics for badge work.

Why We Advocate Girl-Led Process
Girls who get involved in making decisions and setting plans learn a lot. When leaders encourage girls to make basic decisions and participate in planning, they establish a valuable foundation for girls to make larger decisions and plan bigger activities in the future.

Girls who help make decisions and plan their own activities tend to love their Girl Scout experiences more than those whose leaders do everything for them. They feel connected, valued and “heard.” Overall it is important to set expectations with both girls and families that building leadership is sometimes a messy process, but is always beneficial in terms of girls’ growth and development.

How to Encourage Girls to Lead
Many troops employ a democratic system of governance so that all members have the opportunity to express their interests and feelings and share in the planning and coordination of activities.

Following are a few different girl-led governance models, but these are just examples. National Leadership Journeys offer examples of team decision-making, too.

- Daisy/Brownie Circle: While sitting in a circle (sometimes called a ring), girls create a formal group decision-making body. The circle is an organized time for girls to express their ideas and talk about activities they enjoy, and you play an active role in facilitating discussion and helping them plan. Girls often vote to finalize decisions. If girls are talking over each other, consider passing an object, such as a talking stick, that entitles one girl to speak at a time.

- Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Patrol or Team System: In this system, large troops divide into small groups, with every member playing a role. Teams of four to six girls are recommended so that each girl gets a chance to participate and express her opinions. Patrols may be organized by interests or activities that feed into a Take Action project, with each team taking responsibility for some part of the total project; girls may even enjoy coming up with names for their teams.

- Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Executive Board: In the executive board system (also called a steering committee), one leadership team makes decisions for the entire troop. The board’s responsibility is to plan activities and assign jobs based on interests and needs, and the rest of the troop decides how to pass their ideas and suggestions to the executive board throughout the year. The executive board usually has a president, vice president, secretary and treasurer and holds its own meetings to discuss troop matters. Limit the length of time each girl serves on the executive board so all troop members can participate during the year.

- Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Town Meeting: Under the town meeting system, business is discussed and decisions are made at meetings attended by all the girls in the troop. As in the patrol and executive board systems, everyone gets the chance to participate in decision-making and leadership. Your role is to act as a moderator, who makes sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that all ideas are considered.
Prepare for Your Girl Scout Year

Set up a good foundation for your troop activities:
- Hold a family meeting to highlight how other adults can help
- Select your meeting cadence
- Take a good look at our online Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)
- Open a bank account for the troop (be transparent about troop finances with families)
- Plan fun outings and sign up for council programs/events

Encourage Families to Get Involved

Involving other adults will definitely make everyone’s experience more rewarding. There’s no need to go it alone or depend on too few adults!

Think about people whom you admire, who can connect with girls, who are dependable and responsible, and who realistically have time to volunteer. (These adults will need to register as Girl Scout members, complete the volunteer screening, take online learning sessions and review written resources.) You can also talk to your volunteer support team for advice and support. Feel free to use the sample welcome letter and friends/family checklist in the Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie and Junior Leadership Journeys to assist you in expanding your troop’s adult network.

Set up roles that work for you and draw on other volunteers who possess skill sets that you may lack.

Remember: Be sure every volunteer reviews and follows the 12 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, available both in the Quick-Reference Guide to this handbook and in Chapter 4: Safety-Wise.

Your adult “troop committee” members might help by:
- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Locating adults with expertise on a topic of special interest to girls
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Managing troop records and finances

A troop committee may be made up of general members or may include specific positions, such as:
- Cookie Manager: Volunteer(s) who would manage all aspects of Girl Scout cookie activities
- Drivers: Help whenever you need to transport girls for any reason and have a current driver’s license, vehicle insurance and vehicle registration
- Record Keeper: A treasurer/secretary rolled into one person—one person to keep track of the money and keep the books

Troop Meetings

Troops provide a flexible way for girls to meet. Your troop can meet once a week, once a month, or twice a month—how often is up to you and the girls. Troops can meet just about anywhere, as long as the location is safe, easily accessible to girls and adults and within a reasonable commute.

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 for you and the girls. The adult guides for the leadership journeys and the online VTK can help you set up an outline that works for you.
Start-up activities are planned so that when girls arrive they have something to do until the meeting begins. Based on their grade levels and abilities, girls may plan opening and closing activities, bring and prepare treats, teach songs or games and clean up. For trips, campouts, parent meetings and multi-troop events, girls may be responsible for shopping, packing equipment, cleaning up, gathering wood and so on. Based on grade level and maturity, girls can accomplish amazing things!

**Suggestion: Six Parts of a Great Troop Meeting**

**Most important – your meetings should be fun!** Girls come to Girl Scouts to learn how to be leaders, make decisions, and have fun in the activities they choose.

1. **Start Up**—Plan activities for girls as they arrive at the meeting so they have something to do until the meeting begins. It could be as simple as coloring pages, journaling, or talking with each other. (5 minutes)

2. **Opening**—Each troop decides how to open their meeting—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other activity designed by the girls. (5-10 minutes)

3. **Activities**—Use the meeting plans found in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). Activities are already designed to fit easily into this part of your meeting as you help your troop earn badges and complete Journeys. (30-45 minutes)

4. **Clean Up**—Girl Scouts should always leave a place cleaner than they found it! (5 minutes)

5. **Closing**—Just like the opening, each troop can decide how to close—with a song, a game, or a story. (5-10 minutes)

6. **Business**—Collect dues and make announcements, or plan an upcoming event or trip while parents/guardians are present. This gives you a chance to keep families informed. (5 minutes)
The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is an easy, efficient way to plan troop activities and meetings. Built-in tools help you manage your troop calendar, schedule upcoming activities with girl input, break down the curriculum to match your meetings, track the supplies you need, and communicate with girls’ families.

Get started by going to girlscoutsgcnwi.org and clicking on “My GS” in the upper right corner of the homepage. Since the tool is mobile-friendly, you can access it wherever and whenever you need it! Find more information on our website and in the GCNWI Learning Portal (girlscoutsgcnwi.org/training). Watch tutorial videos about the features listed below. The Learning Portal provides real-time updates about enhancements to the VTK throughout the year.

The VTK offers two resources for planning your troop’s time: Year Plans and Meeting Agendas.

**Year Plans**

Daisy, Brownie and Junior troops can choose either a pre-written year plan or create their own custom plan. Cadette, Senior and Ambassador troops have access to create their own custom plan.

The pre-written year plans are a great way for a new leader to get familiar with the content, especially to prepare for their first few meetings. This planning tool helps volunteers and parents see that it really is possible to do a lot of awesome things in one Girl Scout year. The troop’s leader team can change the order of meetings, edit meeting agendas, change activities, as well as email the information to each other and parents. You can easily add additional meetings or activities, such as trips or special events (i.e. ceremony).

*Be sure to plan with input from the girls!*

If you are a Daisy, Brownie or Junior leader, use the pre-written plans as a guide for involving girls in the planning process. For example, the “Junior Badge” year plan includes two meetings to work on the Savvy Shopper badge. If you know that your girls have other interests, an option is to talk with them about what they would prefer to do, help you look through the VTK resources and make changes to the meeting agendas. (More information about girl-led planning is available in your grade level training resources.) The year plan also shows “Year Milestones.” These orange banners appear in chronological order with your troop’s meeting and activities.

**Meeting Agendas**

You and your leader team can edit the full agenda for any meeting. When you create additional meetings or activities, you can add in resources from the VTK library onto your blank agenda. The VTK serves as the go-to place for everyone in your troop to see important information about meetings and activities (such as locations, times and what materials are needed). Your parents have read-only access to meeting agendas in the VTK. This allows them to stay up-to-date on and engaged with everything their daughter is enjoying in Girl Scouts!
Know Your Troop Membership

The “My Troop” tab allows you to view the members of your troop as well as key information about their Girl Scout involvement.

For girl members, you can quickly see their age and date of birth, contact information for their guardians, as well as their attendance and what achievements they've earned for the year. You can see all of your adult volunteers’ contact information, celebrate with them as they reach milestone years of service, and see how they are receiving information from council.

You can add photos of troop activities throughout the year!

Get Resources at Your Fingertips

The “Resources” tab has essential leader resources, including the Safety Activity Checkpoints needed to ensure your girls are safe, as well as having a great time in everything they do with your troop. Search for badge/journey information and meeting aids.

Make it Easy: The Troop Finance Report

Each June, troops complete an annual financial report that summarizes their revenue and expenses for the year. It is one of the best ways to ensure each troop’s financial health contributes to great girl experiences.

The VTK makes this process easier with the “Finances” tab. Simply fill in the boxes with the requested information, upload the required documents, and submit! That’s it!
Ensure that Girls Stay Safe

There is no more important aspect of Girl Scouting than keeping girls safe while they have fun with purpose. 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. Resources and forms referenced here, including the link to the actual Safety Activity Checkpoints, are available in the Volunteer Toolkit or at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/vol-resources.

Safety Guidelines

1. **Follow Safety Activity Checkpoints.** Read them, follow them and share them with other volunteers, parents and girls before engaging in activities with girls. (See details on next page.)

2. **Arrange for proper adult supervision of girls.** There must be at least two unrelated adult volunteers (age 18 or older) present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Volunteers must be screened by our council first. 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 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 our guidelines listed in the Volunteer Policy and Procedures section of this guide 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 an approved, registered 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. Each participant should have her own bed; parent/guardian permission must be obtained if girls are to share a bed. Girls and adults do not share a bed; however, some exceptions may be made for mothers and daughters. It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area (tent, cabin, or designated area) with girls, but if an adult female does share the sleeping area, there should always be two unrelated adult females present. 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. When parents staff 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 your 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, or engage in virtual conversation with strangers. Girls should never arrange in-person meetings with online contacts, other than to deliver cookies, and only with approval and accompaniment of a parent/designated adult. On group websites, publish only girls’ first names and never divulge their contact info. Teach girls the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#) and have them commit to it.

12. **Keep girls safe during money-earning activities.** During Girl Scout product programs (i.e. the cookie program), please follow protocols that ensure the safety of girls, money and products. In addition, resist the temptation of other organizations, causes and fundraisers that may appeal to Girl Scouts to be their labor force. When representing Girl Scouts, girls cannot participate in money-earning activities that represent partisan politics or that are not Girl Scout–approved product programs and efforts, or offers.

### 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 in the Volunteer Toolkit or in the Forms section of our council website. Each checkpoint provides information on where to do the activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear required for the activity, how to prepare for the activity, what specific steps to follow on the day of the activity and more.

If your girls are interested in an activity that is not listed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints, be sure to complete the trip application process **BEFORE** making any definite plans, and we can help you ensure the girls’ safety through that process. Access the trip application at [girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms](https://girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms).

Some activities are allowed only with written council pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely. Please check Safety Activity Checkpoints before planning any activities with your troop. Safety Activity Checkpoints outlines each activity and indicates if council pre-approval is required.

- **Warning:** Activities never allowed for girls include but are not limited to: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (i.e. bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing, outdoor trampolining and zorbing); flying in small private planes, helicopters or blimps; hot air ballooning; skydiving; creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, stunt skiing, snowboards, skateboards, wakeboards and water-skis) operating motorized vehicles (such as motor bikes, all-terrain vehicles, go-carts and motorized personal watercraft such as jet skis); hunting; shooting a projectile at another person; and taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher.
Have the Required Girl-to-Adult Ratios

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girl Scout Levels</th>
<th>Group/Troop Meetings</th>
<th>Events, Travel and Camping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two Adults* for this # of Girls</td>
<td>Plus One Adult for this Additional # of Girls</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisies (Grades K–1)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brownies (Grades 2–3)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juniors (Grades 4–5)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cadettes (Grades 6–8)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seniors (Grades 9–10)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ambassadors (Grades 11–12)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Two adults must be unrelated, at least one of whom is female.

For example, if you’re meeting with 17 Daisies, you’ll need three 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, however, you have 17 Cadettes attending a group meeting, you need only two unrelated adults, at least one of which is female (because, on the chart, two adults can manage up to 25 Cadettes).

In addition to adult-to-girl ratios, remember that adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old or at the age of majority defined by the state, if it is older than 18. Age of majority in Illinois and Indiana is 18. All adults must be registered and approved Girl Scout volunteers.

Transportation

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent’s decision and responsibility. For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities—outside the normal time and place—in which a group will be transported in private vehicles:

- Every driver must be an approved, registered adult volunteer, at least 21 years of age, and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in Volunteer Essentials must be followed.
- If traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female. Girl-volunteer ratios in Volunteer Essentials must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) has at least two girls, and is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.
- New for 2018–2019, girls are not permitted to use ridesharing companies such as Lyft, Uber, Curb, etc. See Safety Activity Checkpoints for details.

For more about driving, see the Transporting Girls section in Chapter 4: Safety-Wise of this handbook.
Enjoy Getting Started

The following reminders will help you feel confident about getting started as a Girl Scout volunteer. Listen to the girls, offer them a wide variety of experiences, keep it fresh, and ensure there are plenty of ways for parents/guardians and other adult volunteers to help.

Have a Parent/Guardian Meeting First

Our experience tells us that having a parent/guardian meeting before you have your first troop meeting is a great way to set expectations, outline how other adults can help and reinforce our focus on age-appropriate, girl-led experience. Girls get much more out of their experiences when they are part of the planning. Grade-level training sessions will help reinforce this concept.

See Meetings with Parents/Guardians in Chapter 3: Engaging All Girls, the Volunteer Toolkit, and the Learning Portal for ideas and sample agendas.

First Meeting: Help Girls Get to Know One Another

Icebreaker games that let girls share simple details about themselves are a great way to start off your first gathering. Journeys often start with such an icebreaker, so if you’re digging into a journey right away, you’ll be all set. Check out our Pinterest account for ideas: pinterest.com/gsgcnwi.

Plan Your First Activities

Earning badges and completing a Journey are great ways to introduce girls to Girl Scouting. Access our online Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) to prepare for that first meeting. We also have a few tips:

1. Find out what interests the group (and be sure to include the other adult volunteers). Ask the girls to talk about what they’re passionate about, what they’ve always wanted to do and how they would spend their time if money and other barriers were no object. Build off the ideas shared, but be sure to include opinions from all the girls. Ask direct questions of those who seem to be holding back or are unsure about answering, so everyone is included.

2. Get the girls talking about how they want to schedule their time together.
   - Can girls organize and plan a field trip or longer travel opportunity that will allow them to learn more about a particular topic or theme?
   - Is there an event that meshes with this topic or area of interest?
   - Can the girls locate and communicate with an expert in the field via email or social media?
   - Can they invite a guest speaker to answer questions or demonstrate particular skills?
   - Which badges or Journeys can the group choose to work on that will deepen their skills in this particular area?
   - What community issues/problems do girls care about?
   - At what age do girls think they can make a difference? (To spark service conversations at early levels)
   - If they are Juniors or older, are they interested in pursuing their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards? These are Girl Scouting’s highest awards for girls and a great way to help them develop the leadership skills and experiences that prepare them for the college admissions process.
   - Do they have ideas for activities that will involve younger or older girls?
   - Do they want to make an impact in their schools, neighborhood, churches or community through meaningful community service projects.
Network, Participate in Events and Seek Support

Our council offers a wide variety of opportunities to help you and the girls have a successful year. Take online training to learn more. Sign the troop up for events that introduce them to topics they may not have considered before, like wildly popular STEM activities. Take a hike at one of our camp properties. Spend some time talking to other local volunteers at service unit meetings or with our troop support specialist staff.

Participate in Spring Renewal

The end of the troop year doesn’t have to be the end of a girls’ time with Girl Scouting, or the end of your time with girls. Have a robust discussion with the girls and their guardians about renewing their membership during our spring renewal campaign which begins in April.

Renewing during the spring means that you will be ready to start right at the beginning of the next school year. And, there are some great incentives, including our council’s Loyalty Program, which offer discounts and special deals through the next year for those who renew early.

Other Reminders

What We Stand For

To understand our organization's official and published positions on faith-based or social and political issues, please note the following statements from Girl Scouts of the USA’s "What We Stand For:"

- The Girl Scout organization does not endorse or promote any particular philosophy or religious belief and allows flexibility when girls say the Girl Scout Promise.
- The Girl Scout Movement is a secular, values-based organization founded on democratic principles, including freedom of religion. We do not attempt to dictate the form or style of a member's worship. We believe faith is a private matter for girls and their families to address.
- The Girl Scout national organization does not have any national collaboration or relationship with Planned Parenthood, nor do we provide any financial support to this organization. We believe health and sexuality are private matters for girls and their families.
- The Girl Scout organization, including local councils, does NOT take a position on abortion or birth control. Our membership is a cross-section of America with regard to opinions on religious and social issues and practices. We believe these matters are best decided by girls and their families.

Our national, organizational stance is that these issues are best addressed by families. We celebrate each girl’s commitment to her own religion and support her and her family as she embraces that by earning some of the religious recognitions available for girls. In fact, the Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting contains a religious award called “My Promise, My Faith” that encourages girls to make connections between their faith community and important values outlined in the Girl Scout Law.

Sensitive Issues

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

When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult 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 Chapter 3: Engaging All Girls in this handbook for more information and visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms for a copy of the form.
Visit www.shopgirlscouts.com for the most current uniform diagrams, resource materials, awards AND our new Cybersecurity, STEM and Engineering Journeys and Badges!
You are going to love being a volunteer! No matter how you volunteer with Girl Scouts, your investment of time and energy will pay back tenfold. Your interests and life experiences make you the perfect person to be a new kind of partner for girls, someone who creates a safe environment where they can work together and each girl feels free to work toward her highest aspirations. You, and nearly one million other volunteers like you, are helping girls make a lasting impact on the world.

Understanding Your Role as a Volunteer

We encourage you 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, too—whether you’re volunteering at a camp, working with girls who are traveling, or partnering with girls on a short-term series on a topic that interests you.

You don’t have to be great at everything you do, but by doing the activities with a smile and enthusiasm, you’ll be an incredible role model to girls. They will see you try new things and so will they. Remember, you’re not alone in this adventure … you’ll be working closely with other volunteers.

Arrange for Proper Adult Supervision of Girls

Your group must have at least two unrelated adult volunteers present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary (this is dependent upon the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls). Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old (or the age of majority defined by your state, if it is older than 18) and must be screened by your council before volunteering. While men are welcome to volunteer, at least one volunteer in every group must be female.

Remember to also check the adult-to-girl ratios in the Quick-Reference Guide and Chapter 4: Safety-Wise in this handbook.

In More than S’mores: Success and Surprises in Girl Scouts Outdoor Experiences, the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI) has described the role of Adult Volunteers:

“Because everything girls do outdoors in Girl Scouts must be supported by an adult, these results speak indirectly to adult volunteers and their preparation. To get girls outdoors more regularly, Girl Scouts need adult volunteers who encourage and promote outdoor experiences. Communicating to volunteers and parents that casual outdoor experiences are effective ways of giving girls opportunities to build competencies and try new things may be the key to opening the gateway for all Girl Scouts to participate in the outdoors on a more regular basis.” (2014, p.27)
Your Responsibilities
Your other responsibilities as a Girl Scout volunteer include:

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

Your Volunteer Support Team
In your role as a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll team up with co-volunteers, parents/guardians, members of the community, council staff and others who have expressed interest in working alongside you. The Volunteer Toolkit and the adult guide for some Journeys give you tips and guidance for creating a friends-and-family network to support you all along the way.

The other volunteers on your support team may help by:

- Filling in for you
- Arranging meeting places
- Being responsible for communicating with girls and parents/guardians
- Locating adults with special skills to facilitate a specialized meeting
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning
- Managing group records

If you have a large support team, the first thing you'll want to do is meet with this group and discuss what brought each of you to Girl Scouts, review your strengths and skills and talk about how you would like to work together as a team. You might also discuss:

- When important milestones will happen (Girl Scout cookie activities, field trips, travel plans, events, dates for other opportunities) and how long the planning process will take
- When and where to meet as a group of volunteers, if necessary
- Whether, when, where and how often to hold parent/guardian meetings
- Whether an advance trip to a destination, event site, or camp needs to happen

Remember to call on your volunteer support team. This team can help you observe a meeting, assign you a buddy, help with registration forms, assist you with opening a bank account, plan your first meeting and so on. Also plan to attend support meetings—usually held several times throughout the year—that provide excellent opportunities to learn from other volunteers.
Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

Learning opportunities ensure that you have the tools you will need in Girl Scouting. The adult development department and the online Learning Portal, gsgcnwitraining.org, will provide you with the instruction and guidance necessary to fulfill your role successfully as a Girl Scout volunteer—learning that will not only help you work more effectively with Girl Scouts, but also may introduce new skills and behaviors into your work life, relationships and personal development. In the end, your service will be recognized and evident to all the girls you help become confident, courageous, and character-driven young women. That’s the greatest reward of all!

Volunteer Training at a Glance

Create an account and access your leader training modules and enrichment opportunities at: http://gsgcnwitraining.org
Knowing How Much You’re Appreciated

Thank you, thank you, thank you! Your hard work means the world to girls, your council staff and Girl Scouts of the USA.

Throughout your experience, stay in contact with your support team about the positive parts of your experience, as well as the challenges you faced, and discuss whether you want to return to this position or try something new. The end of your troop year, camp season, overseas trip, or series/event session is just the beginning of your next adventure!

If you’re ready for more opportunities to work with girls, be sure to let your council support team know how you’d like to be a part of girls’ lives in the future—whether in the same position or in other, flexible ways. These opportunities can be tailored to fit your skills and interests.

Volunteer Appreciation Weeks

Volunteer Appreciation Week—a special week in April—is set aside especially for you. Girl Scouts pay tribute to the volunteers who help girls make the world a better place. The week centers on the longstanding National Girl Scout Leaders’ Day (April 22). Each year, GSGCNWI honors the dedication and outstanding accomplishments of our local volunteers with a volunteer recognition event celebrating awards and years of service.

In addition, Girl Scouts also celebrates Volunteers Make a Difference Week, in conjunction with Make a Difference Day, which takes place during the weekend in autumn that we set our clocks back.

Our volunteer appreciation practices include both formal and informal types of recognition. Informal forms of recognition are the day-to-day ways to thank volunteers and make them feel valued. Informal recognition might include thank-you cards or letters from girls, parents, volunteers or staff members.

Our Just Say Thanks initiative (found at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/volunteer-appreciation) ensures that outstanding individuals in our council receive an expression of appreciation from our CEO.

Formal recognitions typically fall into one of five categories:

- Earned recognitions that do not require approval.
- Council recognitions that require service unit approval.
- Council recognitions that require board approval.
- GSUSA recognitions that require service unit approval.
- GSUSA recognitions that require board approval.

Volunteers, parents and council staff work together to bring the Girl Scout Mission to life. We appreciate and celebrate every moment dedicated to building girls of courage, confidence and character, and hope you will take time to appreciate and acknowledge these efforts.
The following chart summarizes earned and awarded recognitions available to adult Girl Scouts and purchased by the council to present to those who receive it.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Award Name</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Nomination</th>
<th># of Letters</th>
<th>Who Approves</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation Pin</td>
<td>Outstanding service to at least one service unit/committee toward achievement of the council’s goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adult Recognition committee Board of Directors</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honor Pin</td>
<td>Outstanding service to at least 2 service units/committees (or Service Unit and one committee) in a way that furthers the council’s goals. Service goes beyond the expectations for the position.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Adult Recognition Committee Board of Directors</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks Badge</td>
<td>Exceptional service that benefits the total council or entire movement. Service is significantly above and beyond the call of duty.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adult Recognition Committee Board of Directors</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thanks II Badge</td>
<td>Recipient of the Thanks Badge who continues to provide exceptional service that benefits the total council or entire movement.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adult Recognition Committee Board of Directors</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Award</td>
<td>A group award that acknowledges a service unit/committee for achievement of the council goals.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Adult Recognition Committee President of the Board of Directors</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hall of Fame</td>
<td>Recognizes an adult member of 25+ years, who has delivered service that far exceeds the expectation of any position and has had a lasting impact of the Girl Scout organization. May only be presented to 10 people each year.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Adult Recognition Committee Board of Directors</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.A.I.S.Y.</td>
<td>Recognizes outstanding service by a staff member that has resulted in the development of partnerships with volunteers and/or community leaders to at least one service unit/committee toward achievement of the council’s goals and which will benefit the council beyond the staff members’ tenure, goes far beyond the expectations of the employee’s job description and supports the achievement of the council’s goals and strategic learning efforts. Only awarded to 3 people per year.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Adult Recognition Committee Board of Directors</td>
<td>Dec. 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Nomination</td>
<td>Supporting Documents</td>
<td>Unit/Committee</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer of Excellence</td>
<td>Volunteer contributed outstanding service of the council’s mission delivery to girl and adult members.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 Nomination and supporting documents submitted to the Service Unit or Operating Unit</td>
<td>Service Unit/Committee</td>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Found Treasure</td>
<td>Volunteer who has been registered for 2 years or less, who has made a positive impact on Girl Scouts. The service of this member is so outstanding that it merits recognition.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 Nomination made at the Service Unit or Operating Unit</td>
<td>Service Unit/Committee</td>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hidden Heroine</td>
<td>Embodies the Girl Scout principle of “help where I am needed.” The volunteer provides assistance to special projects, ongoing tasks and is the “go-to” person for a Service Unit/Committee.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0 Nomination made at the Service Unit or Operating Unit</td>
<td>Service Unit/Committee</td>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of Service</td>
<td>Registered adult member of Girl Scouts for 5-75 years.</td>
<td>None Volunteer tracks</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Feb. 15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter 2: A National Experience

You belong to a network of nearly 1 million adults who share an important commitment: preparing girls to lead successful lives. You’ll have fun, meet new people, and learn by doing alongside girls at every step. The Girl Scout program—what girls do in Girl Scouting—is based on the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), a national model that helps girls become leaders in their own lives and as they grow. No matter where girls live or what their age or background, they are part of a powerful, national experience. As they build leadership skills, they also develop lifelong friendships and earn meaningful awards, two of many treasured traditions in the sisterhood of Girl Scouting.

The following is an expanded explanation of the overview found in the Quick Start Guide.

What Girl Scouting Does for Girls

Girl Scouting guides girls to become leaders in their daily lives, their communities and the world—helping them become the kind of person exemplified by the Girl Scout Law. When girls—as the Girl Scout Law states—are “honest and fair,” when they “use resources wisely,” and know how to be “courageous and strong,” they can be more successful in everything they do.

Research shows that the courage, confidence and character they develop as Girl Scouts follows them throughout their lives. Girl Scouting has a practical approach to helping girls become leaders:

When girls lead in their own lives, they Discover their values and the confidence to do what’s right. This helps girls act in ways that make us proud, no matter where they are.

When girls lead in their communities, they Connect as they learn how to work with other people. This helps them get along better with others, resolve conflicts and do better on group projects at school.

When girls lead in the world, they Take Action to change the world for the better. Starting as young Girl Scouts, girls learn how to see problems—such as a food pantry in need of donations or an elderly neighbor who could use a hand—and come up with a solution.

In other words: Discover + Connect + Take Action = Leadership. And everything you do with girls in Girl Scouting is aimed at giving them the benefits of these Three Keys to Leadership. Details about the benefits (or outcomes) can be found in Transforming Leadership Continued, available at girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/research/publications.html.
Fun with Purpose

Girl Scouting isn’t just about what we do; it’s also about how we do it. We know that girls will give almost any activity a try, as long as the adults guiding them take the right approach and make learning fun. Girl Scout activities ask adult volunteers to engage girls in three ways or processes that make Girl Scouting unique from school and other extracurricular activities:

**Girl-led:** Girls of every grade level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why and how they’ll structure activities. Of course, you’ll provide guidance appropriate to the age of the girls. Plus, you’ll encourage them to bring their ideas and imaginations into the experiences, make choices and lead the way as much as they can.

**Learning by doing:** This means that girls have active, hands-on experiences. It also means they have a chance to think and talk about what they are learning as a result of the activities. This kind of reflection is
what helps girls gain self-awareness and confidence to dive into new challenges. So make sure girls always have a chance to talk with each other—and you—after an activity. It doesn’t have to be formal, just get them talking and see what happens.

**Cooperative learning:** Girls learn so much about themselves and each other when they team up on common goals. Plus, great teamwork helps girls in school now and on the job later. Look for ways to help each girl contribute her unique talents and ideas to the team, help all girls see how their differences are valuable to the team and coach girls to resolve their conflicts productively.

We call these three methods “processes.” You might be wondering how to put these processes into action with the girls in your group. These steps should help you get started:

1. Help your girls choose the Journey and/or badges they want to work on this year. There’s more information about the National Leadership Journeys [later in this chapter](#), and you can use the Year Plans available in the [Volunteer Toolkit](#).
2. After your troop has chosen the Journey, make sure you either get the adult guide and/or review the Meeting Agendas in the [Volunteer Toolkit](#). As you review the materials, look at how the activities, conversations, and choice-making options are set up using the three processes. Once you start practicing the processes, you’ll probably find that they become second nature when you’re with your girls. (Note: Some Journeys have adult and girl guides that you can purchase, some Journeys are available only in the VTK, and some have both.)
3. Visit the [Learning Portal](#) for training and resources on working with girls in your troop and how best to implement the three processes with them. Take a look at the examples in *Transforming Leadership Continued*, available online at [girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/research/publications.html](http://girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/research/publications.html).

*The girls’ time in Girl Scouting isn’t a to-do list, so please don’t ever feel that checking activities off a list is more important than tuning in to what interests girls and sparks their imaginations. What matters most is the fun and learning that happens as girls make experiences their own.***

**Girl Scout Participation in Activities with Other Scouting Organizations**

The decision by Boy Scouts of America (BSA) to open the Boy Scout program to girls has fundamentally altered the nature of the relationship between BSA and Girl Scouts nationally and locally. Local relationships between BSA and Girl Scout councils that have led to partnerships and joint activities in the past will now expose our membership enrollment and brand to risks. This may mean that the relationship between a council and its BSA counterpart should fundamentally change.

**Marketplace Confusion.** To protect the integrity of the Girl Scout brand and reinforce our programming as unique, girl-only, and best in class, we must ensure that we take care that the activities in which girls participate are exclusive to the Girl Scout program, are safe and girl led, and are conducted under the appropriate supervision of Girl Scouts. Participation of Girl Scouts in activities with other scouting organizations creates risks to Girl Scouts. Confusion is in the marketplace regarding the relationship between Girl Scouts and Boy Scouts by the expansion of Boy Scouts to include girls in their programs. Girl Scout participation in Boy Scout activities will increase that confusion and will contribute to the misperception that Girl Scouts has merged, or is somehow interchangeable, with Boy Scouts.

**Brand.** Associating with organizations who do not have a similar brand history, program portfolio, and track record for safety dilutes and tarnishes our brand, and allows Boy Scouts to leverage the reputation of Girl Scouts for their own purposes.
5 Ways Girl Scouts Builds Girl Leaders

Girl Scouts’ mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Since 1912, girls have explored new fields of knowledge, learned valuable skills, and developed strong core values through Girl Scouts. Today Girl Scouts is, as it always has been, the organization best positioned to help girls develop important leadership skills they need to become successful adults.

At Girl Scouts, guided by supportive adults and peers, girls develop their leadership potential through age-appropriate activities that enable them to discover their values, skills, and the world around them; connect with others in a multicultural environment; and take action to make a difference in their world. These activities are designed to be girl led, cooperative, and hands-on—processes that create high-quality experiences conducive to learning.

When girls participate in Girl Scouts, they benefit in 5 important ways:

**STRONG SENSE OF SELF**
Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and form positive identities.

**POSITIVE VALUES**
Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly, and show concern for others.

**CHALLENGE SEEKING**
Girls take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes.

**HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS**
Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.

**COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING**
Girls desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create “action plans” to solve them.
Why do these five outcomes matter?

When girls exhibit these attitudes and skills, they become responsible, productive, caring, and engaged citizens. But don’t take our word for it! Studies show that the development of attitudes, behaviors, and skills like confidence, conflict resolution, and problem solving are critical to well-being and rival academic and technical skills in their capacity to predict long-term positive life outcomes.¹

Youth who develop these five outcomes...

Are happier, healthier, and less likely to engage in problem behaviors or be victimized. Youth who develop competencies such as perseverance, positive self-esteem, and sociability have lower rates of obesity, depression, and aggression, and show greater life satisfaction and well-being than those who do not develop such attributes/skills.²

Achieve more academically and feel more engaged in school. Youth who participate in programs that promote the attributes and skills linked with our five outcomes show stronger academic performance and school engagement compared to those who do not.³ When students are more self-aware and confident about their learning capabilities, they try harder and persist in the face of challenges.

Become strong job applicants. While employers want new hires to have technical knowledge related to a given job, those skills are not nearly as important as good teamwork, decision-making, and communication skills.⁴ Yet many employers around the world report that job candidates lack these attributes.⁵

Become successful, well-adjusted adults. Kindergarteners who learn how to share, cooperate with others, and be helpful are more likely to have a college degree and a job 20 years later than youth who lack these social skills.⁶ They are also less likely to have substance-abuse problems and run-ins with the law.

Join Girl Scouts today! girlscouts.org

Outdoor Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent in the outdoors, including how to plan and organize outdoor activities. Acknowledge a girl's mastery of an outdoor skill and invite her to challenge herself further by taking that next step up and out! Outdoor fun can be endless when girls lead.

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**Look Out**
Share past experiences in the outdoors.
- Talk about favorite outdoor places and why they're special.
- Wonder what else can be seen in the outdoors.

**Meet Out**
Step outside to look, listen, feel, and smell.
- Share what was observed.
- Learn more about what was discovered.

**Move Out**
Plan and take a short walk outside.
- Discuss being prepared for the weather.
- Do activities to explore nature.
- Plan and carry out an indoor sleepover.

**Explore Out**
Plan and take a short and easy hike.
- Discuss what to take in a day pack.
- Dress for the weather.
- Plan a healthy snack or lunch.
- Learn how to stay safe in the outdoors.

**Cook Out**
Plan and cook a simple meal outdoors.
- Make a list of gear and food supplies needed.
- Learn and practice skills needed to cook a meal.
- Review outdoor cooking safety.
- Practice hand and dish sanitation.
- Create a Kaper Chart for the cookout.

**Camp Out**
Plan and take a 1- to 2-night camping trip.
- Take more responsibility for planning.
- Learn and practice a new outdoor skill.
- Learn a new outdoor cooking skill.
- Plan a food budget, then buy and pack food.
- Practice campsite set up.
- Plan an agenda that includes fun activities.
- Explore/protect the surrounding environment.

**Sleep Out**
Plan and carry out an overnight in a cabin/ backyard.
- Discuss what to pack for the sleep out.
- Learn to use and care for camping gear.
- Learn and practice new outdoor skills.
- Plan a menu with a new cooking skill.
- Discuss campsite organization.
- Plan time for fun activities.

**Adventure Out**
Plan and take an outdoor trip for several days.
- Learn and practice a new outdoor skill.
- Learn a new outdoor cooking skill.
- Develop first-aid skills and use safety check points.
- Budget, schedule, and make arrangements.
- Participate in an environmental service project.
- Teach and inspire others about the outdoors.
- Imagine new experiences to be had outdoors.
- Practice all Leave No Trace principles.

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**Leave No Trace Principles:**
- Plan Ahead & Prepare
- Leave What You Find
- Respect Wildlife
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
Top Reasons Why Girls Should Get Outdoors

Findings from the 2014 More than S’mores Report*

1. Girls really enjoy outdoor activities in Girl Scouts.


3. Girl Scouts who get outdoors are twice as likely to connect with and care for the environment than non-Girl Scouts.

4. Girls of color and girls in lower socioeconomic backgrounds report even stronger benefits from outdoor experiences.

“It was my first time on the water, in a lake. I was scared at first but when I started to paddle I got the hang of it. I really loved it.”

10-year-old Girl Scout, Missouri

Because of Girl Scouts...

71% of girls tried an outdoor activity for the first time.

48% of girls helped other girls do an outdoor activity.

71% of girls improved an outdoor skill.

29% of girls overcame a fear of an outdoor activity.

More than S’mores

Start the fun now!
girlscouts.org/join

*More Than S’mores, a 2014 study by the Girl Scout Research Institute, talked to nearly 3,000 Girl Scouts in fourth- through eighth-grade.
The National Program Portfolio

Books, awards and online resources will bring the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to life with girls. We strongly recommend that each girl has her own books from the National Program Portfolio. These books—the Journeys and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting—and national program awards—like badges and pins—are an important part of how Girl Scouting helps girls experience the power of millions of girls changing the world together. All national program materials are available at our council shops and online at shopgirlscouts.com.

As you use the National Program Portfolio with girls, keep in mind that Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) creates materials to serve our vast and diverse community of girls. To help bring topics off the page and into life, we sometimes provide girls and volunteers with suggestions about what people across the country and around the world are doing. We also sometimes make suggestions about movies, books, music, websites and more that might spark girls’ interests.

At GSUSA, we know that not every example or suggestion we provide will work for every girl, family, volunteer, or community. In partnership with those who assist you with your Girl Scout group—including parents, faith groups, schools and community organizations—we trust you to choose real-life topic experts from your community as well as movies, books, music, websites and other opportunities that are most appropriate for the girls in your area to enrich their Girl Scout activities.

We are proud to be the premier leadership organization for girls. While girls and their families may have questions or interest in programming relevant to other aspects of girls’ lives, we are not always the organization best suited to offer such information.

Also note that GSUSA continuously reviews national program content to guarantee that all our resources are relevant and age appropriate, and that their content doesn’t include violence, sex, inappropriate language, or risky behavior. We value your input and hope that you will bring to your council’s attention any content that concerns you.

National Leadership Journeys

National Leadership Journeys help Girl Scouts learn and practice the three keys, aid their communities and earn leadership awards. In July 2018, we’re rolling out more new Journeys in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). These new Journeys are adding on to the choices that girls and volunteers already have. Every Journey (whether new or old) is topic-specific, includes hands-on activities, and incorporates Discover, Connect and a Take Action project. Depending upon the content, some Journeys are shorter and some are longer, but they have been made simpler to use and easier to deliver.

As of July 2018, the following Journeys are available for volunteers to choose from. They are:

- It’s Your Planet—Love It!
- It’s Your Story—Tell It!
- It’s Your World—Change It!
- Outdoor
- Think Like an Engineer
- Think Like a Citizen Scientist
- Think Like a Programmer

**It’s Your World—Change It!**: Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors. On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie and Junior ONLY.

**It’s Your Planet—Love It!**: Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors. On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior ONLY.

**It’s Your Story—Tell It!**: Available for purchase in council stores (adult guide and girl book) for Daisies–Ambassadors. On the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, and Junior ONLY.
**Outdoor:** Available on the VTK for Brownie and Junior as nine sessions in total, which includes three outdoor badges plus three Take Action meetings. Available on VTK for Daisies as seven sessions in total, which includes two outdoor badges plus three Take Action meetings. Available for Multi-level for Daisies-Juniors on the VTK. Cadette, Senior, Ambassador, and Multi-level will be available for Back to Troop as PDFs on the VTK.

**Think Like an Engineer:** Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

**Think Like a Programmer:** Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

**Think Like a Citizen Scientist:** Available on the VTK for Daisy, Brownie, Junior, and Multi-level. The Journey is six sessions in total, including three Take Action meetings.

Our council hosts Journey Jumpstarts to help you along the way. Visit [girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forgirls](http://girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forgirls) to find more information.

**The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting and National Proficiency Badges**

In addition to the Leadership Journeys, girls at each Girl Scout grade level have their own edition of *The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting*—a binder full of information about being a Girl Scout and how to earn certain badges, including ones about financial literacy and the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Girls who want to earn more badges can add a Skill Building Badge Set tied to the theme of the Journey they’ve chosen.

When a Girl Scout earns a badge, it shows that she’s learned a new skill, such as how to make a healthy snack or take great digital photos. It may even spark an interest at school or plant the seed for a future career. Please remember that we don’t expect you to be an expert in the badge topics; just have fun learning by doing with the girls!

While you’re having fun, keep in mind: Badges are for educating girls, not for decorating their sashes and vests. The quality of a girl’s experience—and the skills and pride she gains from earning leadership awards and skill-building badges—far outweigh the quantity of badges she earns. If you’re working with Girl Scout Daisies, please note that they earn Petals and Leaves (which form a flower) instead of badges. There are several ways to supplement the National Program Portfolio and enhance girls’ time as Girl Scouts—and have fun while you’re doing it!

**Girl Scout Service Progression**

Giving back to your community is part of every aspect of Girl Scouting. Starting even as early as Daisies, girls can identify needs in their community and discover ways to help. This process of brainstorming solutions, making decisions and taking action serves as a step toward making the world a better place. Girls dedicating their time to community service can use these problem solving skills to achieve a Highest Award. Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors can earn their Community Service Bar by dedicating 20 hours to an organization that they feel passionate about or Service to Girl Scouting Bar by dedicating 20 hours to Girl Scouts. Learn more at [girlscoutsgcnwi.org/en/events/service-projects.html](http://girlscoutsgcnwi.org/en/events/service-projects.html).

**Emblems and Patches**

In addition to the leadership awards tied to the Journeys and the national proficiency badges, girls can show they belong by adding emblems to the front of their vests or sashes and participation patches on the back.
Emblems show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular council, a particular troop, or in some other Girl Scout group. These can be worn on the front of a sash or vest (see the diagram in the handbook section of The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting to see where these are placed).

Many times a cool participation patch will be included with a special activity or event you participate in, such as STEMapalooza or Girl Scouts Day at a Blackhawks game. Since these patches and pins aren’t tied to skill-building activities, they are worn on the back of a girl’s sash or vest.

**Shop for Girl Scout Essentials**

You can purchase uniforms, emblems and patches—along with badges and leadership awards—at our local Girl Scout Shops (addresses listed on back cover of this guide) or online at shopgirlscouts.com. Free in-store pickup available when you order online.

**Girl Scouting’s Highest Awards: Bronze, Silver and Gold**

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards are Girl Scouting’s highest awards. All three awards empower girls to do big things while working on an issue close to their heart. While completing any of these awards, girls gain fundamental leadership skills that better themselves, their community and the world.

**Start Early with Journeys and Service Projects**

Before completing a Highest Awards project with a Take Action Project, most Girl Scouts work on a Service Project first. Service Projects can be done at any grade level—including Daisies and Brownies! Service Projects give back to the community and can be a one-time event, like helping out at an animal shelter or food pantry. Service Projects lay the groundwork for Take Action Projects, which are done with a community and are usually sustainable.

When girls express interest in any of the awards, consider the following reflection questions. These questions will assist them in discovering what subjects they may be passionate about and how they can better the community.

- What are your interests?
- What are your strengths?
- What type of communities are you involved in?
- What is needed in your community?

Your council provides Bronze, Silver and Gold Award training for you and your girls. Visit the “Highest Awards” tab at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/ forgirls to learn more.

**Highest Awards and Money-Earning Activities**

*Girl Scouts who need to earn funds to support their Bronze, Silver or Gold Award projects must participate in the fall product and Girl Scout Cookie programs, selling the minimum number of cookies and fall product as their first money-earning activity. Please note that the use of any online money-earning platforms such as GoFundMe or Kickstarter, are not allowed. Please refer to page 76 for more details about money-earning activities.*
Bronze Award
This award is for Girl Scout Juniors. The following is a list of steps girls will take to earn their Bronze Award. This entire project should be a suggested minimum of 20 hours, including planning and execution.

Council Involvement: This is a troop-level award; please see step seven below for optional council involvement.

1. **Complete a Journey:** To earn the Bronze Award, each girl must complete a Junior level Journey.
2. **Build your team:** This project may be done with a Junior troop or a group of Girl Scout Juniors. As a leader, please make sure each girl has a crucial role in the award process.
3. **Explore your community:** As you start the Bronze Award, observe your communities. Each and every community has unique needs.
4. **Choose the project:** Girls will start to research the needs in their community to select an appropriate project.
5. **Make a plan:** As a team, create a detailed plan, timeline and responsibilities list. This may include supplies, volunteers, goal setting, marketing and much more.
6. **Put Your plan in motion:** It is finally time to implement your plan.
7. **Spread the word:** The Bronze Award is a troop-level approved project; however, we want to hear about all the good you’ve done! You can submit your troop’s story and photos at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/bronzeaward. You could get featured on our council’s blog and more!

Silver Award
This award is for Girl Scouts at the Cadette level. The following is a list of steps girls will take to earn their Silver Award. The Silver Award is an excellent stepping stone to the Gold Award. This entire project should be a suggested minimum of 50 hours, including planning and execution.

Council Involvement: This is a troop-level award; please see step eight below for optional council involvement.

1. **Complete a Journey:** To earn the Silver Award, each girl must complete a Cadette-level Journey.
2. **Identify issues you care about:** Choose a few issues you are passionate about. This will help when choosing your team.
3. **Build your team:** This project may be done solo or with a small group, such as 3-4 troop members. If done with a group, delegate duties so each Girl Scout has a role.
4. **Explore your community:** Now that you have built your team and identified issues you care about, observe your communities to decide what is needed.
5. **Choose the project:** Now that you have found your project, ask yourself a few questions: What is our project? Why does it matter? Who will it help?
6. **Develop your project:** As a team, create a detailed plan, this may include a timeline, budget and responsibilities list. Make sure to set goals as a team.
7. **Put your plan in motion:** It is finally time to implement your plan!
8. **Reflect, share your story and celebrate:** We want to know all about your Silver Award. Though not required, girls are encouraged to submit a Silver Award reflection form found at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/silveraward. Any girl whose Silver Award project is reported through this form will receive a certificate, letter of congratulations and an invitation to be our guest at the Gold Award Ceremony. You can purchase the Silver Award pin anytime from a Gathering Place shop for this troop-level approved award! If purchasing your pin from GSUSA you will be asked for proof of completion, in which case you must complete the Silver Award reflection form.
Gold Award

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award a Girl Scout can earn. Once achieved, it shows colleges, employers and your community that you’re out there changing the world. This award is for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors. This entire project should be a suggested minimum of 80 hours, including planning and execution.

Did you know that a Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately rises one rank in all four branches of the U.S. Military? A number of college scholarship opportunities also await Gold Award recipients (learn more at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/scholarships).

Council Involvement: GCNWI offers Gold Award trainings for leaders, volunteers, and Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors. Communication with council is ongoing throughout this process.

1. **Complete a Journey and/or Silver Award:** There are two options, and one option must be completed before beginning this award: 1) One Senior or Ambassador level Journey and Silver Award –OR– 2) Two Senior or Ambassador level Journeys.

2. **Training:** Council-led Gold Award Training must be completed prior to the submission of a Gold Award proposal. Online trainings are offered throughout the year. Visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/goldaward to learn more.

3. **Choose an issue:** Choose an issue in your community that you care about.

4. **Investigate and research:** Research this issue by using interviews, articles, evaluation and anything other strategies that will help you understand this issue.

5. **Build your team:** This project can only be done solo, however, you will need a project advisor, volunteers and other community members who can help with your project.

6. **Create your plan:** Create a detailed plan by completing the Project Proposal Form, budget, and timeline at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/goldaward.

7. **Present your plan:** Submit your proposal via online form (see step 6), or email as a PDF to goldaward@girlscoutsgcnwi.org. Once reviewed, you will receive an invitation to schedule your proposal interview with the Gold Award Committee.

8. **Take action:** After approval of your plan, carry it out and stay in touch with your Gold Award Committee mentor.

9. **Educate and inspire:** Submit your final report, timeline and budget via online form at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/goldward, or email as a PDF to goldaward@girlscoutsgcnwi.org. You will then receive an invitation to schedule your final interview to present your project, reflection and sustainability plan. Each year GCNWI hosts a ceremony to honor the girls who completed their Gold Award and celebrate the difference they made in the world.

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**A Tradition of Honoring Girls**

From the beginning of Girl Scouts, one prestigious award has recognized girls who make a difference in their communities and in their own lives. The first of these awards, in 1916, was the Golden Eagle of Merit. In 1919, the name changed to The Golden Eaglet, and in 1920, the requirements for The Golden Eaglet were updated. It was known as the First Class Award for only two years, from 1938–1940, and was replaced in 1940 with The Curved Bar Award, the requirements for which were updated in 1947. In 1963, GSUSA re-introduced the First Class Award, for a girl who was an “all-around” person, with skills in many fields and a proficiency in one. Today’s highest award, the Girl Scout Gold Award, was introduced in 1980.
Enhancing the Girl Experience at the Council Level

We are your partner in creating an incredible year for your Girl Scouts. Council-sponsored programming is shaped following four core categories: STEM, entrepreneurship, life skills, and outdoor experience. Local offerings give individual girls and troops opportunities to hone leadership skills, try new things in a safe environment, and make unforgettable memories. Visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forgirls for the latest!

Types of Programming

- **Signature Events**: Each year, our council hosts several large-scale signature events for Girl Scouts to explore their interests, connect with other girls and create lifelong memories.
- **Programs and Activities**: We offer badge workshops, Journey overnights and weekends, partner programs, and other engaging opportunities that foster girls’ interests. We also have a host of partner organizations across the region that help connect girls with their communities through service opportunities.
- **Travel**: We offer all kinds of experiences for girls to broaden their horizons—troop travel, GSUSA Destinations, council-sponsored trips and more.
- **Highest Awards**: When girls are inspired to change the world by earning the Bronze, Silver or Gold Award, we’re here to help them with trainings, programs and assistance.
- **Series**: For girls who want a deeper dive into a topic of interest, we have specially-designed series that build on each other to give girls a rich experience.
- **Patch Programs and Council’s Own Awards**: There are many opportunities for troops and girls to earn patches and Council’s Own badges and patches on their own, while we provide the resources to make it happen.
- **Camp and Outdoors**: Girls learn survival skills, go on adventures and make lifelong friends through council camp offerings and troop camping at our beautiful properties.
- **Girls Give Back**: Girls can make their world a better place by contributing their ideas and plans of action to solve community problems. Work together with us at our council-sponsored Days of Service; we also host multiple do-at-home service projects.

Ways to Engage

Our Girl Scout programming allows every girl to foster her interests and try new things. That’s why girls may attend programs on their own or with a troop. We also offer many programs that are appropriate for the whole family!

Troop Resources

- **Custom Programs**: Interested in attending a program, but the time or location isn’t convenient? Plan a custom program online at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/en/events/program-department/CustomPrograms.html for your troop, group, school or service unit with ease!
- **Community Resource Listing**: Visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/en/events/community-resources.html to see a directory of businesses and organizations near you that welcome Girl Scouts for a tour or to complete a badge requirement.
Girl Scout Traditions and Celebrations

Throughout the long history of Girl Scouts, certain traditions remain meaningful and important and are still practiced today. This section gives you an overview of annual celebrations in the Girl Scout year, as well as other revered Girl Scout traditions. Be sure to look in The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting and Leadership Journeys for more information on songs, outdoor activities, historical anecdotes, traditions and ceremonies.

Girl Scout Calendar

Girl Scouts celebrate several special days each year, which you’re encouraged to include in your group planning. Our council offers programs to support these national Girl Scout holidays. Visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forgirls to learn more!

- **World Thinking Day | February 22:** A day when Girl Scouts around the planet participate in activities and projects with global themes. The date is also the birthday of both Lord Baden-Powell and Lady Olave Baden-Powell, the originators of Boy Scouts and the Scouting Movement worldwide.
- **National Girl Scout Cookie Weekend | Last weekend in February**
- **Girl Scout Birthday | March 12:** The first troop meeting was held in Savannah, Georgia, on this date in 1912. Note that Girl Scout Week begins the Sunday before March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sunday”) and extends through the Saturday following March 12 (a day known as “Girl Scout Sabbath”).
- **Volunteer Appreciation Week | April:** This week centers on the long-standing National Girl Scout Leaders’ Day (April 22), but expands the definition of volunteers beyond troop leaders to include all the volunteers who work in so many ways on behalf of girls in Girl Scouting.
- **Founder’s Day | October 31:** Celebrating the birthday of our founder, Juliette Gordon Low.

World Thinking Day: February 22

*World Thinking Day, first created in 1926, offers a special day for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world to “think” of each other and give thanks and appreciation to their sister Girl Scouts. February 22 is the mutual birthday of Lord Baden-Powell, founder of the Boy Scout movement, and his wife, Olave, who served as World Chief Guide.*

On this day girls honor World Thinking Day by earning the World Thinking Day award (girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/global/world-thinking-day.html), which focuses on an annual theme selected by the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS). They also show their appreciation and friendship on World Thinking Day by extending warm wishes and contributing to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund (donate.girlscouts.org/worldfriendshipfund) which helps offer Girl Guiding/Girl Scouting to more girls and young women worldwide.
Time-Honored Ceremonies

Ceremonies play an important part in Girl Scouts and are used not only to celebrate accomplishments, experience time-honored traditions and reinforce the values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, but also to encourage girls to take a short pause in their busy lives and connect with their fellow Girl Scouts in fun and meaningful ways. Many examples of ceremonies—for awards, meeting openings and closings and so on—are sewn right into the Journeys, including ideas for new ceremonies girls can create.

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

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

If you’re working with girls who want to host an event—large or small—be sure girls are leading the event-planning, instead of sitting by passively while you or another adult plans the event.

To get girls started, ask them to think about the following questions:

- What sort of event do you have in mind?
- Should it be outdoors or indoors?
- Who’s invited? How do we invite them?
- What do we hope to accomplish with this event?
- Should we invite experts or special speakers? If so, who? How do we find them?
- What kind of entertainment do we want to have?
- What snacks or refreshments do we want to have?
- How should we decorate for this event?
- How do we know our event was a success?

In addition, here are some questions to keep you on track as you plan:

- What’s our main topic or focus?
- Where will the event take place?
- Is there a charge for using this venue?
- Is the venue large enough to accommodate the audience?
- Do we have to obtain permission to use this venue? If so, from whom?
- Are there adequate facilities for the audience? If not, how much will extra portable toilets cost and how many do we need?
- Is there adequate parking or a drop-off point for girls?
- Do we need tables? chairs? podiums? microphones? speakers?
- How many chaperones will we need? Who will we ask?
- What emergency care do we need to plan for? Is the event large enough that local police and fire departments need to be notified?
- Do we need to purchase additional insurance for non-Girl Scouts?
- Will we give away any keepsakes?
- Who will set up the event?
- Who will clean up after the event?

Ideas for girl-led events with family, friends and community experts are also available in the Leadership Journey adult guides!
Signs, Songs, Handshake and More!

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

**Girl Scout Sign**

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

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

**Girl Scout Handshake**

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

**Quiet Sign**

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

**Girl Scout Slogan and Motto**

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

**Songs**

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

Songs can be used to open or close meetings, enhance ceremonies, lighten a load while hiking, or share a special moment with other Girl Scouts. For tips on choosing and leading songs, go to gsuniversity.girlscouts.org/resource/song-leading-workshops.
Chapter 3: Engaging All Girls

As a Girl Scout volunteer, you’ll have the opportunity to guide girls of all backgrounds, behaviors, skills and abilities. You’ll help her develop leadership skills she can use now and as she grows—all in a safe and accepting environment. This chapter gives you tips for doing just that.

Arranging a Time and Place for Girl-Led Meetings

When and how often to meet is up to you, your co-volunteers, parents and girls: it may just be one time for this particular group of girls. Or, if you meet regularly, what day and time work best for the girls, for you, for your co-volunteers and for other adults who will be presenting or mentoring? Once per week, twice a month, once a month? Is after-school best? Can your co-volunteers meet at that time, or will meetings work better in the evenings or on the weekends?

A meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls. You might consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, houses of worship, community buildings, childcare facilities and local businesses. For teens, you can also rotate meetings at coffee shops, bookstores and other places girls enjoy spending time.

Here are a few points to keep in mind as you consider meeting locations:

- **Cost**: Space should be free/of minimum cost to us; we can help recommend spaces that are. Contact your service unit manager for the list.
- **Size**: Ensure that the space is large enough to accommodate the whole group and all activities.
- **Availability**: Be sure the space is available for the day and the entire meeting length.
- **Resources**: Determine what types of furnishings (table? chairs?) come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby or closet where you can store supplies.
- **Safety**: Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure first-aid equipment is on hand and that you are aware of all emergency and evacuation procedures.
- **Facilities**: Sanitary and accessible toilets are critical.
- **Communication-friendly**: Be sure your cell phone works in the meeting space.
- **Allergen-free**: Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won’t bother susceptible girls during meetings.
- **Accessibility**: Be sure the space can accommodate girls with disabilities, as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.

When trying to secure a meeting location, you might say: “I’m a Girl Scout volunteer, with a group of ______ girls. We’re doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like _____ and ______. We’re all about leadership—the kind that girls use in their daily lives and the kind that makes our community better. We’d love to hold our meetings here because ______.”
Understanding Healthy Development in Girls

As you listen and learn along with girls, you may find it useful to review the highlights of their development. What follows are the developmental abilities and needs of girls at various grade levels. You’ll also find these listed in the adult guide of each Leadership Journey. Plus, the activities in the Journeys are set up with the following guidelines in mind that help you get to know the girls.

GSRI reports in *More than S’mores* that participating in casual outdoor activities in Girl Scouts, like playing, walking or taking field trips in the outdoors, made girls stronger problem solvers and challenge seekers. These outdoor experiences often place girls in new physical, psychological and social situations that motivate curiosity and foster a sense of discovery. These challenges “require girls to become more self-aware and to cooperate, communicate and solve problems” (2014, page 5).

### Girl Scout Daisies (Grades K-1)

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

### Girl Scout Brownies (Grades 2-3)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At this level girls...</th>
<th>This means...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Have lots of energy and need to run, walk and play outside.</td>
<td>Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are social and enjoy working in groups.</td>
<td>Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.</td>
<td>Letting girls lead, direct and help out in activities whenever possible. Allow girls as a group to make decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.</td>
<td>Doing more than just reading to girls about the Brownie Elf’s adventures. Ask girls questions to gauge their understanding and allow them to role play their own pretend visit to a new country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need clear directions and structure and like knowing what to expect.</td>
<td>Offering only one direction at a time. Also, have girls create the schedule and flow of your get-togethers and share it at the start.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money and distance.</td>
<td>Offering support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings or performances, count out money for a trip and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and can tie shoes, use basic tools, begin to sew, etc.</td>
<td>Encouraging girls to express themselves and their creativity by making things with their hands. Girls may need some assistance, however, holding scissors, threading needles and so on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Love to act in plays, create music and dance.</td>
<td>Girls might like to create a play about welcoming a new girl to their school, or tell a story through dance or creative movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know how to follow rules, listen well and appreciate recognition of a job done well.</td>
<td>Acknowledging when the girls have listened or followed the directions well, which will increase their motivation to listen and follow again!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Girl Scout Juniors (Grades 4-5)**

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

**Girl Scout Cadettes (Grades 6-8)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At this level girls...</th>
<th>This means...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are going through puberty, including changes in their skin, body-shape and weight. They’re also starting their menstrual cycles and have occasional shifts in mood.</td>
<td>Being sensitive to the many changes Cadettes are undergoing and acknowledging that these changes are as normal as growing taller! Girls need time to adapt to their changing bodies, and their feelings about their bodies may not keep up. Reinforce that, as with everything else, people go through puberty in different ways and at different times.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are starting to spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.</td>
<td>That girls will enjoy teaming-up in small or large groups for art projects, performances and written activities, as well as tackling relationship issues through both artistic endeavors and Take Action projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be very self-conscious—wanting to be like everyone else, but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.</td>
<td>Encouraging girls to share, but only when they are comfortable. At this age, they may be more comfortable sharing a piece of artwork or a fictional story than their own words. Throughout the activities, highlight and discuss differences as positive, interesting and beautiful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home.</td>
<td>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience what’s known as “fun failure:” girls learn from trying something new and making mistakes.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Girl Scout Seniors (Grades 9-10)

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

### Girl Scout Ambassadors (Grades 11-12)

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

A safe space is one in which girls feel as though they can be themselves, without explanation, judgment, or ridicule. Girl Scout research shows that girls are looking for an emotionally safe environment, where confidentiality is respected and they can express themselves without fear.

The environment you create is as important—maybe more—than the activities girls do; it’s the key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of. The following sections share some tips on creating a friendly, safe environment for girls.

Girl-Adult Partnership

Girl Scouting is for the enjoyment and benefit of the girls, so meetings are built around girls’ ideas. When you put the girls first, you’re helping develop a team relationship, making space for the development of leadership skills, and allowing girls to benefit from the guidance, mentoring and coaching of caring adults.

The three Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing and cooperative learning) are integral to the girl-adult partnership. Take time to read about processes and think about how to incorporate them into your group’s experiences. (See Chapter 2: A National Experience in this handbook for more information about using the Journey adult guides.)

Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl

Girls look up to their volunteers. They need to know that you consider each of them an important person. They can survive a poor meeting place or an activity that flops, but they cannot endure being ignored or rejected. Recognize acts of trying as well as instances of clear success. Emphasize the positive qualities that make each girl worthy and unique. Be generous with praise and stingy with rebuke. Help girls find ways to show acceptance of and support for one another.

Promoting Fairness

Girls are sensitive to injustice. They forgive mistakes if they are sure you are trying to be fair. They look for fairness in the ways responsibilities are shared, in handling of disagreements and in responses to performance and accomplishment. When possible, consult girls as to what they think is fair before decisions are made. Explain your reasoning and show why you did something. Be willing to apologize if needed. Try to see that the responsibilities, as well as the chances for feeling important, are equally divided. Help girls explore and decide for themselves the fair ways of solving problems, carrying out activities and responding to behavior and accomplishments.

Building Trust

Girls need your belief in them and your support when they try new things. They must be sure you will not betray a confidence. Show girls you trust them to think for themselves and use their own judgment. Help them make the important decisions in the group. Help them correct their own mistakes. Help girls give and show trust toward one another. Help them see how trust can be built, lost, regained and strengthened.
Managing Conflict

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

When a conflict arises between girls or a girl and a volunteer, get those involved to sit down together and talk calmly and in a nonjudgmental manner. (Each party may need some time—a few days or a week—to calm down before being able to do this.) Although talking in this way can be uncomfortable and difficult, it does lay the groundwork for working well together in the future.

Whatever you do, do not spread your complaint around to others—that won’t help the situation and causes only embarrassment and anger.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your volunteer support team. If the supervisor cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the supervisor), the issue can be taken to the next level of supervision and, ultimately, contact your council if you need extra help.

Inspiring Open Communication

Girls want someone who will listen to what they think, feel and want to do. They like having someone they can talk to about important things, including things that might not seem important to adults. Listen to the girls. Respond with words and actions. Speak your mind openly when you are happy or concerned about something, and encourage girls to do this, too. Leave the door open for girls to seek advice, share ideas and feelings, and propose plans or improvements. Help girls see how open communication can result in action, discovery, better understanding of self and others and a more comfortable climate for fun and accomplishment.

Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age

When communicating with girls, consider the following tips:

- **Listen:** Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do (no “you shoulds”) is the first step in helping them take ownership of their program.
- **Be honest:** If you’re not comfortable with a topic or activity, say so. No one expects you to be an expert on every topic. Ask for alternatives or seek out volunteers with the required expertise. (Owning up to mistakes—and apologizing for them—goes a long way with girls.)
- **Be open to real issues:** For girls, important topics are things like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs and other serious issues. (You’ll also have plenty of time to discuss less weighty subjects.) When you don’t know, listen. Also seek help from appropriate community resources if you need assistance or more information than you currently have.
- **Show respect:** Girls often say that their best experiences were the ones where adults treated them as equal partners. Being spoken to as a young adult helps them grow.
- **Offer options:** Providing flexibility in changing needs and interests shows that you respect the girls and their busy lives. But whatever option is chosen, girls at every grade level also want guidance and parameters.
- **Stay current:** Be aware of the TV shows girls watch, movies they like, books and magazines they read, and music they listen to—not to pretend you have the same interests, but to show you’re interested in their world.
One way to communicate with girls is through the **LUTE** method—**listen, understand, tolerate and empathize**. Here is a breakdown of the acronym **LUTE** to remind you of how to respond when a girl is upset, angry, or confused.

- **L = Listen**: Hear her out, ask for details and reflect back what you hear, such as, “What happened next?” or “What did she say?”
- **U = Understand**: Try to be understanding of her feelings, with comments such as, “So what I hear you saying is . . .” “I’m sure that upset you,” “I understand why you’re unhappy,” and “Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too.”
- **T = Tolerate**: You can tolerate the feelings that she just can’t handle right now on her own. It signifies that you can listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Say something like: “Try talking to me about it. I’ll listen,” “I know you’re mad—talking it out helps,” and “I can handle it—say whatever you want to.”
- **E = Empathize**: Let her know you can imagine feeling what she’s feeling, with comments such as, “I’m sure that really hurts” or “I can imagine how painful this is for you.”

**Addressing the Needs of Older Girls**

Consider the following tips when working with teenage girls:

- Think of yourself as a partner, and as a coach or mentor, as needed (not a “leader”).
- Ask girls what rules they need for safety and what group agreements they need to be a good team.
- Understand that girls need time to talk, unwind and have fun together.
- Ask what they think and what they want to do.
- Encourage girls to speak their minds.
- Provide structure, but don’t micromanage.
- Give everyone a voice in the group.
- Treat girls like partners.
- Don’t repeat what’s said in the group to anyone outside of it (unless necessary for a girl’s safety).

**Girl Scout Research Institute**

*It’s amazing what you can learn when you listen to girls. Since its founding in 2000, the Girl Scout Research Institute has become an internationally recognized center for research and public policy information on the development and well-being of girls. Not just Girl Scouts, but all girls.*

*In addition to research staff, the GSRI draws on experts in child development, education, business, government, and the not-for-profit sector. We provide the youth development field with definitive research reviews that consolidate existing studies. And, by most measures, we are now the leading source of original research on the issues that girls face and the social trends that affect their lives. Visit [girlscouts.org/research](http://girlscouts.org/research).*

**When Sensitive Topics Come Up**

According to Feeling Safe: What Girls Say, a 2003 Girl Scout Research Institute study, girls are looking for groups that allow connection and a sense of close friendship. They want volunteers who are teen savvy and can help them with issues they face, such as bullying, peer pressure, dating, athletic and academic performance and more. Some of these issues may be considered “sensitive” by parents, and they may have opinions or input about how, and whether, Girl Scouts should cover these topics should be covered with their daughters.
Girl Scouts welcomes and serves girls and families from a wide spectrum of faiths and cultures. When girls wish to participate in discussions or activities that could be considered sensitive—even for some—put the topic on hold until you have spoken with parents and received guidance from your council. When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position.

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

We at Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana maintain that parents/guardians make all decisions regarding their girl’s participation in Girl Scout program that may be of a sensitive nature. As a volunteer leader, you must get written parental permission for any locally planned program offering that could be considered sensitive. A form is available in the Form section of this guide and online at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms. Included on the permission form should be the topic of the activity, any specific content that might create controversy, and any action steps the girls will take when the activity is complete. Be sure to have a form for each girl, and keep the forms on hand in case a problem arises. For activities not sponsored by Girl Scouts, find out in advance (from organizers or other volunteers who may be familiar with the content) what will be presented, and follow your council’s guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Report Concerns

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

- Share your concern with the girl's family, if this is feasible.
- Seek help from appropriate community resources.

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

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

Most parents and guardians are helpful, supportive and sincerely appreciate your time and effort on behalf of their daughters. And you almost always have the same goal, which is to make Girl Scouting an enriching experience for their girls. Encourage them to check out girlscouts4girls.org to find out how to expand their roles as advocates for their daughters.

**Advocating for Girls**

The Girl Scouts Public Policy and Advocacy Office in Washington, D.C., builds relationships with members of Congress, White House officials and other federal departments and agencies, continuously informing and educating them about issues important to girls and Girl Scouting. The office also supports Girl Scout councils at the state and local levels as they build capacity to be the voice for girls. These advocacy efforts help demonstrate to lawmakers that Girl Scouts is a resource and an authority on issues affecting girls. Visit girlscouts.org/who_we_are/advocacy.

**Using “I” Statements**

Perhaps the most important tip for communicating with parents/guardians is for you to use “I” statements instead of “you” statements. “I” statements, which are detailed in the aMAZE Journey for Girl Scout Cadettes, tell someone what you need from her or him, while “you” statements may make the person feel defensive.

Here are some examples of “you” statements:

- “Your daughter just isn’t responsible.”
- “You’re not doing your share.”

Now look at “I” statements:

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If a Parent or Guardian . . .</th>
<th>You Can Say . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is uninvolved and asks how she can help but seems to have no idea of how to follow through or take leadership of even the smallest activity,</td>
<td>“I do need your help. Here are some written guidelines on how to prepare for our camping trip.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constantly talks about all the ways you could make the group better,</td>
<td>“I need your leadership. Project ideas you would like to develop and lead can fit in well with our plan. Please put your ideas in writing, and perhaps I can help you carry them out.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tells you things like, “Denise’s mother is on welfare, and Denise really doesn’t belong in this group,”</td>
<td>“I need your sensitivity. Girl Scouting is for all girls, and by teaching your daughter to be sensitive to others’ feelings you help teach the whole group sensitivity.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shifts parental responsibilities to you and is so busy with her own life that she allows no time to help,</td>
<td>“I love volunteering for Girl Scouts and want to make a difference. If you could take a few moments from your busy schedule to let me know what you value about what we’re doing, I’d appreciate it. It would keep me going for another year.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Meetings with Parents/Guardians or a Friends-and-Family Network

A parent/guardian meeting, or a meeting of your friends-and-family network (as encouraged in many of the leadership Journeys), is a chance for you to get to know the families of the girls in your group. See the Volunteer Toolkit and the Learning Portal for ideas and sample agendas.

Before the meeting, be sure you and/or your co-volunteers have done the following:

- For younger girls, arranged for a parent, another volunteer, or a group of older girls to do activities with the girls in your group while you talk with their parents/guardians (if girls will attend the meeting, too)
- Practiced a discussion on the following: Girl Scout Mission, Promise and Law; benefits of Girl Scouting for their daughters, including how the GSLE is a world-class system for developing girl leaders; all the fun the girls are going to have; expectations for girls and their parents/guardians; and ideas of how parents and other guardians can participate in and enrich their daughters’ Girl Scout experiences
- Determined when product programs (including Girl Scout cookie activities) will happen in your council; parents/guardians will absolutely want to know
- Determined what information parents should bring to the meeting
- Used the Friends and Family pages provided in the adults guides for many of the Journeys, or created your own one-page information sheet (contact information for you and co-volunteers and helpers, the day and time of each meeting, location of and directions to the meeting place, what to bring with them, and information on how to get Journey resources—books, awards and keepsakes—and other merchandise like sashes, vests, T-shirts and so on)
- Gathered or created supplies, including a sign-in sheet, an information sheet, permission forms for parents/guardians (also available from your council), health history forms (as required by your council) and GSUSA registration forms
- Prepared yourself to ask parents and guardians for help, being as specific as you can about the kind of help you will need (the Journey’s Friends and Family pages will come in handy here)

Your First Parent/Guardian Meeting

You’re free to structure the parent/guardian meeting in whatever way works for you, but the following structure works for many new volunteers:

- As the girls and adults arrive, ask them to sign in. If the girls’ parents/guardians haven’t already registered them online through our online registration process outlined above, you’ll want to email or hand out information so they can do so. Paper registration forms may be passed out if necessary.
- Open the meeting by welcoming the girls and adults. Introduce yourself and other co-volunteers or helpers. Have adults and girls introduce themselves, discuss whether anyone in their families has been a Girl Scout, and talk about what Girl Scouting means to them. Welcome everyone, regardless of experience, and let them know they will be learning about Girl Scouts today. (If you’re new to Girl Scouting, don’t worry—just let everyone know you’ll be learning about Girl Scouting together!)
- Ask the girls to go with the adult or teen in charge of their activity and begin the discussion.
- Discuss the information you prepared for this meeting:
  - All the fun girls are going to have!
  - When and where the group will meet and examples of activities girls might choose to do
  - That a parent/guardian permission form is used for activities outside the group’s normal meeting time and place and the importance of completing and returning it promptly
  - How you plan to keep in touch with parents/guardians (a Facebook page or group, Twitter, email, text messaging, a phone tree, or fliers the girls take home are just some ideas)
Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

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

Inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, about all girls being offered the same opportunities, about respect and dignity, and about honoring the uniqueness of and differences among us all. You’re accepting and inclusive when you:

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

As you think about where, when and how often to meet with your group, you will find yourself considering the needs, resources, safety and beliefs of all members and potential members. As you do this, include the special needs of any members who have disabilities, or whose parents or guardians have disabilities. But please don’t rely on visual cues to inform you of a disability: Approximately 20 percent of the U.S. population has a disability—that’s one in five people, of every socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity and religion.

As a volunteer, your interactions with girls present an opportunity to improve the way society views girls (and their parents/guardians) with disabilities. Historically, disabilities have been looked at from a deficit
viewpoint with a focus on how people with disabilities could be fixed. Today, the focus is on a person’s abilities—on what she can do rather than on what she cannot.

If you want to find out what a girl with a disability needs to make her Girl Scout experience successful, simply ask her or her parent/guardian. If you are frank and accessible, it’s likely they will respond in kind, creating an atmosphere that enriches everyone.

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

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Say . . .</th>
<th>Instead of . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>She has a learning disability.</td>
<td>She is learning disabled.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has a developmental delay.</td>
<td>She is mentally retarded; she is slow.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She uses a wheelchair.</td>
<td>She is wheelchair-bound.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

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

### Registering Girls with Cognitive Disabilities

Girls with cognitive disabilities can be registered as closely as possible to their chronological ages. They wear the uniform of that grade level. Make any adaptations for the girl to ongoing activities of the grade level to which the group belongs. Young women with cognitive disorders may choose to retain their girl membership through their 21st year, and then move into an adult membership category.
Chapter 4: Safety-Wise

In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is always our top priority.

Knowing Your Responsibilities

You the volunteer, the parents/guardians of the girls in your group, and the girls themselves share the responsibility for staying safe. The next three sections flesh out who’s responsible for what. Safety Activity Checkpoints may be found online at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/vol-resources.

Responsibilities of the Volunteer: Girl Scout Safety Guidelines

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

All Safety Guidelines can be found on page 13 of the Quick-Reference Guide.

Responsibilities of Parents and Guardians

You should engage each parent or guardian to help you work toward ensuring the health, safety and well-being of girls. Clearly communicate to parents and guardians that they are expected to:

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

Responsibilities of Girls

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

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

Girl Scouts’ adult-to-girl ratios show the minimum number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. (Councils may also establish maximums due to size or cost restrictions.) These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls—for example, if one adult has to respond to an emergency, a second adult is always on hand for the rest of the girls. It may take you a minute to get used to the layout of this chart, but once you start to use it, you’ll find the chart extremely helpful.

Reference Adult-to-Girl Ratio chart on page 15 of the Quick-Reference Guide.

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

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

• The “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints
• Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge
• Any relevant terms and conditions for online participation in product program

Transporting Girls

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

Reference page 15 of the Quick-Reference Guide for basic guidelines.

Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats and chartered flights. Each driver of motorized private transportation must be at least 21 years old and hold a valid operator’s license appropriate to the vehicle—state laws must be followed, even if they are more stringent than the guidelines here. Anyone who is driving a vehicle with more than 12 passengers must also be a professional driver who possesses a commercial driver’s license (CDL).

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

• Read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms and avoid surprises. Note the minimum age of drivers (often 25), as well as the maximum age (often under 70). Be sure the car is adequately insured, knowing who is responsible for damage to or the loss of the vehicle itself. Also, ensure you have a good paper trail, with evidence that the vehicle rental is Girl Scout–related.
• Obtain parent/guardian permission (form available at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms or this guide) for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place.
• New for 2018-2019, girls are not permitted to use ridesharing companies such as Lyft, Uber, Curb, etc. See Safety Activity Checkpoints for details.
Checklist for Drivers
When driving a car, RV or camper, take the following precautions. Ask all drivers to do the same:

- Ensure all drivers are adults over the age of 21—girls should not be transporting other girls.
- Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pickup, or in a camper-trailer.
- Keep directions and a road map in the car, along with a first-aid kit and a flashlight.
- Check your lights, signals, tires, windshield wipers, horns and fluid levels before each trip and check them periodically on long trips.
- Keep all necessary papers (driver’s license, vehicle registration, state or local inspections, insurance coverage, etc.) up-to-date.
- Wear your seat belt at all times and insist that all passengers do the same; keep girls under 12 in the back seats.
- Follow all the established rules of the road in your state (following the speed limit, keeping a two-car-length between you and the car ahead of you, not talking or texting on a cell phone or other personal electronic device, not using earbuds or headphones, driving with your headlights on, etc.).
- Avoid driving for extended periods at night, when tired, or taking medication that makes you drowsy.
- Plan rest stops every few hours; if driving with others, prearrange stopping places along the way. When planning longer trips, arrange for relief drivers.

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

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

- Safety precautions in place
- Need for appropriate clothing and/or supplies
- Need for advance arrangements for all transportation and confirmation of these plans
- Need for written permission from them in order for their daughter to participate
- Location of designated sale areas, which are also communicated to the Council
Communicate with Your Local Police Department

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

- School Resource Officers who have specific training for communicating with young people
- Community Volunteers who may be able to assist by being present during booth sales

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

Prepare for Emergencies

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

Arrange for Volunteer Supervision

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

- Volunteers who oversee Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors must:
  - Be aware of how, when and where the girls are selling products
  - Be on call when girls are participating in product programs
  - Be readily available to them should they need assistance.
  - Help girls understand how to be safe in their surroundings, and always enforce the use of the buddy system

Volunteer supervision for all Girl Scouts extends to any online activity. Consult the “Computer/Online Use” Safety Activity Checkpoints for specific information about safe online practices for all activities, and to obtain a copy of the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge.

Plan for Safeguarding Money

Girls should always have a plan for safeguarding money, which includes such things as:

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

Money due for products sold is collected when the products are delivered to the customer. For more information, call our product program hotline at 855-ILOVEGS (456-8347), ext. 6722.

Use the Buddy System

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

In order to ensure the safety of girls while selling door-to-door, you and the girls should become familiar with the areas and neighborhoods in which girls would like to sell. In addition, girls should:

- Participate in door-to-door sales only during daylight hours.
- Wear a membership pin, uniform, or Girl Scout clothing (e.g., Girl Scout T-shirt) to clearly identify themselves as Girl Scouts.
- Avoid a house or person that makes them uncomfortable. They should walk away and find the next person/place that does not make them uncomfortable.
- Call 9-1-1 if they see someone that seems to be acting in a way that makes them feel unsafe. This could include, but is not limited to, any person who is staring at them for long periods, seems to be following them for no apparent reason or takes pictures of the them.
- Use safe pedestrian practices, such as crossing at corners and obeying walk signals.
- Not enter the home or vehicle of a stranger, and to avoid selling to people in vehicles (except at drive-thru cookie booths) or going into alleys.
- Should not carry large amounts of money (see “Plan for Safeguarding Money”, above).

Booth Sites

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

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

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

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

- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes
- Having a volunteer keep money secure. Example, keep in a front-facing pouch around her waist.
- Reduce cash transactions by offering credit card payment options per your council guidelines.

If someone takes money or cookies from your booth, do not attempt to physically recover the stolen items and do not allow the girls to do so. Instead, get a good description of the offender(s), call 911, and alert local security (if applicable). Make sure girls know what to do in case of theft. Report any incidents by calling the Product Program Hotline at 855-ILOVEGS (456-8347), ext. 6722.

*In case of an incident of medical emergency at a booth site, call 911 and complete all necessary paperwork. Then call our council emergency number immediately at 312-416-2500, M-F, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Or call 877-870-5823 after hours or during weekends.*
**Computer/Online Safety**

**Understand the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge**

In order to make sure that girls are aware of how to safely use the Internet, you should discuss online safety issues with the girls and distribute copies of the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#). The girls should also take a copy of the pledge home and go over it with their parents. Both the girl and her parent should sign the pledge.

**Safeguard Information**

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

- Girl Scouts should only use their first names.
- A Girl Scout’s last name, address, phone number, or e-mail address should never be posted.
- Always have a parent’s or guardian’s permission when using pictures of girls on a website. This is especially important if the girl is under 13 years old.
- Do not post addresses of group meeting places, dates and times of meetings, events or trips on a website. Instead, a volunteer who wishes to communicate upcoming events with families of Girl Scouts should send an e-mail to the families.
- Do not allow automatic posting of messages to a website. All postings to message boards, social media and guest books should have volunteer oversight, and be screened prior to posting live.
- Ensure that websites do not show personal e-mail addresses of girls, but use a troop, group or volunteer’s e-mail.

**Safety in Technology-Based Sales**

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

- Girls must read, understand and accept the [Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge](#), prior to conducting any online sales or marketing activities.
- Girls may send e-mail messages to alert friends and relatives about product programs and accept customer commitments via email.
- Social media sites may be used to market product, however, all applicable GSUSA and council guidelines must be followed.
- Girls writing product e-mails or announcements online should sign with their first names only, their troop/group number or name and their council name.
- Personal e-mails or street addresses of girls should never be used. Instead, use one of the following:
  - A blind return address account where the girls’ name or personal e-mail is not revealed to the customer and is instead hosted on a secure site
  - A group account, monitored by a volunteer
  - A volunteer’s e-mail account, which is supervised by that volunteer

For additional information and guidance please see Terms & Conditions for Parents/Guardians and Terms & Conditions for Volunteers, as well as Cookie and Product Sales and Computer/Online Use in Safety Activity Checkpoints.
Preparing for Activities

How can you, as a Girl Scout volunteer, determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate? Good judgment and common sense often dictate the answer. What’s safe in one circumstance may not be safe in another. An incoming storm, for example, might force you to assess or discontinue an activity. If you are uncertain about the safety of an activity, contact your local service unit manager with full details and don’t proceed without approval. Err on the side of caution and make the safety of girls your most important consideration. Prior to any activity, find the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints in the Volunteer Toolkit or the form section of the website related to any activity you plan to do with girls.

Safety Activity Checkpoints exist for the following activities.

1. Amusement Parks
2. Animal Interaction
3. Backpacking
4. Bicycling
5. Camping
6. Climbing and Adventure Sports—Master Progression Chart
   a. Challenge Courses
   b. Climbing and Rappelling
   c. Recreational Tree Climbing
   d. Zip Lining
7. Computer and Internet Use
8. Cookie and Product Sales
9. Cross-Country Skiing
10. Downhill Skiing and Snowboarding
11. Fencing
12. Fishing and Ice Fishing
13. Geocaching
14. Go-Karting
15. Hayrides
16. Hiking
17. Horseback Riding
18. Indoor Skydiving
19. Indoor Trampoline
20. Inflatables
21. Miscellaneous Activities
22. Offshore Water Vessels
23. Orienteering
24. Outdoor Cooking
25. Paddling and Rowing Sports—Master Progression Chart
   a. Canoeing
   b. Corcl Boats
   c. Kayaking
   d. Row Boating
   e. Standup Paddle Boarding
   f. Whitewater Rafting
26. Sailing
27. Scuba
28. Sledding and Tobogganing
29. Snorkeling
30. Snowshoeing
31. Spelunking/Caving
32. Surfing
33. Swimming
34. Target and Shooting Sports—Master Progression Chart
   a. Archery
   b. Shooting Sports
   c. Tomahawk, Knife, and Hatchet Throwing
35. Tethered Balloon Rides
36. Travel/Trips
37. Tubing
38. Waterskiing and Wakeboarding
39. Windsurfing
If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity you and the girls are interested in, follow the trip and travel process before making any definite plans with the girls. Some activities are allowed only with written council pre-approval and only for girls 12 and over, while some are off-limits completely. Please check Safety Activity Checkpoints before planning any activities with your troop. Safety Activity Checkpoints outlines each activity and indicates if council pre-approval is required.

- **Warning**: Activities never allowed for any girl include but are not limited to: potentially uncontrolled free-falling (i.e. bungee jumping, hang gliding, parachuting, parasailing, outdoor trampolining and zorbing); flying in small private planes, helicopters or blimps; hot air ballooning; skydiving; creating extreme variations of approved activities (such as high-altitude climbing and aerial tricks on bicycles, stunt skiing, snowboards, skateboards, wakeboards and water-skis) operating motorized vehicles (such as motor bikes, all-terrain vehicles, go-carts and motorized personal watercraft such as jet skis); hunting; shooting a projectile at another person; and taking watercraft trips in Class V or higher.

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.

**Health Histories (Including Examinations and Immunizations)**

Current health histories for all girls and adults within the troop should be maintained by the troop leaders and carried by that leader to all activities and events in case of an accident or emergency that requires medical attention or communication with parents/guardians or emergency contacts. 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 and a health practitioner).

For various reasons, some parents/guardians may object to immunizations or medical examinations. Please contact your troop support specialist at the council to ensure that provisions can be made for these girls to attend Girl Scout functions in a way that accommodates these concerns.

It is important for you to also be aware of any medications a girl may take or allergies she may have.

- **Medication**: including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a girl’s custodial parent or guardian. (See the Forms section of this guide or our online Resources and Forms section.) 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 be sure to double-check with their parents/guardians and review their health histories.
Girl Scout Activity Insurance

Every registered Girl Scout and registered volunteer member in the Girl Scout movement is automatically covered under the basic Mutual of Omaha Activity Insurance plan upon registration. The premium for the Basic Plan, which provides supplemental medical insurance is paid for in full by Girl Scouts of the USA.

This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. This is one reason why all volunteers and girls should be registered members. It is important to remember that non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters and friends) and other persons are not covered by the basic plan.

This insurance coverage is not intended to diminish the need for, or replace existing, family health insurance. When $130 in benefits has been paid under this plan for covered expenses, any subsequent benefits from the basic plan will be payable (up to the specified maximum) only for expenses incurred that aren’t covered under another insurance policy. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available under the basic plan.

An optional Activity Insurance plan is available for Girl Scouts taking extended trips (trips that are more than two overnight stays) and for non-members who participate in Girl Scout activities. These optional plans are secondary insurance that a council may offer to cover participants taking part in any council-approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. Optional insurance coverage is available for any Girl Scout activity that involves non-Girl Scouts or lasts longer than three days and two nights.

Review the Girl Scouts insurance plan description. You can access the insurance plan description and forms online at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms. If you need additional assistance identifying which enrollment form to complete to file a claim, please contact your insurance associate.

Certificates of Insurance

If you are asked for a certificate of insurance, please email insurance@girlscoutsgcnwi.org. Please include the full name of the venue, address, city, state, zip, venue contact name, and the venue contact email address.

Experts

The Safety Activity Checkpoints for most activities require having an expert on hand to help girls learn an activity. Some things to keep in mind:

Does the person have documented training and experience? She or he should have documented experience for the activity in question, such as course completion certificates or cards, records of previous training to instruct the activity and letters of reference. The expert’s training, certifications, and experience should mirror those outlined in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

What does she or he need to be able to do? This person should have the knowledge and experience to make appropriate judgments concerning participants, equipment, facilities, safety considerations, supervision and procedures for the activity. At the very least, he or she should be able to give clear instructions to girls and adults, troubleshoot unexpected scenarios, and respond appropriately in an emergency.

See more on Experts under Safety Standards and Activity Guidelines in introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints under the topic of Instructor Credibility.
Providing Emergency Care

As you know, emergencies can happen. Girls need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting to adults any accidents, illnesses, or unusual behaviors during Girl Scout activities. You can help girls to:

- **Know what to report.** See the “Procedures for Accidents” section later in this chapter.
- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.**
- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost persons and building-security responses.** Every girl and adult must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.
- **Assemble a well-stocked, up-to-date, first-aid kit that is always accessible.** First-aid administered in the first few minutes can mean the difference between life and death. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911.

First-Aid/CPR

Emergencies require prompt action and quick judgment. For many activities, Girl Scouts recommends that at least one adult volunteer be first-aid/CPR-certified. For that reason, if you have the opportunity to get trained in council-approved first-aid/CPR, do it! You can take advantage of first-aid/CPR training offered by chapters of the American Red Cross, Emergency Care and Safety Institute (ECSI), National Safety Council, EMP America, American Heart Association, or other sponsoring organizations approved by your council. Take age-specific CPR training, that is, take child CPR if you’re working with younger girls and adult CPR when working with older girls and adults. As a partner of GSUSA, American Red Cross offers discounts on certification courses.

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

Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana offers a “blended learning” option which combines the convenience of eLearning with an in-person skills session. Check our council’s Training Calendar on the “Volunteer” section of our website for information.

First-Aider

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

Activities take place in a variety of locations, which is why first-aid requirements are based on the remoteness of the activity—as noted in the Safety Activity Checkpoints for that activity.
For example, it’s possible to do a two-mile hike that has cell phone reception and service along the entire route and EMS (Emergency Medical System) is, at maximum, 30 minutes away at all times. It is also possible to hike more remotely with no cell phone service at a place where EMS would take more than 30 minutes to arrive. It’s important that you or another volunteer with your group has the necessary medical experience (including knowledge of evacuation techniques) to ensure group safety. The levels of first aid required for any activity take into account both how much danger is involved and how remote the area is from emergency medical services.

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

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

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

*Note: The presence of a first-aider is required at resident camp. For large events—200 people or more—there should be one first-aider for every 200 participants. The following healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders: physician, physician’s assistant, nurse practitioner, registered nurse, licensed practical nurse, paramedic, military medic and emergency medical technician.

**First-Aid Kit**

Make sure a general first-aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not available at your meeting place. You can purchase a Girl Scout first-aid kit, you can buy a commercial kit, or you and the girls can assemble a kit yourselves. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its Anatomy of a First Aid Kit. (Note that the Red Cross’s suggested list includes aspirin, which you will not be at liberty to give to girls without direct parent/guardian permission.) You can also customize a kit to cover your specific needs, including flares, treatments for frostbite or snake bites and the like.

In addition to standard materials, all kits should contain your council and emergency telephone numbers (found on the inside back cover of this guide). Girl Scout activity insurance forms, parent consent forms and health histories should be included (available in the Forms section of this guide or at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms).
You Witness or Suspect Abuse

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

For additional information, please check the following resources:

- U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Child Welfare Information Gateway: childwelfare.gov/can/
- Mandatory Reporters of Child Abuse and Neglect: childwelfare.gov/systemwide/laws_policies/statutes/manda.cfm

Procedures for Accidents

Although you hope the worst never happens, you must observe council procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the sick or injured person. Follow our established council procedures as noted on the emergency information card on the back page of this guide for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand your emergency information card and phone numbers of parents/guardians and emergency services such as the police, fire department or hospital emergency technicians.

Follow the procedures stated on the EMERGENCY INFORMATION CARD found on the back cover of this book. Cut it out or copy it and keep it in your wallet.

After receiving a report of an accident, council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance at the scene, if needed, and will notify parents/guardians, as appropriate. If a child needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, only council-designated staff alerted through our emergency protocol should discuss the incident with these representatives. Please do not speak on behalf of the council.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, notify the police. A responsible adult must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings. Follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, your council, and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.
Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances

Helping girls decide what they want to do and coaching them as they earn and manage money to pursue their goals, is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). As your group plans and finances its own activities with your guidance, the girls learn valuable life skills.

Girl Scout groups are financially supported by a share of money earned through council-sponsored product program activities (the fall product and Girl Scout Cookie programs), group council-approved money-earning activities and any fees or assessments your group may charge. The $25 annual membership dues paid by each girl go to the national organization. No part of the dues remain with the troop or the council. This chapter will help you establish a group banking account and provide you with guidance to help girls manage their group finances, practice successful product-program techniques, review safety requirements and understand how to collaborate with sponsors and causes. Visit the Learning Portal for the most up-to-date training resources and information about money management and council-sponsored product programs.

Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana is committed to ensuring that all girls and adults have the opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. We offer limited funds to members who would be unable to participate in Girl Scout activities without financial support from the council. Troops are encouraged to facilitate girl-led financial planning for their activities. Financial assistance is not a primary source of funding for members or troops.

Financial assistance funds are supported by the Family Partnership campaign as well as the Fall Product and Girl Scout Cookie Programs. For complete Financial Assistance information and forms, please visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/financial-assistance.

Establishing a Bank Account

All troops and groups are required to set up a bank account. If you’re taking over an existing troop/group, you may inherit a checking account. For an inherited troop/group bank account, authorized signers names must be changed. To change the names, the bank requires all departing authorized signers and new designated authorized signers be present at the bank. The bank will not allow the authorized signers names to be changed unless all participating parties are present. With a new troop/group, you should open a new account. This usually happens when there is money to deposit, such as group dues or money from product programs or group money-earning activities. Consider these tips:

- Keep group funds in the bank before an activity or trip, paying for as many items as possible in advance of your departure.
- Use debit cards during the activity or trip.
- Make one person responsible for group funds and for keeping a daily account of expenditures.
- Have one or more back-up people who also have debit cards, in case the main card is lost.
- Handle a lost group debit card the same way you would a personal debit card: cancel it immediately.
- Payment for products such as cookies and nuts/candies are processed through the troop’s bank account in a process called ACH (Automatic Clearing House). Money due to the council must be in the bank a minimum of one week prior to the payment due (called ACH Sweep).
- As a general rule, keep troop money separate from the troop leader’s personal money.
Follow your council’s financial policies and procedures for setting up a troop bank account. Most council product program activities have specific banking and tracking procedures.

Unused Girl Scout money left in accounts when groups disband becomes the property of the council. Prior to disbanding, the group may decide to donate any unused funds to their service unit, another troop or for girl activities. Girl activities can include purchasing materials to support another organization through Take Action projects. As when closing a personal account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it, and realize that you may have to close the account in person.

Submit remaining funds to a staff member or send your disbanded paperwork to disbandingtroops@girlscoutsgcnwi.org. Funds received by the council will be dispersed to financial assistance to support our members with the greatest need.

**Product Program Participation**

All Girl Scout members are expected to participate in the fall product and cookie programs as the primary source of troop money earning. In addition to providing an opportunity for girls to learn life skills and earn funds to support troop/group activities, product program proceeds offset the cost of volunteer training, girl programs and administrative support to troops and service units.

**Service Unit and Troop Financial Reports**

By June 15 of each year, troops are required to submit an annual financial report through the Finance tab of the Volunteer Toolkit, accompanied by a reconciled bank statement, including a detailed cash report or software program report of their choice, to track monthly financial transactions. Troops are encouraged to keep detailed records and receipts for one year following each membership year in their possession.

Service Units are required to submit to their service unit support manager an annual financial report, accompanied by a bank statement, including a detailed cash report or software program report of their choice, to track monthly financial transactions. The Service Unit Financial Report Form is available online at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms.

**Bad Debts**

In the event that a volunteer has a bad debt exceeding 45 days after they have received notification, said volunteer will be immediately removed from her/his position by the council and will be sent to collections.

**Disbanded Troops**

A troop disbands when they decide not to re-register or stop meeting during the membership year. Money belongs to the troop and not to individual girls. When a troop disbands, the service unit manager must be notified. The troop decides 1) how to use its existing funds, 2) completes the link for the disbanding troop form found on its annual financial report form in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), 3) closes out the troop bank account and 4) turns all remaining paperwork and funds into the council by contacting disbandingtroops@girlscoutsgcnwi.org. For your convenience, you may also give your disbanded troop form and monies to your troop support specialist who will turn them in on your behalf.

**Volunteers Handling Finances**

All adults handling money must be approved volunteers with no financial restrictions. This includes, but is not limited to, troop cookie managers, troop fall product managers, service unit cookie managers,
service unit fall product managers, service unit treasurers, troop treasurers, and troop support volunteers. Volunteers should deposit funds on a regular basis within 48 hours of receipt.

**Troop Bank Accounts**

All troops are required to hold their Girl Scout funds in a bank account. This is to ensure a clear division between troop funds and a troop leader’s personal funds. It also provides a clear record of all deposits and expenses so that leaders can easily explain to girls and their families how the girls used their troop funds throughout the year. The bank account is to be opened in the name of Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana, Troop Number XXXXX.

There are to be a minimum of two (2) unrelated volunteers on the account. No signer on the account may be a Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana employee. This account will use the federal tax identification number 36-3871241. The address on the account must be one of the signers. Bank statements are to be sent to the home address of a person registered with the troop, not to the Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana’s Gathering Place address.

Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana recommends establishing an account with BMO Harris Bank. The council established a mutually beneficial partnership with BMO Harris Bank providing many benefits to troops such as waiving account fees. Troops select one of two letters that is submitted to the bank when opening or modifying a bank account. Please contact your troop support specialist who will advise you and help provide you with the correct form.

*Note: Your service unit manager or troop support specialist will advise you on bank account activity, troop financial reporting and use of sales tax exemption forms.*

**Cancellations and Refunds for Council-Sponsored Activities**

If the council cancels an activity or event for any reason, troops or families will receive a full refund. Programs may be cancelled due to low enrollment. If a program does not meet the minimum girls required by the registration close date, the program will be cancelled. Participants will be notified of the cancellation via email on the Monday prior to the program. Council events and activities run rain or shine, unless there are safety concerns that prompt the council to issue a cancellation notice.

Refunds will be made as follows:
- No refunds issued on pre-purchased tickets.
- No refunds are given within two weeks of a program.
- You may swap participants up to the day of the event.
- Refunds will not be given for programs or events $5 or less.
- Refund requests must be made in writing prior to registration deadline.
- No refunds will be made for registrants not attending the program.
- Girl and adult membership registration is non-refundable.
- Participants choosing not to attend will not be issued a refund.

**Automatic Clearing House (ACH)**

Our council uses ACH (Automatic Clearing House) to process payments for fall product and cookie program money owed to the council. Only bank fees that are associated with NSF checks accepted from a product program customer by the troop will be reimbursed to the troop. Bank fees that are associated with shortages in accounts at the time of the automatic payment sweep will not be reimbursed to the troop.
Dates and procedures for each ACH sweep are detailed in the product program materials provided to each troop presented by the service unit fall product or cookie manager at the training session. Details of product program volunteer responsibility are outlined in the position description and are available at product program trainings. Debt owed by a girl’s family must be submitted to the council by the deadline date on an IC (Individual Collection) form that’s posted on our website for each product program. All debt owed by a girl or the troop will be pursued. Any questions about our fall product or cookie programs can be answered by calling the Product Program helpline at 1-855-ILOVEGS (1-855-456-8347), ext. 6722.

Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program

Did you know that the Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led business in the country, with sales of more than $700 million per year for girls and their communities nationwide?

That’s right. The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the leading entrepreneurial program for girls: no university has produced as many female business owners as the Girl Scout Cookie Program has.

If you have a moment, watch the latest Girl Scout What Can a Cookie Do? video for an inspiring look into just how powerful those treats—and the girls who sell them—can be.

Council-sponsored product programs are really the best way for girls to earn money to pursue their goals: the sales are beloved by the community and come with program, sales, and marketing materials and support that help girls run a great business. And they’re an integral part of the GSLE. With every season of cookies, another generation of girls learns five important skills:

- Goal setting
- Decision making
- Money management
- People skills
- Business ethics

And most of all, girls gain a tremendous amount of confidence. It’s not easy to ask people to buy something—you have to speak up, look them in the eye, and believe in what you’re doing—all skills that help a girl succeed now and throughout the rest of her life.

Before beginning any cookies or other product programs with your group, refer to the cookies section of girlscouts.org/program/gs_cookies and girlscoutcookies.org.

A Sweet Tradition

It has been decades since Girl Scouts began selling home-baked cookies to raise money. The idea was so popular that, in 1936, Girl Scouts enlisted bakers to handle the growing demand. For more on Girl Scout Cookie History, visit girlscouts.org/program/gs_cookies/history.asp.

Two commercial bakers are currently licensed by Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies—Little Brownie Bakers and ABC/Interbake Foods—and each council selects the baker of its choice. Each baker gets to name its own cookies (which is why some cookies have two names) and gets to decide which flavors it will offer in a given year, besides the three mandatory flavors (Thin Mints, Do-Si-Dos®/Peanut Butter Sandwich, and Trefoils/Shortbread). For additional information on cookie varieties, including nutritional details, visit girlscoutcookies.org.
Our Council’s Role
Each year, GSGCNWI provides learning opportunities and support so girls, volunteers and families understand the procedures for supporting both of our council’s product programs (fall product and cookies). Our council establishes guidelines, procedures for conducting the program and determines how the proceeds and girl reward system will be managed.

Knowing Where Proceeds Go
Your council will provide a breakdown of “how the cookie crumbles” in your council. Please share this information with girls and their parents/guardians so everyone’s clear on how revenue raised through product programs makes it possible for your Girl Scout council to serve girls. Proceeds resulting from product programs support program activities—in fact, council-sponsored product programs are a primary way in which your council raises funds to support Girl Scouting. The percentage of money to be allocated to participating groups (like yours) is determined by your council and explained to girls and volunteers as part of the product program activity orientation.

The income from product programs does not become the property of individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for incentives and credits that they put toward Council sponsored camps, programs and programmatic materials.

Girls may earn official Girl Scout grade-appropriate rewards related to product program activities, and each council may choose to provide items such as participation patches, rewards, and council credit for event fees, camp fees, grants for travel and Take Action projects, as well as materials and supplies for program activities. The council plan for rewards applies equally to all girls participating in the product program activity.

One critical task for each troop/group, is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the group’s volunteer, you’re in charge of making sure money is spent wisely, excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and all income is tracked, too. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as they learn to keep impeccable records.

The Girl/Volunteer Partnership
Underlying all the lessons that girls can learn from their participation in the Girl Scout Cookie Program is the girl/volunteer partnership. Ideally, this is a partnership between the girl and her leader and between the girl and her parents or guardian. Volunteers do not sell cookies, they participate only in supporting the direct involvement of girls.

During the Girl Scout Cookie Program the girl/volunteer partnership may look like this:
• A volunteer and girl working together to make plans and set goals.
• A volunteer assisting a girl by giving her access to the information and training she needs but letting the girl do the selling and delivering of cookies.
• A volunteer guiding a girl in understanding the finances and letting her practice the skills.
• A volunteer advising a girl on how to market her cookies but allowing her to make her make her own decisions.
• A volunteer helping a girl understand her responsibility to support her local council but ensuring that her participation is voluntary.
Preparing for Your Girl Scout Cookie Booths

Cookie booths, or temporary sales set-ups in areas with lots of foot traffic, are a popular way for girls to sell cookies as a team. Your council may have established cookie booth locations; contact the council before planning a cookie booth of your own. We encourage volunteers to use their best judgement in setting up cookie booths in locations that will be open, accessible, and safe for all girls and potential customers.

Girl safety is the top priority while selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products. Volunteers, parents, and girls should be familiar with Cookie and Product Sales in Safety Activity Checkpoints, as well as Ensuring Product Program Safety in Chapter 4: Safety-Wise. Review these resources to make sure you and the girls are as prepared as possible.

Once you’ve gotten council approval, check out the booth site before the day of the sale. Talk to business owners in the area so they’ll know what to expect. Find out what security measures are in place—these may include lights for evening sales and whether a security camera watches the booth area—and where the nearest bathrooms are located.

On the day of the sale, these tips will help make booth sales enjoyable for everyone:

- Ensure that you have adequate space at the booth (table, products, and girls) to allow safe passage by pedestrians, bikes, and cars.
- Plan to have at least two volunteers and one girl at the booth at all times. At least one of those volunteers must be registered with the council and have a background check. From time to time, volunteers might want to take breaks or will have to accompany young girls to the bathroom, so make sure to have a few extra volunteers on hand.
- Girls make all sales, except in cases where volunteers are helping Daisies handle money. *Note: Volunteers and Girl Scout council staff do not sell cookies and other products; girls sell them. Before beginning any cookies or other product programs with your group, refer to this guide and girlscoutcookies.org."
- Respect the surrounding businesses by making sure your booth isn’t blocking a store entrance or exit.
- Attract customers with colorful signs. Remind girls to be polite and to have their sales pitch ready for interested shoppers.
- Report any suspicious people in the area to local security.

Reference Chapter 4: Safety-Wise, page 59, for what to do in case of theft, an incident or medical emergency at a booth site.

The Volunteer Toolkit

The Volunteer Toolkit can help you coordinate your troop’s cookie booths. Click “Add Activity” at the top of the Year Plan tab. Enter in the booth information and keep it updated with which girls and adult will be there! The VTK will even write an email with the booth information. All you have to do it customize it and send it to your troop parents and volunteers!

Loop Sites

Cookie sites held within the “Chicago Loop” (Chicago Ave. on the north, Roosevelt on the south, Halsted on the west, Lake Michigan on the east) are earmarked for our council loop site program. Troops cannot secure any booth site within the above mentioned boundaries at any time during our cookie program. If a troop has a direct connection to a building, please call the product program help line for more information, 855-ILOVEGS (456-8347), ext. 6722.
Gift of Caring Donation Program

Gift of Caring is an established product donation program where customers may purchase product for the sole purpose of having it donated to the military or a community organization coordinated by our council. This is a great talking point for girls to share with their customers and a great way to help teach girls that product program can make a big impact in their community and to others.

Here are some things to remember about cookie donations:

- All cookie donation programs must be approved by your council.
- Donated cookies must stay within the council jurisdiction unless your council has the approval from other council jurisdictions.
- Donated products cannot be resold and must be used in a responsible and ethical way.
- Donated products are used in a way that does not undermine the work of councils or jeopardizes the integrity of the Girl Scout Brand.

Handling Product Complaints

It has always been the practice of Girl Scout councils and the bakers to guarantee customer satisfaction with their cookies. If a customer for some reason is not satisfied with the quality of their cookies they can contact the baker via the number printed on the side of the box of cookies.

Troops/group should notify their council if they are aware of any customer dissatisfaction.

Using Online Resources and Social Media for Product Programs

Girls are only to use the Internet to market the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program to friends and family (for clarity, “friends and family” are people whom the girl or her family personally know).

- The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl-led program and online marketing and sales efforts should always be led by a girl while also being supervised by her parents or caretakers.
- Friends and family of a girl participating in the cookie program must not market or share a girl’s contact information, sales links, or sales information on public-facing online sites. They also should not share their sales link with any news outlets (this includes online and traditional news media, such as radio, television, or magazines).
- For safety purposes and other reasons, online marketing activities, especially those conducted through social media platforms, should always be done through accounts set to “private.”
- Should any online marketing activities be identified as in violation of guidance, GSUSA or the council reserves the right to intervene and request removal or remove the post.
- Parents, girls, and volunteers should contact and collaborate with their councils and GSUSA in advance on any national news media opportunities.

Girls may use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, text messages, emails and Little Brownie Bakers Cookie Club as online marketing tools to let family, friends and former customers know about the product program and collect indications of interest. All of these online platforms require that users are 13 years of age or older to create an account; it is always a good idea to get parental permission for girls to use social media no matter their age. Girls under 13 can use their parent or guardian’s online sites with their approval and supervision.
The following sections detail how girls can use electronic marketing, social media and group websites to gather sale commitments from family, friends and previous customers. Please keep in mind that girls:

- **Can market to and collect indications of interest from customers within their council’s zip codes.** Refer prospects that come from outside council jurisdiction to the council finder at girlscoutcookies.org. Family members are the exception to this rule.
- **May NOT transact sales on the Internet.**
- **Must sign the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge** before doing any online activities, and all online activities must be done under the supervision of adults. The pledge is available at girlscouts.org/help/internet_safety_pledge.asp.
- **Cannot share their own or any other girl’s email address, physical address or phone number with the public.** When writing email messages or online announcements, girls should sign with their first name only, along with their troop number or name and their council name.
- **Must sign a photo release form before their images are used.** Releases should be signed by the parents/guardians of the girls pictured and any adults pictured.
- **Must follow specific requirements of video sharing sites and follow council guidelines when a video is representing Girl Scouts or Girl Scout products.** Photo releases must be signed, and all content must be in good taste.

### Setting Up a Troop/Group Website
Troops whose girls meet age criteria (13 years or older) and have parental permission may set up a group Facebook page or website. This site must be approved by the council, and it can be a fantastic way for girls to share information, market Girl Scout products, and talk about their Take Action projects.

Don’t violate copyright law by using designs, text from magazines or books, poetry, music, lyrics, videos, graphics, or trademarked symbols without specific permission from the copyright or trademark holder (and, generally, this permission is pretty tough to get!). Girl Scout trademarks (such as the trefoil shape, Girl Scout pins, and badges and patches) can be used only in accordance with guidelines for their use. (The Girl Scout trefoil, for example, may not be animated or used as wallpaper for a website.) Check with your council’s website for complete graphics guidelines and approvals.

It is important to remember the twofold purpose of the Girl Scout Cookie Program when selling cookies or other products. The primary purposes of these sales are to help girls grow and develop and to generate the revenue necessary to provide Girl Scouting to as many girls as possible. For this reason, girls should be directly involved in any sales that are made, whether in person or over the Internet.

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**Daisies: Stay Especially Safe!**

*Girl Scout Daisies are too young to be marketing online through their group, parent or guardian websites, or social media sites. For this reason, Girl Scout Daisies are allowed to send out emails only when working directly with an adult. Daisies and their adult volunteers must use only blind emails or the online marketing tools provided by GSUSA product vendors on their websites.*
Money-Earning Basics

Girls earn money in two distinct ways: the fall product and Girl Scout Cookie programs organized by our council. All girls, troops, and groups are expected to participate in both the fall product and cookie programs. There is no minimum required level of participation unless the individual, troop, or group is asking for financial assistance and/or wanting to do another money-earning activity. In these cases, the minimum each girl must sell is defined as:

- a minimum of 12 candy/nut products OR
- four magazine subscriptions, tumblers, veggies, or candles OR
- a combination of both for fall product AND
- a minimum of 30 packages of cookies

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

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

There are a few specific guidelines—some required by the Internal Revenue Service—that ensure that product programs and additional money-earning activities are conducted with legal and financial integrity. To that end, consider the following reminders and cautions:

- All rewards earned by girls through the product program activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).
- Rewards are based on sales ranges set by the council and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
- Groups are encouraged to participate in council product programs as their primary money-earning activity; any group money-earning activities may not compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other council product programs selling times. This blackout period is for October, January, February, and March.
- Obtain written approval from the council prior to the onset of a group money-earning event (see girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms).
- Girl Scouts discourages the use of games of chance as a money-earning activity. Activities which could be considered a game of chance include raffles, contests, bingo, and any other activity in which participants pay for the chance of winning cash or non-cash prizes.
- Group money-earning activities must be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and be consistent with the principles of the GSLE.
- Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, earn rewards and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product programs. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following council procedures.

The best way to earn money for your group is to start with Girl Scout Cookie activities and other council-sponsored product programs. If the group has participated in both programs, the group may organize additional activities to earn additional funds on its own.
**Additional Group Money-Earning Activities**

Product programs are a great way to earn the funds necessary for girls to travel or carry out take-action projects. Troops can earn enough money to meet their girls’ goals through active participation in both our fall product and cookie programs. Remember that groups must participate in the cookie and fall programs before they are allowed to organize another additional money-earning project (see page 75).

1. Approval is not required for money-earning projects that will earn less than $100.
2. For money-earning projects that will earn more than $100, the Troop Money-Earning Project Approval Form must be submitted 30 days prior to the project.
3. Before implementing any money-earning project, please refer to the Managing Group Finances section of Volunteer Essentials for complete guidelines.
4. Refer the Safety Activity Checkpoints when planning any money-earning activity.
5. Girls must be involved in planning and implementing the project.
6. Girls must receive 100 percent of the proceeds from any money-earning activity; and funds raised must belong to the troop as a whole (they cannot be refunded or redeemed by an individual member).
7. Money-earning projects cannot take place during the black out months of October, January, February, and March.
8. Troops cannot take orders for, sell, or endorse commercial products or businesses of any kind (this includes Mary Kay, Tupperware, Candle Lite, Culvers and coupon programs). However, troops can sell wholesale, non-branded or homemade items.
9. Troops cannot use paid advertising or the Internet to promote their project. They are encouraged to use signs, fliers and word of mouth. Please refer to Using Online Resources and Social Media for Product Programs section of Volunteer Essentials for complete guidelines.
10. Troops and/or Service Units cannot participate in cause marketing. This includes Culver’s/Panera Bread/Portillo’s fund raising events.
11. Projects must not be conducted on a door-to-door basis (with the exception of the cookie program).
12. For projects involving food, troops/service units must follow state food safety guidelines and, in some cases, purchase a food license:
   - Illinois Department of Health – Follow these guidelines for food stand/community dinner projects in Illinois.
   - Indiana Department of Health – Follow these guidelines for food stand/community dinner projects in Indiana. Each county has their own guidelines.

**Money-Earning Project Ideas**

Although you cannot resell products, groups may conduct other money-earning activities such as the following:

**Sell crafts and goods:**
- Garage sale
- Calendars, cookbooks, or bird feeders/houses if created by girls
- Wreath, flower, plant or tree sale (items must be wholesale/non-branded)
- Concession stand (must have appropriate food license and receive 100 percent of the profits)
- Cookie or cocoa mix in a jar (must have appropriate food license, if applicable)

**Charge or accept donations for services:**
- Tutor others, or walk dogs
- Wash cars, rake lawns, or shovel sidewalks
- Bag groceries or gift wrap for donations (but cannot replace a paid employee’s regular position)
- Referee at sporting events
- Offer clown activities or face painting at community or school events
• Organize a fall or international festival (accept donations or charge a small fee)
• Community dinner or breakfast (must have appropriate food license and follow promotion guidelines)
• Facilitate badge/patch workshops for younger troops
• Facilitate a recyclable drive (i.e. cans, paper or ink cartridges)
• Take and distribute holiday photos

**Charge or accept donations for productions:**
• Haunted houses
• Talent shows
• Dances

**Collaborating with Sponsors and Other Organizations**

Sponsors help Girl Scout councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouting. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations and individuals may be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, offer in-kind donations, provide activity materials, or loan equipment. The sponsor’s participation can be recognized by arranging for the girls to send thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony, or working together on a Take Action project.

*For information on working with a sponsor, consult your service unit support manager. Our council may already have relationships with certain organizations, or may know of some reasons not to collaborate with certain organizations.*

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

- **Girl Scouts are not allowed, when identifying ourselves as Girl Scouts (such as wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins), to solicit money on behalf of another organization.** This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. You and your group can, however, support another organization through Take Action projects. Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose, as long as they’re not wearing anything that officially identifies them as “Girl Scouts.”

- **When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your group may not participate (directly or indirectly) in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office.** Letter-writing campaigns are not allowed, nor is participating in a political rally, circulating a petition, or carrying a political banner.

- **Girl Scout groups must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice of the sponsoring group.**

- **Girl Scouts and volunteers are not allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell any commercial products.** “Commercial products” are any product sold at retail.
Helping Girls Reach Their Financial Goals

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

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

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

3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn based on their anticipated program plans.

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

5. **Write it out.** Once the group has decided their goals and proposed activities, describe it in writing or perhaps create a chart. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out an application for approval and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created.

6. **Share the plan and troop treasury information.** This helps girls see where they are toward meeting troop financial goals and helps parents understand troop finances.

*Remember: It’s great for girls to have opportunities, like the Girl Scout Cookie Program, to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals as part of the GSLE. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and spending money. Take Action projects, for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money!*

## Reviewing Financial and Sales Abilities by Grade Level

### Girl Scout Daisies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records and does all group budgeting.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents/guardians may decide that they will contribute to the cost of activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls can participate in Girl Scout cookie activities and other council-sponsored product programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisies are always paired with an adult when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but adults handle the money and keep the girls secure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Girl Scout Brownies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records and shares some of the group-budgeting responsibilities.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls may decide to pay dues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**How Girl Scout Activities are Financially Supported**

**Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)**
GSUSA receives all membership dues collected with registration forms from all Girl Scout councils throughout the United States. In addition, GSUSA fundraises nationally and generates funds through licensing agreements. GSUSA supports local councils through development of standards/policies, national/international programs, training and advocacy.

**Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana (GSGCNWI)**
The council’s fund development department works with board members, individuals, alumnae, volunteers, family foundations, corporations, foundations, government entities, organizations and United Way partners to raise funds and awareness for Girl Scouts locally. Funding sources include, but are not limited to, Family Partnership gifts, public and private gifts and grants, United Way allocations, product program revenue and program fees. Council funding provides council-wide programs, training, support, facilities, maintenance and efficiently-run Girl Scout activities.

GSGCNWI is a non-profit entity recognized by the IRS as a tax-exempt charitable organization. As a charitable organization, our council can accept tax-deductible donations made to the council and provide donors with the necessary donor acknowledgment. **While a troop is a part of the council, a troop or service unit does not qualify as a non-profit organization with a unique charitable identification number.**

**Troop**
Troop dues are a main source of income for the troop treasury. Each troop sets its own timeline for collection based on its needs and plans for the year. Earnings from the Girl Scout Cookie and fall product programs, as well as troop money-earning activities, help the treasury grow. Money belongs to the troop as a whole; it is not distributed to individual girls. Money is held in a troop bank account. Troop money supports activities planned by Girl Scouts in partnership with trained adult leaders. The money is often used for service project materials, field trips, badge work, craft supplies, and recognition.
Troop and Service Unit Procedures

- **Solicited Cash Contributions**: Per GSUSA’s Blue Book of Basic Documents, girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money. Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by the Girl Scout council and in which the local council is a beneficiary.

- **Unsolicited Cash Contributions**: When a troop, group or service unit receives an unsolicited cash contribution, the gift should be directed to the council for deposit and acknowledgment. In a given membership year, GSGCNWI will return 100% of all gifts directed to a troop, up to a maximum of $100 per girl member. In a given membership year, GSGCNWI will return 100% of all gifts directed to a service unit, up to $1,000. Gifts beyond these maximums will be handled on a case-by-case basis with the individual donor.

- **Solicited In-Kind Contributions**: If a troop, group or service unit is intending to solicit an in-kind donation with an estimated value of $500 or more, they must secure approval from the council prior to soliciting the contribution. Please contact our fund development department at 312-912-6345 or by sending an email to funddevelopment@girlscoutsgcnwi.org.

- **Matching Contributions Based on Volunteer Hours**: GSGCNWI will return 100% of the matching volunteer hour donation to the designated troop and/or service unit.

To ensure appropriate distribution and acknowledgement of contributions directed to a troop or service unit, check memo lines and descriptive information must include "Disburse to Troop [XYZ] or SU [XYZ]." Once the funds are verified as received, a request will be made for the appropriate funds be disbursed to the troop leader. Please allow up to four weeks of processing time after council receives the funds and the request is submitted. Note that many companies do not distribute funds immediately and can take up to three months to send the funds to council.

Please contact the fund development at 312-912-6345 if you or someone you know plans to participate, or has participated, in an employee hour-matching program or is expecting unsolicited cash contributions. Additional troop and/or service unit funding issues, specific to our council, will be handled on an individual basis.

Philanthropy

**Family Partnership**

Family Partnership is the community of members, families and alumnae that support our council. One hundred percent of the funds raised through Family Partnership stay within our communities and help ensure that families across our council can access financial help when they need it the most.

Thanks in part to Family Partnership generosity, last year we awarded nearly $160,000 in financial assistance to girls and troops. These funds allowed girls who needed an extra financial boost to become Girl Scouts, attend camp, participate in our unique programs, and have the exceptional experiences that are part of the Girl Scouts experience.

**How to Support Family Partnership**

Please consider sharing your love of Girl Scouts with a Family Partnership donation in any amount that is important to you. Your support will ensure that any girl can have transformative Girl Scout experiences, just like the Girl Scouts in your life. Gifts can be made online by credit card when you register for membership or directly on our website at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/familypartnership. You are also welcome to send a gift in the mail to Fund Development at 20 S. Clark Street, Suite 200, Chicago, IL 60603.

Thank you in advance for the time, talent and treasure you give to our council and Family Partnership. We truly appreciate your support! If you have any questions or comments, please contact Fund Development at 312-912-6345.
Appendix: Travel

Some of the most memorable moments in a Girl Scout’s life happen while taking trips. Travel offers a wealth of opportunities for girls to develop leadership, confidence, and practical life skills. The following information can help you and girls prepare for local, regional, or international travel.

### Juliette Low World Friendship Fund

To honor Juliette Gordon Low’s love of travel, of experiencing different cultures and of making friends, Girl Scouts created the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund in 1927. Today, this fund supports girls’ international travel, participation in adult learning and attendance at other international events—any event that fosters global friendships that connect Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 150 nations. Find out more or donate to the fund at donate.girlscouts.org/worldfriendshipfund.

### Traveling with Girls

Girl Scouts is a great place for girls to learn how to plan and take exciting trips, because travel is built on a progression of activities—one activity leads to the next. Daisies can begin with a discovery walk. As girls grow in their travel skills and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips—even global trips!

For Daisies, this could mean a day trip to an arboretum as part of the Journey they are achieving. For Seniors or Ambassadors it might mean whitewater rafting in Costa Rica or exploring Our Chalet World Center in Switzerland.

Although many troops decide to travel together, Girl Scouts may also get together specifically for the purpose of traveling. Girls might join a trip with other girls from around their council, or form a new troop with other girls who like to travel. Girl Scouts of the USA also offers individual Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors the chance to travel independently and meet other Girl Scouts from across the country through the Destinations program.

The recommended progression of trips and travel for Girl Scouts are:

1. **Short trips to local points of interest (Daisies and older):** A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.
2. **Day trip (Daisies and older):** An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal)—younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home. Note: Full-day trips may be very challenging for Daisies, especially for kindergarteners who have not experienced short trips. Make sure girls take some short trips before they progress to a full day trip.
3. **Overnight trips (Daisies and older):** A trip of one (or possibly two) nights away could start with one night camping or staying at a Girl Scout property, and progress to a visit to a state or national park, or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or campground – or even an overnight at a large museum! These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not long enough to generate homesickness. Note: A Daisy troop may participate in an overnight experience if the girls are ready. Brownie troops can participate up to two nights. For camp this differs: girls who have completed kindergarten may independently participate at day camp and in resident camp experiences lasting up to three nights. Girls who have completed first grade may independently participate in resident camp experiences lasting four or more nights.
4. **Extended overnight trips (Juniors and older):** Three or four nights camping or staying in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls’ home region - up to a few hours away from home. National trips (Cadettes and older): Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of ordinary recreational trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component such as incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country. Perhaps the girls want to plan a trip to some national parks as part of the Girl Scout Ranger program.

5. **International trips (Cadettes and older):** Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation.
   - International trips are available to Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors who have successfully participated in a progression of overnight trips with Girl Scouting. When girls show interest in traveling abroad, complete the Intent to Travel Internationally form (fs24.formsite.com/gsgcnwi2/form204/index.html) at least one year in advance.
   - Download the Global Travel Toolkit at forgirls.girlscouts.org/travel/resources/global-travel-toolkit/.
   - Volunteers should ensure that girls are mature enough to participate in the trip. See Travel Progression Checklist below.
   - Visiting one of the four World Centers (girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts-global-world-centers.html) is a great place to start. Also, consider traveling with international service-learning organizations. Girls have traveled to Costa Rica to volunteer at schools, to Mexico to volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, and to India to work with girls living in impoverished urban slums.

Although some girls who are in a group (for example, a troop of Cadettes) may decide to travel together, opportunities exist for girls who are not otherwise involved in Girl Scouts to get together specifically for the purpose of traveling locally, regionally and even internationally. Girls can travel regardless of how they are—or aren’t—participating in Girl Scouting.

**Travel Progression Checklist**

If your group is thinking about travel, consider first whether the girls are mature enough to handle the trip. Determine a group’s readiness for travel by assessing the girls’:

- Ability to be away from their parents and their homes
- Ability to adapt to unfamiliar surroundings and situations
- Ability to make decisions for themselves and the good of the group well and easily
- Previous cross-cultural experiences
- Ability to get along with each other and handle challenges
- Ability to work well as a team
- Skills, interests and language skills (where applicable)

**Using Journeys and Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting in Their Travels**

Girl Scout travel is an ideal way to offer girls leadership opportunities. Encourage girls to choose one of the three series of National Leadership Journeys. The Journey’s theme will give girls a way to explore leadership through their travels. Use the adult guide to incorporate activities and discussions that help girls explore the Three Keys to Leadership (Discover, Connect and Take Action) as they plan their trip and eventually travel.

Tying your trip to the topic of a Leadership Journey is a cinch. For example, if Cadette girls have chosen MEdia, before their trip they can read online newspapers from the area to which they’re traveling—and evaluate when they arrive how well the media reflects the realities there. If Senior girls are using SOW WHAT?, they can plan to observe agricultural practices in other parts of the country or around the world. Ambassadors using BLISS: Live It! Give It! can build a trip around dreaming big—and empowering others in their community to dream big, too.
If girls also want to complete skill-building badge requirements as part of their trip, they can. The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, which fits perfectly into planning a trip. In addition, girls can explore other badge topics, depending on the focus of their trip. For examples, Cadettes can explore the food in other regions or countries for their New Cuisines badge, Seniors can find out about international business customs as part of their Business Etiquette badge, and Ambassadors can work on their Photography badge while documenting their trip.

Be sure to visit Chapter 2: A National Experience in this handbook to find out more about the three exciting series of Journeys and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting.

To ensure that any travel you do with girls infuses the Girl Scout Leadership Experience at every opportunity, limit your role to facilitating the girls’ brainstorming and planning—but never doing the work for them. Allow the girls to lead, learn collaboratively and learn by doing (and by making mistakes). All the while, however, provide ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!

**Include girls with disabilities.** Communicate with girls with disabilities and/or their caregivers to assess any needs and accommodations. Make sure that reasonable accommodations are made for girls with disabilities. Learn more about the resources and information that Global Explorers (globalexplorers.org) and Wilderness Inquiries (wildernessinquiry.org) provide to people with disabilities.

**Seeking Council Permission**

Before all trips, you and the girls should review our council’s Trip and Travel Overview in this chapter to discover when you will need to obtain council permission for trips and how far in advance the paperwork needs to be submitted.

Encourage the girls to submit much of the information themselves, including the following information when applicable:

- Detailed itinerary, including specific activities involved, mode of travel, and all dates and times
- Location and type of premises to be used
- Numbers of girls who will be participating (parental permissions must be obtained)
- Names and contact information for the adults participating
- Any other groups, organizations, consultants or resource people who will be involved
- Participants’ skill levels (language skills, backpacking or camping experience, etc.)
- Any specialized equipment that will be used
- Required agreements or contracts (for example, hiring a bus, use of premises)

**From the Birth of Girl Scouting to the World Centers**

**The Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace in Savannah, GA, is a fantastic place for Girl Scout Juniors and older to visit** (juliettegordonlowbirthplace.org). Reservations and council approval are required to take a group. Most educational opportunities are booked at least a year in advance, so book early! Families and individuals do not need to reserve a tour in advance.

In addition, lodges are available in England, Mexico, Switzerland, and India for use by Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, each with hostel- or dormitory-style accommodations. These World Centers are operated by World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS) and offer low-cost accommodations and special programs. They are a great way to meet Girl Guides and Girl Scouts from around the world.
Involving Chaperones
To determine how many volunteer chaperones the girls will need with them on the trip, see the adult-to-girl ratios. As you ask for chaperones, be sure to look for ones who are committed to:

• Being a positive role model
• Respecting all girls and adults equally, with no preferential treatment
• Creating a safe space for girls
• Prioritizing the safety of all girls
• Supporting and reinforcing a group agreement
• Handling pressure and stress by modeling flexibility and a sense of humor
• Creating an experience for and with girls
• Getting fit (appropriate to the trip)

Note: Be sure every volunteer reviews and follows the 12 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, available both in the Quick-Reference Guide to this handbook and in Chapter 4: Safety-Wise.

Adults in Addition to Chaperones
Traveling with Girl Scouts is unique from other organizations because girls take the lead—both during the planning and on the trip. This helps girls build essential skills, develop confidence, overcome challenges, and practice collaboration. Girls are most likely to achieve these outcomes when they travel with the recommended girl/adult ratios, rather than with too many adults on the trip. When there are too many adults participating, it becomes difficult for the trip to remain girl-led. You may want to start your travel experiences with Daisies by inviting parents to join local field trips and day trips.

When parents are involved, make certain you model for them girl-led practices, and help them take a support role to girl decision-making. That way, by the time girls are ready for a weekend trip, and definitely a regional or national trip, your girls are ready to do the planning and to make decisions fully on the trip. Avoid having parents tag along on your regional, national, and international trips. If girls are not ready to travel without a parent, they are not yet ready to step up to a more intensive trip. When you give girls the chance to travel independently (with their leaders, of course!) you help girls build decision-making skills, independence, and confidence, and provide them with a powerful component in girls’ full Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Letting Girls Lead
Whether the trip is a day hike or a cross-country trek, the basic steps of trip planning are essentially the same. It’s true that as the locale gets farther away, the itinerary more complex, and the trip of greater duration, the details become richer and more complex, but planning every trip starts by asking the following:

• What do we hope to experience?
• Who will we want to talk to and meet? What will we ask?
• Where are we interested in going?
• When are we all available to go?
• Will everyone in our group be able to go?
• Are there physical barriers that cannot be accommodated?
• What are visiting hours and the need for advance reservations?
• What are our options for getting there?
• What’s the least and most this trip could cost?
• What can we do now to get ourselves ready?
• How will we earn the money?
• What’s the availability of drinking water, restrooms and eating places?
• Where is emergency help available?
• What safety factors must we consider?
• What will we do as we travel?
• What will we do when we get there?
• How will we share the Take Action story?
As girls answer these questions, they begin the trip-planning process. In time, girls can make specific arrangements, attend to many details, create a budget and handle money, and accept responsibility for their personal conduct and safety. Later, after they’ve returned from an event or trip, girls also have the chance to evaluate their experiences and share them with others.

**Tips for Girls Traveling Alone**

If a Girl Scout Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador will be traveling alone during any part of a trip, use the opportunity to help her feel comfortable and capable being on her own. Always talk first with her parents to assess her maturity and ability to handle herself and have them complete an emergency form. If she is flying, discuss the possibility of booking a nonstop flight to make her trip less stressful and ask parents to contact the airline, which will make special arrangements for any unaccompanied minor. With the girl herself, develop a trip plan, discuss hotel security and safety, and talk about avoiding excess communication with strangers, not wearing a nametag, and avoiding exposing money or other items (such as smartphones, iPads and iPods) that are attractive to pickpockets.

**Staying Safe During the Trip**

Be sure to discuss the following items with the girls and their parents before you leave on any trip (you may also want to put this information in writing and have girls sign it):

- Who her buddy is—and how the buddy system works
- What to do if she is separated from the group, whether by accident or because of a crime
- What to do if she loses something significant: money, passport, luggage
- What do to in the event of a crime and how to report a crime
- What to do if emergency help is needed
- How to perform basic first-aid procedures
- How to deal with a large crowd (if applicable)
- What behaviors you expect—and what consequences exist for not living up to those behaviors

**Travel Security and Safety Tips**

Share these safety tips with girls before you leave on any trip that involves a stay at a hotel, motel, hostel or dormitory:

- Always lock the door behind you, using the deadbolt and the chain or anchor.
- Do not open the door for strangers; if hotel staff claims to be at the door, call the front desk to confirm.
- Don’t mention or display your room number when in the presence of strangers.
- Never leave jewelry, electronics, cash, or credit cards in your room.
- Never leave luggage unattended in the hotel lobby (or in an airport or train or bus station).
- When arriving at the hotel, locate emergency exits.
- Keep a small flashlight on your bedside table, along with a small bag with your room key, wallet, passport and cell phone. Take the these with you if you have to leave the room in an emergency.
- If a fire alarm goes off, get out as quickly as possible. Don’t stop to pack your suitcase.
- Before leaving your room, feel the door: If it is warm, do not open it. Stay in your room and stuff towels around the door. Call the hotel operator immediately. If the door is cool, proceed slowly out the door, looking for flames or smoke. Repeat these instructions for any door you encounter.
- Contact the front desk to make sure girls’ rooms are cleared of any minibars or refrigerators. Also be sure the hotel doesn’t provide access to inappropriate movies on TVs and does not allow long-distance calls. Alert the hotel management that underage girls are staying in the hotel and ask them to contact you if any girls are seen out of their rooms after bedtime.
Re-Engaging Girls

Girls who have traveled once tend to want to travel again. Be sure girls are aware that there are other travel opportunities such as council-sponsored trips and Girl Scout Destinations. GSGCNWI sponsors multiple trips each year for girls within the council, including national trips to Colorado and international trips to the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts’ World Centers. Visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/en/events/travel.html for more information on council-sponsored trips.

Girl Scout Destinations are sponsored by GSUSA. Girls apply on an individual basis to explore both national and international locations. Learn more at forgirls.girlscouts.org/travel/take-a-trip/destinations. Council-sponsored trips and Destinations provide an opportunity for individual members to broaden their perspectives and give Girl Scouting an enhanced visibility.

Visiting Your Council’s Properties: Local Trips

Our camp and other properties have heard girls giggle and sing silly camp songs for generations. They are a perfect place, a very safe space, to take girls on day hikes, first overnights, weekend retreats and more!

Visit Our Camps at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/en/camp/our-camps.html and view up-to-date fliers for each camp location.
Reserving Council Property

To reserve space at Butternut Springs, Friendship Center, Greene Wood, Juniper Knoll, Palos, Pokanoka or River Trails, please follow the steps outlined below.

Five Easy Steps

1. **Complete Outdoor Module 1 training.** which is necessary for all overnights and day use. Modules 1, 2 and 3 trainings are required for a two-night stay at camp. Current certification in first aid and CPR must be on file with our Property Registrar prior to your arrival at camp. A current first aid/CPR trained adult or medical professional must be present at all times with your troop. Incomplete applications will not be processed. If training information is needed, please visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/en/for-volunteers/training.html.

2. **Select your accommodations.** Visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/our-camps to view available accommodations. To view a full list of camp pricing and available recreations, visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/rent-camp. If you wish to tour a camp, please call our property registrar at 312-912-6371 for information on scheduling a visit.

3. **Complete an online Property Rental application.** To complete an online Property Rental application, visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/en/camp/rent-camp.html and select the Property Rental Application link near the bottom of the page. Complete the online application form which will include opportunities for recreations. Copies of outdoor training, first aid, and CPR certifications will be required. A $25 (per site) application fee is also required with your Property Rental application. This application fee is non-refundable (Exception: If property selected is unavailable). Only fully completed applications will be confirmed and processed.

If you don’t have access to the online form, please send your request for a paper application to the following and include your name, address and phone number.

   Property Registrar  
   Fax: 312-750-0718

4. **Secure your reservation.** Once your request has been processed, a contract along with deposit instructions and other paperwork will be sent to the troop representative for the event. To secure your reservation, a signed copy of page two of the Site Use Agreement with the specified payment must be received by the date listed at the bottom of the Group Reservation Page to avoid cancellation of your reservation request. Payment can be made by credit card, check or cash; submit by mail or bring to any Gathering Place.

5. **Complete payment.** Final payment and recreation participant numbers must be received 30 days prior to your arrival at camp in order to avoid reservation cancellations. Please note that adjustments to billing will not be made after this date.

*If you have questions, please contact our property registrar at 312-912-6371.*
Trip and Travel Checklist

Before Any Girl Scout Trip or Outing


☐ Review Safety Activity Checkpoints to determine if council permission is needed for activities
  - If permission is needed, obtain approval

☐ Be sure that every girl participating is a registered member

☐ Review Outdoor Training Requirements
  - Cabin, lodge or personal home overnights need Outdoor Module 1
  - Tent camping and/or cooking over a fire require Outdoor Modules 2 & 3

☐ Secure a parent/guardian permission slip for each girl

☐ Be sure that adult chaperones and drivers are registered and approved volunteers

☐ Verify that drivers hold a valid driver’s license and car insurance

☐ Have a current health history for each participant, girls and adults

☐ Identify an emergency contact person (adult available by phone but not going on trip)

☐ Replenish troop first aid kit

☐ Provide proof of first aid certification when activities state it is needed

☐ Secure additional insurance if non-members will be in attendance (i.e. family events)

☐ If staying at a personal home, send a copy of the homeowner’s insurance declaration page to tripapplications@girlscoutsgcnwi.org. This acts as the Certificate of Insurance, similar to the documentation that the council receives from other places troops stay that are not council-owned properties. **Note: Generally, the use of Airbnb and other private rentals is not permitted. The council will consider exceptions on a case-by-case basis. Contact the council early in the planning process at tripapplications@girlscoutsgcnwi.org.**

The Day of the Trip

**The leader has:**

☐ Signed permission slip for each girl

☐ Emergency contact information (and cell phone number) for each driver

☐ Assigned each girl a buddy

**Each girl has:**

☐ Dressed for the weather

☐ The necessary equipment, including lunch or lunch money if needed

**First aider has:**

☐ Troop first aid kit

☐ Girl and Adult Health Histories (Best practice: Provide each driver a copy of all histories)

☐ Girls’ medication in original containers and a signed Administering Medication to a Minor form. **Note: Girls should keep epinephrine auto-injector and/or inhalers with them.**

☐ Accident/Incident Report Form

**Emergency contact person (adult NOT going on the trip) has:**

☐ Contact info/trip itinerary with phone numbers for venues and leaders’ cell phone numbers

☐ Copies of the contact and emergency contact numbers for each participant

**Each driver has:**

☐ A trip itinerary

☐ A first aid kit

**After any Girl Scout trip:**

☐ Evaluate the trip with your girls

☐ Help them reflect on what they learned from their experience

☐ Retain permission slip for current membership year
# Trip and Travel Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Trip</th>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Overnight — United States</th>
<th>Outside the United States</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Non-Camp</td>
<td>Camp</td>
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<td># of Days or Nights</td>
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<td>3 or more</td>
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<td>GSGCNWI-Owned Property</td>
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<tr>
<td>Council Approval Required</td>
<td>Trip and Travel Application</td>
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<td>4 weeks prior</td>
<td>4 weeks prior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supplementary Insurance</td>
<td>Plan 2: Recommended for non-members</td>
<td>Plan 2: Required for non-members</td>
<td>Plan 2: Required for non-members</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apply at least 3 weeks prior</td>
<td>Apply at least 3 weeks prior</td>
<td>Apply at least 3 weeks prior</td>
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<tr>
<td>First-Aid/ CPR/ AED Training</td>
<td>Required for at least one volunteer</td>
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<td>Additional Training Required</td>
<td>Refer to the Camp Trained Adult section in the Learning Portal and the specific Safety Activity Checkpoints for your planned activities. Note: Additional training is needed for both day and overnight activities at a camp property.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
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For complete information about trips and travel, please visit girlscoutsgcnwi.org/travel.
Welcome to Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana! We are excited to have you as a Girl Scout volunteer. Volunteers across the council share a commitment to the Girl Scout Mission. The Girl Scout Mission is to build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place. This document contains the Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana volunteer policies and procedures, which you will need to know as part of our team. Volunteers should familiarize themselves with the council policies and procedures, which guide and protect their status as Girl Scout volunteers.

Volunteers are to observe all policies and procedures found in this document. Welcome. We look forward to your contributions!

**HUMAN RELATIONS STATEMENT POLICY**

The Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana is committed to engaging girls in a lifelong leadership development journey that empowers them to take action in making the world a better place. Volunteers are essential to the strength and capacity of the Girl Scout Movement, and are essential partners in achieving the goals of the council. The council will strive to promote an atmosphere in which relationships are characterized by dignity, honesty, courtesy, respect and equitable treatment.

**MEMBERSHIP POLICY**

Girl Scouts of the USA is a membership organization. All adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement should be registered members of Girl Scouts of the USA and pay the annual membership dues, except those who are lifetime members or who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity. Financial aid is available.

**NONDISCRIMINATION POLICY**

It is the policy of Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana not to discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age (over 40), disability unrelated to the individual’s ability to perform designated volunteer duties, national origin, citizenship, marital status, or economic status.

**ELIGIBILITY AND PLACEMENT POLICY**

Each volunteer is assigned on the basis of ability to perform in the volunteer position, volunteer and council need, ability and willingness to attend training, and qualifications for membership in the Girl Scout Movement. Every effort will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and interests and the needs of the council.

Volunteers shall be Girl Scout adult members and complete a criminal background check. Criminal background checks are performed to maintain a safe environment for girls and adults. Volunteers are required to renew their criminal background check every three (3) years.
ASSIGNMENT AND APPROVAL PROCEDURE
Prior to volunteering in any capacity with Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana, all adults must be eligible to serve as volunteers. Eligible volunteers are those adults who have completed the volunteer screening process and have been approved to volunteer.

REAPPOINTMENT PROCEDURE
Operational volunteers will be appointed for a term of one year. Reappointment will be based on past performance, adherence to council and Girl Scouts of the USA policies, standards and procedures, support of the Girl Scout Mission and council goals.

TRAINING POLICY
The Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana strives to develop each person’s ability to effectively perform her or his assignment(s) in the Girl Scouts. In pursuit of this endeavor, orientation and/or training for all volunteer assignments is provided.

A volunteer is expected to participate in any training necessary for her or his position. Failure to complete training programs may be a basis for release or cause for non-reappointment to the current position.

Check the Learning Portal for information on training sessions suggested for your volunteer position, girlscoutsgcnwi.org/training.

- At least one registered adult in a troop/group leadership role must complete the Girl Scout Welcome Session before their first assignment.
- At least one registered adult in a troop/group leadership role must complete required training before or within 30 days of the first troop meeting.
- It is required that adults in positions of troop/group leadership whose group will be changing grade levels participate in training for the new level.

TRAINING PROCEDURES
Participants may register for training using the Learning Portal at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/training.

Volunteer training opportunities are offered in a variety of formats including online, webinar, face-to-face and, blended learning, which combines eLearning with a face-to-face skills session. Check the Learning Portal for information on training sessions suggested for your volunteer position.

Any training facilitated by a trainer – for example webinar, face-to-face or blended learning:
- Pre-registration for training is required.
- Some courses, such as first aid and outdoor education, have fees to cover the cost of supplies and certifications. Participants have to pay in full when registering for the course.
- A waiting list will be established for courses that exceed the maximum capacity.
- Registration deadlines are indicated on the Learning Portal.
- Participants will receive a course confirmation to remind them of their registration no later than 48 hours prior to the training.
- Children cannot be accommodated at training events due to insurance considerations.

Volunteer training opportunities can be scheduled upon request if a trainer is available. Please complete the Training by Request form found on the Learning Portal to request a training.
Partial financial aid may be available for training courses that have a fee. Please complete the Adult Development financial aid application found on the Learning Portal and submit it for approval. The cost for volunteer training is considered a troop expense and can be covered by troop treasury funds.

**CANCELLATIONS**

In-person courses may be canceled due to low registration or inclement weather. Registered participants will be notified by email if the course is canceled due to low registration. In the case of emergency or inclement weather, you will be notified by telephone. Only those registered for a course can be notified if a course is canceled.

Should you need to cancel your attendance at a session, login to the Learning Portal course and edit your registration. If you need assistance or questions contact Customer Care, customercare@girlscoutsgcnwi.org.

**PERFORMANCE APPRAISAL POLICY**

Volunteers will be provided with the opportunity for a regular review and feedback. Standards of performance shall be established for each volunteer position, in accordance with council goals.

**VOLUNTEER COACHING PERFORMANCE AND CORRECTIVE ACTION PROCEDURES**

The process for performance assessment and corrective action supports the Performance Appraisal Policy. A volunteer may have the opportunity for a performance review by their volunteer or staff supervisor. The purpose of a performance review is to coach a volunteer, evaluate changes that need to be made, help assess whether a position is a good fit or make any other recommendations to help the volunteer be successful in her/his role. Generally, performance reviews are conducted at the end of a volunteer’s position term, although a performance review and coaching may occur throughout the year.

If there is an unsatisfactory performance appraisal, the volunteer will be asked to make changes or to fulfill specified requirements to correct the unfavorable behavior within a specified timeframe. At times, a volunteer may not be able to fulfill a request within a particular timeframe. It is the obligation of the volunteer to share that information with the requestor as soon as possible in order to be able to come to an agreed upon timeframe by which a request is to be fulfilled. It is at the discretion of the requestor whether the timeframe can change but is not obligated to change the timeframe if it is not in the best interest of other volunteers, adults or girls.

If the volunteer fails to fulfill the request, the volunteer may be subject to removal from the position, reassigned to another position or be terminated.

**CONFIDENTIALITY POLICY**

Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana respects the right to individual privacy of each registered Girl Scout member. Information obtained by Girl Scouts, its staff and/or volunteers may only be used by and for Girl Scouts for the purpose of Girl Scout activity and should not be used for any other organization or solicitation.
CHILD ABUSE REPORTING POLICY
Anytime volunteers have reasonable cause to believe that a Girl Scout minor may have been abused or neglected, they may file a report with the appropriate state’s department of children and family services. Girl Scout volunteers are considered permissive reporters, and although not required by law to file such reports, are encouraged to do so. Volunteers are required to report to the corporate office any time a report has been sent to the department, or anytime there is reasonable cause to suspect that child abuse or neglect of a Girl Scout minor has occurred.

REPORTING SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE PROCEDURES
If a volunteer has any reason to believe that a Girl Scout minor is being abused or neglected, they may file a report with the appropriate state’s department of children and family services. If in Illinois, call 800-252-2873. If in Indiana, call 800-800-5556. This call may be made from the Girl Scout office, if desired. Volunteers are required to report to director of volunteer services anytime a report has been sent to the department or anytime there is reasonable cause to suspect that child abuse or neglect of a Girl Scout minor has occurred.

FINANCE POLICY
Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana is responsible for ensuring that all money earned or received in the name of Girl Scouting within its jurisdiction is used for Girl Scout purposes. All money received becomes the property of Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana and not of individuals. Custodianship of such funds is the responsibility of designated registered adult members, in conformity with council-established policies, standards and procedures. Girl Scout volunteers must abide by mandatory policies, standards and procedures set forth by GSUSA publications, as well as those found in Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana’s volunteer policies.

SERVICE UNIT AND TROOP FINANCIAL REPORTS PROCEDURES
By June 15 of each year, troops are required to submit an annual financial report through the Finance tab of the Volunteer Toolkit, accompanied by a reconciled bank statement, including a detailed cash report or software program report of their choice, to track monthly financial transactions. Troops are encouraged to keep detailed records and receipts for one year following each membership year in their possession.

Service Units are required to submit to their to service unit support manager an annual financial report, accompanied by a bank statement, including a detailed cash report or software program report of their choice, to track monthly financial transactions. The Service Unit Financial Report Form is available online at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms.

BAD DEBT PROCEDURES
In the event that a volunteer has a bad debt exceeding 45 days after they have received notification, said volunteer will be immediately removed from her/his position by the council and will be sent to collections.
DISBANDED TROOP PROCEDURES
A troop disbands when they decide not to reregister or stop meeting during or at the close of the membership year. Money belongs to the troop and not to individual girls. Troops that are disbanding must complete the following steps:
• Notify the service unit manager
• Troop decides how to use any existing funds
• Complete and submit the Annual Financial Report in the Finance tab of Volunteer Toolkit
• Complete the Disbanding Troop form through the Annual Financial Report in Volunteer Toolkit
• All remaining funds not used by the troop must be transferred to the council. Make checks payable to Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana; Memo: Disbanding Troop XXXXX. Mail to any Gathering Place, ATTN: Customer Care
• Close out the troop bank account after all outstanding checks have cleared

ADULTS HANDLING FINANCES PROCEDURES
All adults handling money must be approved volunteers with no financial restrictions. This includes, but is not limited to, troop cookie managers, troop fall product managers, service unit cookie managers, service unit fall product managers, service unit treasurers, troop treasurers, and troop support volunteers. Volunteers should deposit funds on a regular basis within 48 hours of receipt. Volunteers who accept responsibility for troop finances of any kind are responsible for the girls’ funds. The volunteer must be able to provide receipts, bank statements, signed permission slips, etc. to show where and how their Girl Scout funds were used and provide balances due.

TROOP BANK ACCOUNT PROCEDURES
All troops are required to hold their Girl Scout funds in a bank account. The bank account is to be opened in the name of Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana, Troop Number XXXXX. There are to be minimally two (2) signers on the account. No signer on the account may be a Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana employee. This account will use the federal tax identification number 36-3871241. The address on the account must be that of one of the signers. Bank statements are to be sent to the home address of a person registered with the troop, not to the Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana. Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana recommends establishing an account with BMO Harris Bank. The council has been able to establish a mutually beneficial partnership with BMO Harris Bank that provides many benefits to troops that open a business account, such as, waiving account fees. Troops select one of two letters that is submitted to the bank when opening or modifying a bank account. Your service unit manager or troop support specialist will advise you on bank account activity, troop financial reporting and use of sales tax exemption forms.

TROOP MONEY- EARNING PROCEDURES
All Girl Scouts are expected to participate in Girl Scout product program activities to cover their expenses. These programs include the Fall Product Program and the Girl Scout Cookie® Program. If Girl Scouts need additional money to support program activities and have completed the two council-wide product program activities, they may apply for an additional money-earning activity. Any group money-earning activities may not compete with the Girl Scout Cookie program or other council product programs selling times. This black-out period is for October, January, February, and March.

Girl Scouts need to complete a Money-Earning Application for activities beyond council-sponsored programs. See Money-Earning Basics on page 75. Girl Scout members in troops and
individual girl members participating in the Girl Scout Silver Award, the Girl Scout Gold Award, or travel activities will follow the same procedures outlined above to secure permission for additional money-earning activities.

**COUNCIL SHOP CHECK ACCEPTANCE PROCEDURE**

We only accept personal or troop checks. Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana reserves the right to refuse or accept any check. Information on the check must be preprinted by a financial institution and have a valid check number. It must include the person’s name, the address of the person, the phone number and troop number. We do not accept temporary or starter checks, two or three party checks, checks drawn on foreign banks, or payroll checks.

A state issued driver’s license, state issued ID card, or US Passport must be shown upon request. If an ID is requested, the information must match the preprinted information on the check. The customer whose name is printed on the check by the financial institution must be present.

Checks should be presented for exact amount of purchase only. No cash back. By writing a check to us for payment you authorize us to withdraw the full amount of the payment from your checking account by standard deposit of your check, or utilizing Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT), if we choose. In the event a check is returned from the bank unpaid for any reason and funds are available in your account, we reserve the right to Utilize Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to withdraw the full amount of the check, plus our $25 fee, directly from your account. There is a $25 return check fee for insufficient funds.

**PRODUCT PROGRAM PROCEDURES:**

**PAYMENTS DUE TO THE COUNCIL**

Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana will use Automated Clearing House (ACH) electronic funds transfers for money due from the troop to the council for both product programs. ACH is an electronic network for financial transactions. It is the safe and secure system through which funds are transferred electronically (sweep), to make payments and/or collect funds. The ACH system uses the bank routing number and bank account number to identify accounts to be debited.

Troops are required to deposit all money received as a result of their product program into their troop bank accounts a minimum of one week prior to the scheduled sweep transaction date.

Troops who have insufficient funds in their troop bank accounts to cover the total amount due to the council at the time of the sweep are responsible for all bank fees incurred as the result of insufficient funds.

Troops may occasionally receive a returned check written by a customer from their bank due to non-sufficient funds (NSF). Troops will need to email a copy of the NSF check to Product Program and the following steps will then take place:

- Product Program will update Nut-e/eBudde to reflect the loss of sales and payments.
- GSGCNWI will refund the cost of any bank fees to the troop.
- GSGCNWI will pursue collections of the NSF check.

**COUNTERFEIT MONEY**

The council strongly recommends that troops, including girls and their parents, not accept any bill larger than a $20 (twenty) when taking payments for Girl Scout products. If an individual decides to accept a $50 or $100 bill, they accept full responsibility for any that may turn up as counterfeit.
We also strongly recommend that troops purchase a counterfeit bill detector pen to use at booth sites and etc. This is another opportunity for an entrepreneurial lesson for our Girl Scouts. (They are available at many office supply stores and on the Internet.)

**REPORTING PRODUCT/MONEY LOSS**
- Girl Scout volunteers and anyone accepting responsibility for Girl Scout products and payments are responsible for making restitution and providing supporting paperwork to the council or to the troop.
- In case of fraudulent activity such as theft of product and/or money, product damage due to negligence, carelessness, fire, flood or Acts of God, there is still responsibility.
- The following steps must be taken in reporting the incidents mentioned above:
  - A police report must be filed within 24 hours of the occurrence,
  - A copy of the police report including the details below must be submitted to the Girl Scout council within 48 hours of the occurrence:
    - Date and time
    - Location
    - Troop number
    - Full name of the volunteer
    - Details of the incident including the amount of cookies and/or money involved
- Submission of the above conditions and information does not absolve the person who incurred the loss.
- The persons who incurred the loss or incident are expected to submit said loss through their insurance provider to make restitution to the troop or council.
- The Girl Scout council reserves the right to review each occurrence or incident separately. We will take into consideration the circumstances surrounding each case.

**GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCT POLICY**

Girl Scout volunteers may not consume or use alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs, or be under the influence of same at any council-owned property or at any function where girls are in attendance. In addition, performing volunteer duties while under the influence of illegal drugs and/or alcohol is prohibited. The use of alcohol may be permitted at council-approved functions with the prior approval of special events staff.

Adults who accompany troops or groups must not smoke in the presence of minors at Girl Scout activities. Smoking is not permitted at council-owned sites except in designated areas.

Possession of firearms by adults in any Girl Scout activity or in any way affiliated with a Girl Scout program activity where children are present, shall not be permitted, unless otherwise dictated by law and/or a council-approved activity.

**PROGRAM AND SAFETY POLICY**

Leaders/Advisors must obtain written parent/guardian consent for every girl that may want to participate in any activity that is held at a different place or time from the regularly scheduled meeting. The regularly scheduled meeting place by definition includes the outside property where the troop meets. Parent/Guardian consent to participate shall also be obtained if an activity involves unusual risk and/or sensitive issues as defined in Safety Activity Checkpoints, even if conducted at the regularly scheduled meeting time and place.
A certified first aider must be present during an overnight or camping trip and as specified by Safety Activity Checkpoints. A registered adult must be present who has appropriate council approved training or skill competency, as determined by the council, for the specific event or trip.

**PROGRAM AND SAFETY PROCEDURES**

All Safety Activity Checkpoints are to be adhered to during any troop/group activities including trips, meetings, overnights, camping and extended trips. Safety Activity Checkpoints are available online at girlscoutsgcnwi.org/forms.

If troops/groups are leaving the regular meeting site or are meeting at a time and location different from the regular group meeting, parents/guardians must be informed in writing prior to departure. Permission slips for each outing or trip must be signed by a parent/guardian.

Additional permission slips signed by a parent/guardian are required for topics that may be sensitive in nature as outlined in Safety Activity Checkpoints. A Sensitive Topics Permission Form can be found at girlscoutsgcni.org/forms.

At least two unrelated volunteers, one who is female, must be present at all times. Each troop/group is to have a minimum of one position-trained volunteer or designee present at all times. Additional volunteers are required as chaperones according to ratios outlined in Safety Activity Checkpoints. These volunteers are to be registered as Girl Scouts and approved volunteers.

Male volunteers may accompany a Girl Scout group on an overnight. Be sure the following procedures are followed:

- When camping on council property, be sure the Property Registrar (312-416-2500 ext. 6371) is made aware so that the property manager may be informed of male volunteers accompanying the troop/group.
- One member of the leadership team must be an unrelated female.
- Separate sleeping accommodations and hygiene facilities must be arranged.
- Girl Scout leaders are expected to exercise care and good judgment to ensure a safe and appropriate environment for the girls.

**CAMP ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURES PROCEDURES**

All camp participants must adhere to camp check-in and check-out. Detailed procedures will be sent with your rental confirmation.

Check-in procedures may vary by campsite. Participants must have a complete roster to give the property manager. All vehicles must be parked in the parking lot. Parking on the grass is prohibited. Only one vehicle can be designated as the emergency vehicle for hospital type of emergencies and can travel to the campsite.

Camp participants should inform property manager of the time they will be leaving the camp. Plan to spend one hour cleaning the indoor and outdoor space(s) used by your troop/group. Do not leave the camp without approval of check-out from the property manager. The adult in charge must be on the property the entire time that troops/groups are on the property.

**PRODUCT PROGRAM PARTICIPATION PROCEDURES**

All Girl Scouts members are expected to participate in the fall product and cookie programs. In addition to providing an opportunity for girls to earn funds to support troop/group activities,
product program funds offset the cost of volunteer training, girl program and administrative support to troops and service units.

**CANCELLATIONS AND REFUNDS PROCEDURES**

**COUNCIL-SPONSORED ACTIVITIES**

If the council cancels an activity or event for any reason, troops or families will receive a full refund. Programs may be cancelled due to low enrollment. If a program does not meet the minimum girls required by the registration close date, the program will be cancelled. Participants will be notified of the cancellation via email on the Monday prior to the program. Council events and activities run rain or shine, unless there are safety concerns that prompt the council to issue a cancellation notice.

Refunds will be made as follows:
- No refunds issued on pre-purchased tickets
- No refunds are given within two weeks of a program
- You may swap participants up to the day of the event
- Refunds will not be given for programs or events $5 or less
- Refund requests must be made in writing prior to registration deadline
- No refunds will be made for registrants not attending the program
- Girl and adult membership registration is non-refundable
- Participants choosing not to attend will not be issued a refund

**DEADLINES AND MIN/MAX REQUIREMENTS**

Once registration begins, programs will be filled on a first-come, first-serve basis. Registration will continue until the program has reached the maximum number allowed or the registration deadline, which varies depending on the program. Programs may be cancelled if the stated minimum is not met; all programs are subject to change or cancellation. A waiting list is created for programs that have reached capacity. To be placed on the waiting list call the Program Registrar (815) 651-2711.

**MEMBERSHIP**

Membership fees are non-refundable.

**TROOP CAMPING**

If a troop needs to cancel for any reason, cancellation must be made by email to property@girlscoutsgcnwi.org.
- The $25 per site application fee for camp property rentals is non-refundable.
- In the event of cancellation, GSGCNWI will refund 50 percent of fees paid excluding the $25 per site application fee.

In the event of rescheduling a rental, GSGCNWI will transfer fees paid excluding the $25 per site application fee to a new reservation made within the same membership year.

**COUNCIL SHOP RETURN AND EXCHANGE PROCEDURES**

Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana will accept your return or exchange of unworn, unwashed, unaltered merchandise within 60 days of the original purchase. Merchandise may be returned or exchanged at any of our Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana locations. Returns with a receipt will be credited via the original payment method. Items without a receipt will only be accepted for exchange at the current retail price or in-store credit. All clearance and Joliet outlet store merchandise are final sale and cannot be returned or exchanged.
CONFLICT RESOLUTION POLICY

The conflict resolution process is based on the fundamental values of respect for the individual and fairness. The policy exists so members of the organization can air their grievances and have avenues to resolving them. All volunteers may use the conflict resolution procedure. Every volunteer may expect a fair resolution of her/his dispute without fear of jeopardizing her/his volunteer status. The initiation of the conflict resolution procedure will not restrict the council from taking immediate and appropriate action with respect to the volunteer.

CONFLICT AND GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

Volunteers are encouraged to voice concerns they have in order to find a resolution to those concerns. GCNWI recognizes the importance of resolving conflicts and grievances in a timely manner and ensuring fairness for all individuals involved. Often times, “grievance” and “conflict” are used interchangeably when discussing issues. Because each of these is unique, they are addressed separately to better serve the needs of the individuals involved. All conflict and grievance resolutions will be guided by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURES

Conflict resolution procedures are implemented when an individual expresses a conflict with another individual. GCNWI encourages individuals to, first, reach out to the person with whom they have a conflict in order to share perspective and remove any misunderstandings. Often times, a discussion, with the intent of seeking understanding, can simply be the solution. GCNWI will also work to ensure confidentiality if the individual requests it; however, confidentiality, often times, limits an investigation of a situation.

GCNWI favors a mediation approach to conflicts where the individuals retain the power to come to a mutually beneficial agreement through a facilitated discussion. The facilitator is usually a volunteer, staff member or third party. An individual can follow these steps to resolve conflict:

• The individual is strongly encouraged to discuss the situation face-to-face with the person with whom they have a conflict to seek understanding, remove all possible misunderstandings, share viewpoints and diffuse a situation with peaceful resolution. If that does not resolve the issue, proceed to next step.
• The parties should jointly discuss the situation with the volunteer or staff supervisor to assist in finding a resolution mutually benefitting all parties involved. If this does not resolve the issue, proceed to next step.
• If the issue is not resolved by this point, the individuals may escalate the issue to the director of volunteer services or vice president of member and mission engagement.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURES

Grievance procedures may be implemented when a volunteer expresses concern with the application of the council’s policy, procedure, practice or decision. Filing a grievance will not guarantee a reversal of the application of the council’s policy, procedure, practice or decision, but provides a forum for further discussion and review.

A volunteer may express a concern by discussing the concern with her/his volunteer or staff supervisor.
The volunteer and their volunteer or staff supervisor will strive to find a solution or mutual understanding of the expressed concern. The expressed concern will also be shared with the appropriate department for consideration, review or possible future implementation.

TRANSPORTATION POLICY
Volunteers operating motor vehicles transporting Girl Scouts must be at least 21 years of age and hold a valid driver’s license.

- Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana requires that buses used to carry Girl Scouts must have insurance in accordance with current minimum amounts as determined by the council. A copy of the current insurance certificate must be on file at the corporate office confirming this information.
- Volunteers transporting Girl Scouts must carry appropriate insurance in accordance with state laws. All activity insurance regulations, as stated in policies carried by the council or GSUSA, must be followed.
- Companies used for renting or leasing cars, buses, vans, or other vehicles to transport Girl Scouts must provide a certificate of insurance listing the Girl Scouts as an additional insured entity. This certificate must be approved by the Girl Scout’s insurance carrier prior to transporting any Girl Scouts.
- In passenger cars, vans and trucks used during Girl Scout activities, each passenger must have her or his own seat belt. The State laws of Illinois and Indiana regarding passenger restraint systems, including booster seats, must be followed at all times.

TRANSPORTATION PROCEDURE
All volunteers driving Girl Scout members must be at least 21 years of age, must be a registered member of Girl Scouts and have a volunteer screening and clear background check report on file. Volunteers should refer to Safety Activity Checkpoints on transporting girls.

RESIGNATION POLICY
In order to maintain professionalism and support an effective transition of responsibilities, volunteers are encouraged to give at least two (2) week’s notice when they are resigning from their assignment. Written notification of resignation is to be provided to the volunteer’s immediate supervisor.

TERMINATION POLICY
Although it is anticipated that a volunteer’s activities with the council shall be mutually rewarding, situations may arise that make it necessary to release an individual from a volunteer position. Reasons for termination may include, but are not limited to:

- Abuse, neglect, mishandling, or mistreatment of girls or adults
- Inability to perform the assignment
- Excessive absence or tardiness
- Misappropriation of funds or outstanding debt
- Unsatisfactory completion of objectives or failure to take corrective action
- Conviction of a felony
- Discrimination regarding race, color, ethnicity, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, age (over 40), disability unrelated to the individual’s ability to perform designated volunteer duties, religion, or economic status
- Failure to maintain strict confidentiality when handling sensitive or privileged information
- Violation of Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana and/or Girl Scouts of the USA policies
- Actions not consistent with the Girl Scout Movement

**TERMINATION PROCEDURES**

The termination process supports the Termination Policy and exists to ensure consistency and fairness. Request for a volunteer’s termination can be initiated by volunteers, non-volunteers or staff and must be made to the director of volunteer services. Termination requests should generally follow a coaching and corrective action process unless extenuating circumstances exist. When it is deemed necessary to possibly terminate a volunteer, the council will adhere to the following steps:

- The director of volunteer services or designee will have a discussion with the volunteer to explain why there is concern about the volunteer’s performance/actions.
- The director of volunteer services or designee will conduct an investigation into the issues to determine if termination is warranted.
- The director of volunteer services or designee, in certain circumstances, may assign a team of volunteer representatives from throughout council to convene in order to evaluate the facts. If convened, the volunteer representatives must act only on the basis of substantiated information and involve only those directly involved in the fact-gathering and decision-making process. They may also meet with the participants as a group to seek clarity.
- When the facts indicate that release or termination is necessary, the volunteer will be notified of the decision.

All termination proceedings shall remain strictly confidential. The council reserves the right to notify relevant GCNWI persons. Termination does not terminate membership with Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.

**WHISTLEBLOWER POLICY**

**Purpose**

Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana (GSGCNWI) requires all directors, officers, employees, volunteers and contracted vendors (hereafter referred to as “stakeholders”) to observe high standards of professional and personal ethics in the conduct of their duties and responsibilities. These individuals must comply with all applicable laws and regulations, and practice the Girl Scout Law and Promise in fulfilling their responsibilities.

This policy establishes procedures for the reporting of:
- concerns regarding accounting or auditing activities;
- the commission of unlawful acts such as corruption, bribery, theft or misuse of council property, fraud, coercion, willful omission to perform duty;
- gross misconduct or gross inefficiency;
- any condition that may significantly threaten the health or safety of girl members, volunteers, employees or the public.

**Reporting in Good Faith**

GSGCNWI encourages all stakeholders to promptly report any action or suspected action in violation of our ethical standards using the procedures established by this policy. Stakeholders reporting a known or suspected violation must do so in good faith, without malice to GSGCNWI or any individual, and have reasonable grounds for believing that a violation of our standards has occurred. Failure to report a suspected violation or to act in good faith may result in corrective action up to and including termination of services provided by the stakeholder.
No Retaliation
This Whistleblower Policy is intended to encourage and enable stakeholders to raise concerns within GSGCNWI prior to seeking resolution outside the organization. With this goal in mind, no stakeholder who in good faith reports a suspected violation, or cooperates in the investigation of a suspected violation, will suffer harassment, retaliation, or be subject to adverse employment, volunteer or vendor consequences as a result of their efforts to comply with this policy. Moreover, retaliation against a stakeholder who has reported a suspected violation in good faith is grounds for corrective action up to and including termination of services provided by the stakeholder.

Reporting Procedures
Serious concerns relating to financial reporting, unethical or illegal conduct, should be reported via any one of the avenues listed below. The variety of options provided is intended to offer flexibility for the complainant and the ability to report to parties not implicated in the complaint.

Employees
- Discuss the concern with your immediate supervisor, manager, or department head
- Discuss the concern with a member of the Human Resources team

Directors
- Discuss the concern with the Board Chair
- Discuss the Concern with the CEO or a member of the executive team

Volunteers
- Discuss the concern with your volunteer supervisor or service unit manager
- Discuss the concern with your primary staff liaison

Vendors
- Discuss the concern with your primary contact within GSGCNWI

-OR-

All employees, directors, volunteers and vendors may make use of our third party reporting service via any the following avenues:
- Toll Free Telephone Hotline:
  877-472-2110 (English speaking U.S. and Canada)
  800-216-1288 (Spanish speaking North America)
- Email: reports@lighthouse-services.com (complainant must identify name of the company)
- Fax alternative for written documents: 215-689-3885 (please be sure to use company name)
- Web: lighthouse-services.com (click on Report Incident link).
  Username: GSGCNWI and Password: juliette

Complaint Handling Procedures
The action taken will depend on the nature of the concern. Initial inquiries will be made to determine whether an investigation is appropriate and the form that it should take. Some concerns may be resolved by agreed action without the need for investigation.

Regardless of whether the concern was reported to GSGCNWI staff or through the third party service, the complainant will receive acknowledgment that the concern was received. The final disposition of all complaints received will be reported and reviewed by the Audit Committee of the Board of Directors.
Confidentiality
Reports of suspected violations and investigations pertaining thereto, will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct a full investigation and cooperate with law enforcement authorities. Disclosure of such information to individuals not involved in the investigation will be viewed as a serious disciplinary offense and may result in corrective action up to and including termination of services provided by the stakeholder.

GSGCNWI strongly encourages stakeholders to identify themselves when reporting suspected violations in order to facilitate investigation of the matter. However, reports may be made anonymously in writing or by voice message to the VP of HR or through the third party reporting service. Please note that while anonymous allegations will be investigated to the extent possible, consideration will be given to the prudence of continuing such investigations based on the likelihood of confirming the alleged facts or circumstances.

Notes:
1-855-ILOVEGS (456-8347)

**Girl Scout Gathering Places:**

20 S. Clark Street, Suite 200
Chicago, IL 60603

1005 175th Street
Homewood, IL 60430

1551 Spencer Road
Joliet, IL 60433

3155 W. 71st Street
Naperville, IL 60450

8699 Broadway
Merrillville, IN 46410

650 N. Lakeview Parkway
Vernon Hills, IL 60061

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**Girl Scout Emergency Information Card**

*Procedure to be followed at scene of serious accident, emergency, or fatality:
1. Give priority attention to providing all possible care for the injured.
2. Secure doctor, ambulance, and/or police, as appropriate.
3. Contact Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana at 855-456-8347, then press zero, Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 5 p.m. to report the emergency and secure additional assistance.
4. In the event of fatality or serious accident: ALWAYS notify police. Retain a responsible person at the scene. See that no disturbance of victim or surroundings is permitted until police have assumed authority.
5. Refer all questions from the press (print, radio and television reporters) to Girl Scouts of Greater Chicago and Northwest Indiana at 312-912-8330. Members of a trained crisis team will respond appropriately. MAKE NO STATEMENTS TO THE PRESS and do not discuss the incident, place any blame or accept liability.
6. Once the emergency is over, fill out an Avoider/Incident Report Form and send to your membership specialist.*

Clip or copy this card, fold in half and keep with you in your wallet or troop/group first aid kit whenever you are involved in a Girl Scout activity or event, including day trips, product program activities or overnights.