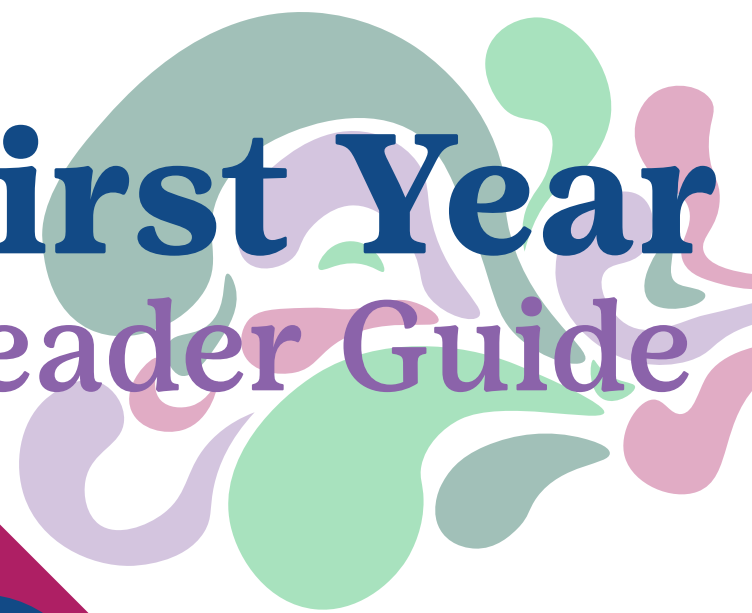
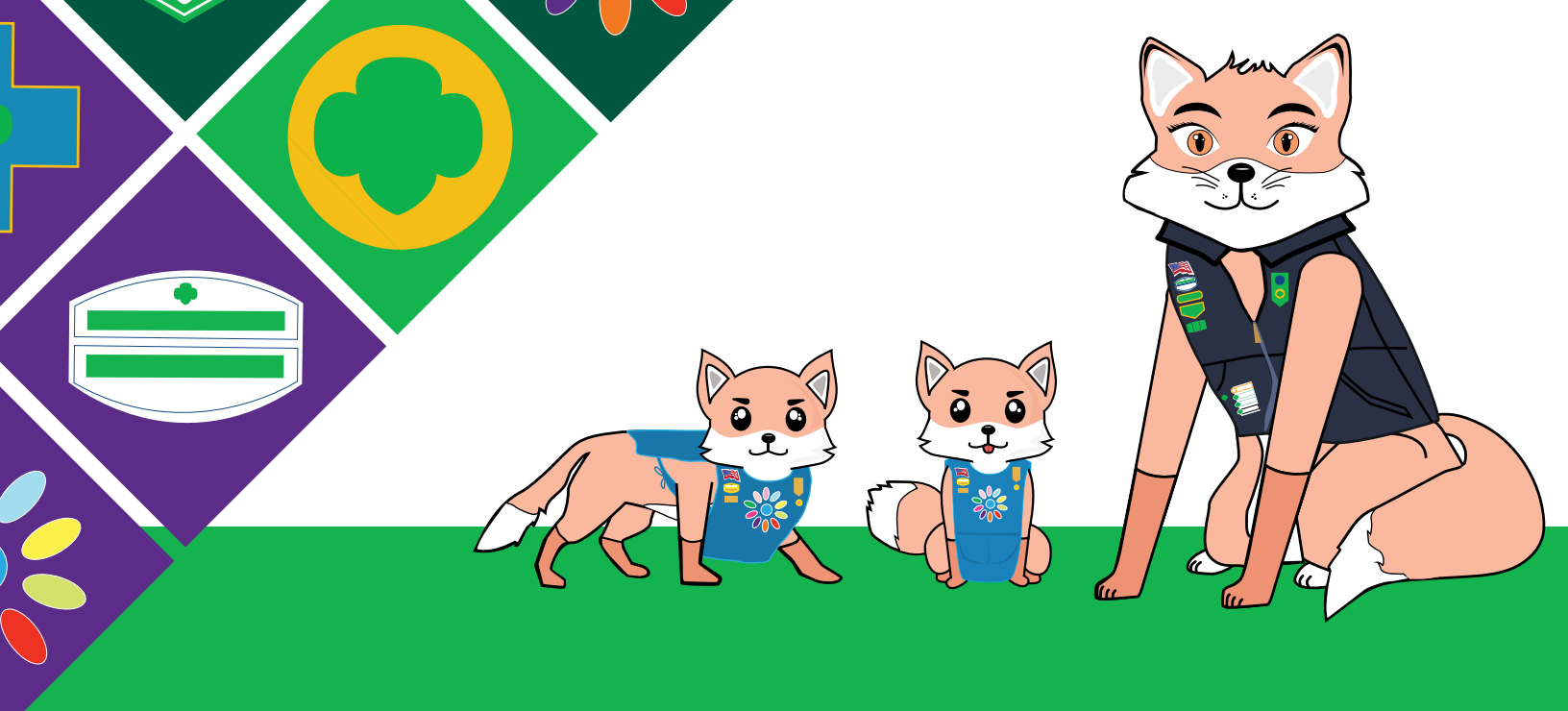


The banner is a colorful quilted design with a diamond-shaped patchwork pattern. The patches contain various symbols: a blue cross on a green background, a yellow star on a blue background, a multi-colored flower on a green background, a green heart on a yellow background, and a white book on a green background. The text "First Lead" is written in a large, stylized font, with "First" in blue and "Lead" in purple. At the bottom, two cartoon foxes are walking on a green field. The foxes are orange with white chests and are wearing blue vests with a colorful flower patch. The background of the banner is white.



# First Year Reader Guide



# About Us

Since 1968, [Girl Scouts of Suffolk County](#) has been committed to building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place. With activities designed to be girl-led, cooperative, and hands-on, Girl Scouts take on new challenges and explore their strengths regardless of background or ability. Supported by adult volunteers and mentors right here in our community, as well as millions of alums around the globe, Girl Scouts lead the way as the world-changers of tomorrow.

## Social Media

Stay on top of all communication from [GSSC](#) by following us on social media:

- Facebook: [Girl Scouts of Suffolk County](#)
- Instagram: [@girlscouts\\_sc](#)
- YouTube: [Girl Scouts of Suffolk County](#)
- LinkedIn: [Girl Scouts of Suffolk County](#)
- Twitter: [@girlscouts\\_sc](#)

We also encourage all leaders to share photos and videos of their troops!  
Send them in at [www.gssc.us/gs-photos](http://www.gssc.us/gs-photos)

## Table of Contents

Welcome to Girl Scouts.....	3
Volunteer Code of Conduct.....	4
First Year Leader Support System.....	5
Live Trainings and Events	
Navigating the Council Website.....	6-8
Troop Trip Policy.....	9-10
Troop Finances.....	11-12
Forms and Documents.....	13-14
Girl Scout Product Programs.....	15
Girl Scout Meeting Traditions.....	16



# Welcome to Girl Scouts

## Support System

Girl Scouts is all about sisterhood. As a leader, you are not alone! Your troop co-leader(s) and parents/caregivers are your primary team. Get to know them and allow them to help!

## Service Unit

**What is a Service Unit?** It is a geographically defined area that consists of Girl Scout troops that are in the same local area. These troops are supported by a Service Unit team. Service Unit teams consist of experienced Girl Scout volunteers who support troop volunteers throughout the Girl Scout year. The team includes a coordinator, treasurer, and more.

These volunteers work together to support you by providing local activity and event opportunities and hosting a monthly troop leader meeting. Most Service Units also have a private social media group to communicate throughout the year. Ask your Service Unit Coordinator how to join!

## Council Staff

We are here for you! GSSC's Mission Delivery team will be here to get you started, connect you with your Service Unit volunteer team, and to support you throughout the year. If you have a private matter, a conflict to discuss, issues with registration or any other needs, email [customercare@gssc.us](mailto:customercare@gssc.us) or call (631) 543-6622.

## Governing Structure Organization Breakdown

*Girls and Volunteers are  
the HEART of Girl Scouts!*

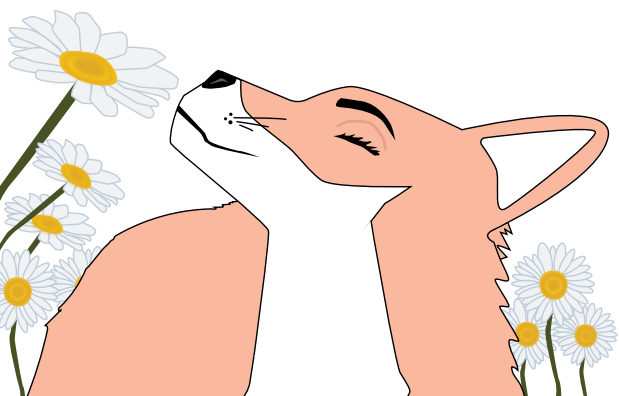


**TROOP**

**SERVICE UNIT**

**GIRL SCOUTS  
OF SUFFOLK COUNTY**

**GIRL SCOUTS OF USA**



# Girl Scout Volunteer Code of Conduct

As a Volunteer of Girl Scouts of Suffolk County, I understand and agree to the expectations of behavior and representation defined in the Volunteer Compliance Standards and Girl Scouts of Suffolk County Code of Conduct:

## **VOLUNTEER COMPLIANCE STANDARDS**

As a designated volunteer leader, members must adhere to the following expectations to be considered a volunteer in “good standing” with GSSC:

- Active adult membership of GSUSA and GSSC as a volunteer in an assigned ‘leadership role’ through MyGS.
- Current background check which needs to be renewed every 3 years via GSUSA/GSSC authorized background check vendor.
- Compliance with the Girl Scouts of Suffolk County Code of Conduct and Girl Scouts Promise and Law.
- Updated and completed training courses and assignments.
- Completed Volunteer Financial Agreement and proven adherence to all stated policies as outlined.
- Troop affiliation cannot be in arrears for product program and/or monies due to council for membership or program events.

## **GIRL SCOUTS OF SUFFOLK COUNTY CODE OF CONDUCT FOR VOLUNTEERS**

GSSC is committed to the highest ethical standards and expect all volunteers to act in the best interest of the organization and its mission, embracing its values and guidelines for ethical behavior as follows:

- Affirm the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Comply with all policies, procedures and safety guidelines as outlined by GSUSA and GSSC.
- Serve as a mandated reporter in instances of child abuse or neglect and seek support from GSSC in said reporting.
- Welcome girls and adults from a variety of backgrounds and create an inclusive and diverse Girl Scout experience.
- Behave in a manner that models the ideals and values of the Girl Scout Promise and Law in all verbal or written communications (telephone conversations, emails, texts, newsletters, social media and announcements), ensuring they do not contain profanity or condescending remarks.
- Refrain from inappropriate displays of anger, aggression or berating of individuals in public or private.
- Honor the leadership of the girls and support their decisions.
- Act responsibly when overseeing Girl Scout funds, maintain accurate records, and file required reports.
- Not use any volunteer position for personal, political, or monetary gain.

**I understand that if I do not comply with the above standards or if I participate in illegal activities, abuse or mistreat girls, parents, volunteers or staff, or otherwise act in a way that negatively impacts the image or goals of GSSC and/or GSUSA, I may be terminated from a leadership position or from any volunteer role with GSSC. By completing and submitting this form below I agree to uphold the standards of excellence as outlined above.**

# First Year Leader's Support System

## Live Trainings and Support Events

### First Year Leader Circle

Join council staff for our virtual “circles” throughout the first year. We will tackle topics such as: first meetings; working with parents/caregivers; badge activities; and more! Leaders will feel ready and excited to lead troops and have opportunities to share with and learn from fellow Suffolk County volunteers!

### Girl Scout Cookie Program® for New Leaders

Learn how girls can earn entrepreneurship and life skills through our Girl Scout Cookie campaign. This training will give a detailed overview of the programs, how to engage parents/caregivers as volunteers, and best practices from experienced leaders.

### Troop Leader Expo

New and returning leaders can walk through our expo and learn about resources and programs available in the coming year from council staff, fellow leaders, and community vendors.

### Volunteer Tips Series

Volunteers lend their leader and professional expertise to tackling tricky topics such as: managing behaviors; building activity plans; handling conflict; and more.

### Troop Showcase Series

Bridging ceremonies, highest awards, overnight trips, and more! Our Troop Showcase series spotlights troops from every level sharing best practices on various activities throughout the year.

Check out our [event calendar](#) to register for these events.



# Council Website

First Year Leaders can find all of the information they need to manage their Girl Scout Year on our website under the [Members](#) page and the [Activities](#) page.

## Members Section:

### Badges & Journeys

This is where you can browse badges and journeys and obtain a snapshot of requirements.

### Highest Awards, Leadership Awards & Scholarships

These pages house information for Bronze, Silver, and Gold awards as well as Community Service Bars, and more.

### Plan Your Girl Scout Year

This is where you can find Troop Leader Year Plans, songs and traditions, and other resources for meetings.

### Forms and Documents

All necessary forms for troop meetings can be found here as well as documents that highlight safety policies, and more.

### First Year Leader Support

The one stop shop for all things to help our first year leaders get started including videos on how to access the Volunteer Toolkit, using MyGS, and more.

### Training & Development

A listing of our online and in-person training opportunities to keep you inspired and educated throughout your leadership journey can be found here.

## Activities Section

### Event Calendar

This is where you can search and register for council events, programs, workshops, and trainings for girls and adults.

### Program Guide

Council run programs will be featured here as a guide with information on how to register for events.

### Patch Programs

These patch programs are unique to GSSC and feature partnerships with local organizations or another troop. Girls can earn these as a troop or on their own.

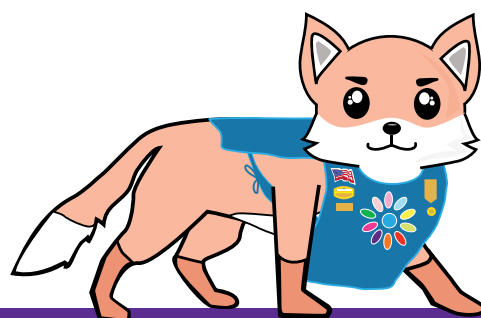
### Camp and Outdoors

Learn all about troop camping and activities at our camp properties.

### Special Events

Stay connected to learn more about our special events throughout the year for troops and volunteers.

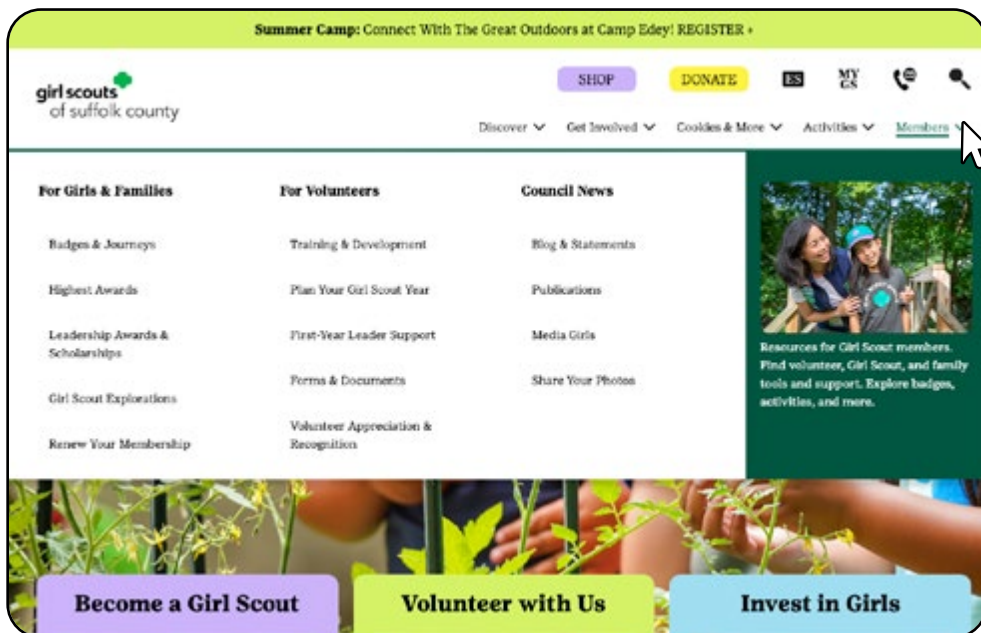
*See example screenshots of website on the next page.*



# Council Website (Cont'd)

## Members:

Desktop version



Hover mouse over navigation name to see secondary sections.

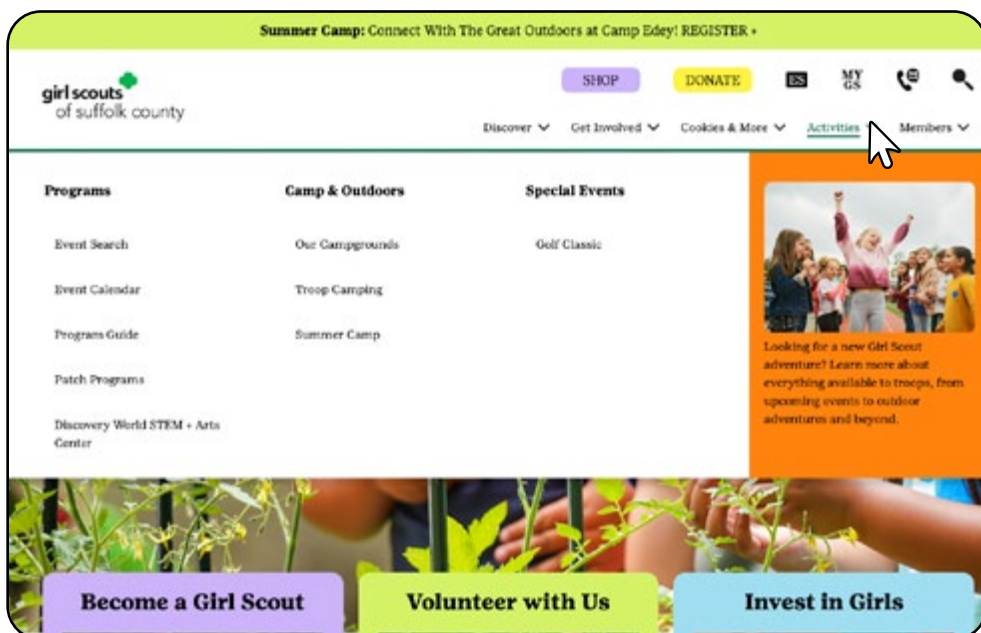
Mobile version



Tap Menu ≡ > Tap Title to see sections

## Activities:

Desktop version



Hover mouse over navigation name to see secondary sections.

Mobile version

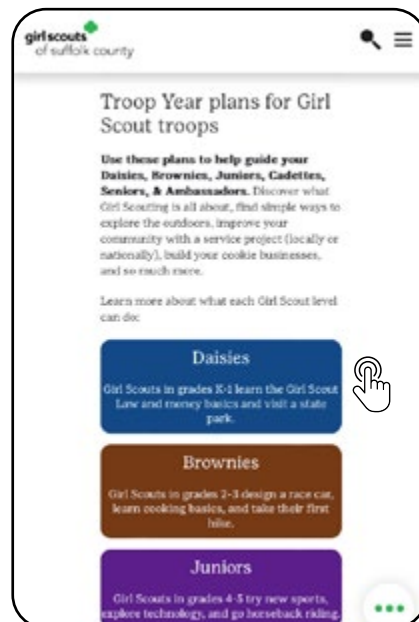
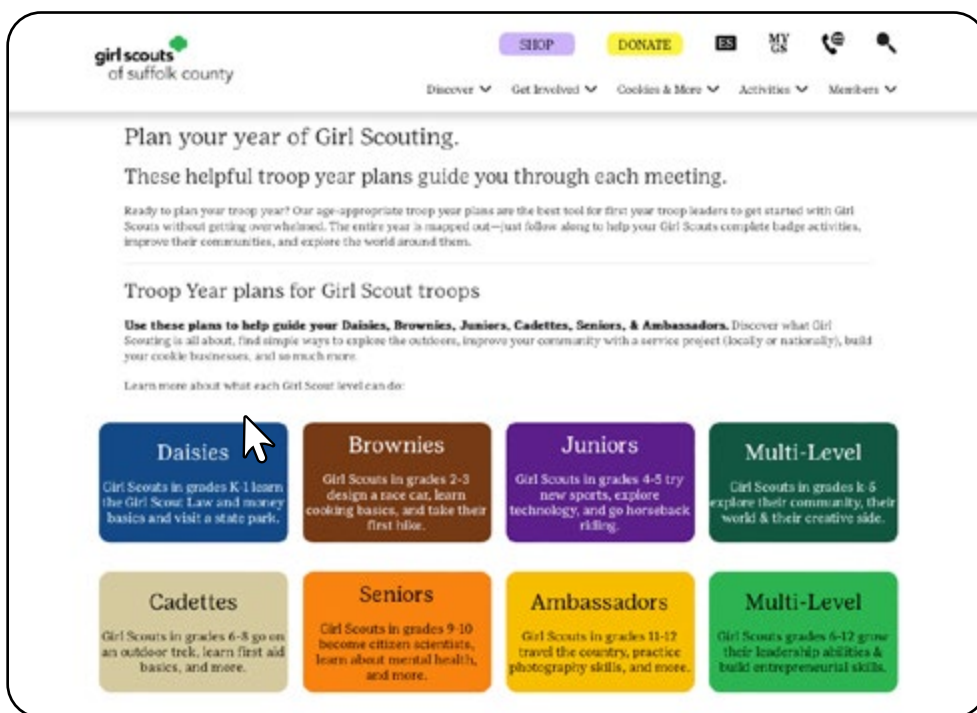
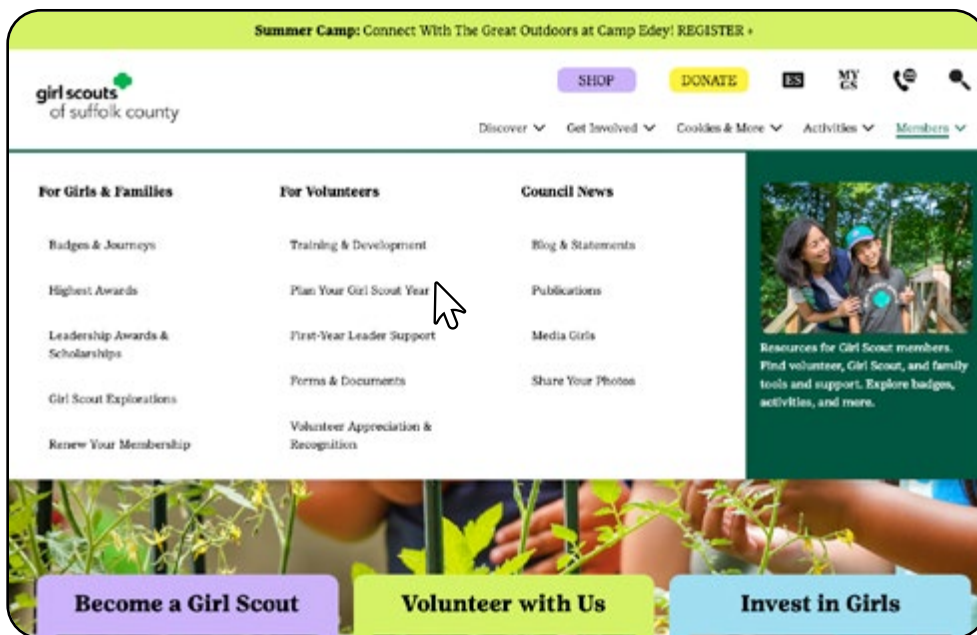


Tap Menu ≡ > Tap Title to see sections

# Council Website (Cont'd)

## Troop Leader Year Plan

While we encourage a “choose your own adventure” planning approach, there are easy to follow [Troop Leader Year Plans](#) on our website to inspire first year leaders. Take a look at the program level of your troop.



# Troop Trip Policy

## Trip Policy Per Level

- **Daisy:** Day trips within Nassau or Suffolk County. Overnight trips are only permitted with a parent/caregiver chaperone for each girl at events sponsored by Service Unit or Council, as well as camping within Nassau and Suffolk County.
- **Brownie:** Day trips anywhere within the greater New York area (Suffolk, Nassau, New York City), Connecticut, Eastern Pennsylvania, and New Jersey. Overnight trips are only permitted with proper adult troop coverage at events sponsored by Service Unit or Council, as well as camping within Nassau and Suffolk County.
- **Junior:** Day trips, overnight trips as listed above and Washington DC, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts.
- **Cadette:** Day trips, overnight trips as listed above, as well as trips that involve extensive travel within the US.
- **Senior & Ambassador:** Day trips, overnight trips as listed above, as well as trips that involve travel to other countries.

## Trip Forms

### Trip Approval Request Form

This form is used for any day trip or one overnight trip and must be submitted 2-3 weeks prior to the date of the event.

### Extended Trip Approval Form

This form is used for all overnight trips for 2 or more days, 6-12 months prior to the date of the event. This form is also required to be submitted for troop camping .

### Certificate of Insurance (COI)

All trip organizations need to have their COI on file with GSSC. Leaders can review the current list of businesses and schools. If a Certificate of Insurance for GSSC is requested by an organization, a leader can submit a request using our Certificate of Insurance Request form.

### Overnight Troop Camping Request Form

This form is only available upon completion of the gsLearn course GSSC Introduction to Troop Camping. It is required to request a camping trip on or off council property.



# Troop Trip Policy *(Cont'd)*

## Knowing how many Volunteers you need

From troop meetings to camping weekends and cookie booths, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure Girl Scouts have fun and stay safe, no matter their grade level. If you are not sure about the number of adults you will need for your activity, the chart below breaks down the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of Girl Scouts.

Remember to always consult the [GSUSA Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) & [GSSC Safety Guidelines](#) for guidance when planning trips.

Girl Scout Volunteer-to-Youth Ratios	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, & Camping	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for up to this number of youth:	One additional volunteer to each additional:	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for up to this number of youth:	One additional volunteer to each additional:
Girl Scout Daises (Grades K-1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (Grades 2-3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (Grades 4-5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
Girl Scout Cadettes (Grades 6-8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Girl Scout Seniors (Grades 9-10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (Grades 11-12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

# Forms & Documents

These [Forms and Documents](#) can be found under the Members section of the website.

*\*Service Unit Coordinator*

Name of Form / Document	What is it needed for?	Does it need to be approved or reviewed? / Who approves it or collects the completed version?
Certificate of Insurance (COI) for Businesses & Schools	Required by GSSC to have on file to serve as a location for a troop meeting or trip.	N/A
Certificate of Insurance (COI) Request	Troops and Service Units can submit a request to obtain a copy of GSSC's COI in the event it is requested by a business or school.	N/A
Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge	Outlines safety guidelines for girls' usage of internet for Girl Scout activities and promotions.	N/A
Girl Scout Blue Book of Documents	Houses constitution and bylaws of Girl Scouts USA Also available in Spanish	N/A
Girl Scout Volunteer Essentials	Comprehensive information about the Girl Scout Leadership Experience program, troop management, safety and more.	N/A
ACH (Automated Clearing House) Form	Used by GSSC to obtain troop account information that will allow council to pull and refund over payments as they relate to the product sale programs	Received: The form must be completed by the troop leader and then submitted to GSSC.
Accident/Injury Report Form	Used by troops and Service Units if a girl, adult, or tagalong is involved in an accident or gets injured during a Girl Scout event or activity.	Reviewed: The form must be completed by the volunteer on site and then submitted to the Director of Mission Delivery at GSSC.
Adult/Volunteer Media Release Form	Used by troop and Service Units to obtain permission to use adult/volunteer images or recordings for marketing and/or record keeping.	Reviewed: This form needs to be completed and given to the troop leader or Service Unit Team member for record keeping.
Extended Trip Approval	Used by troops and Juliettes when requesting a trip that includes an overnight for 2 or more days. Must be submitted 6-12 months prior to the date of the event.	Approval: Completed forms are electronically sent to SUC* for initial approval. One reviewed, SUC sends to Director of Mission Delivery at GSSC to give final approval and notification to a troop that trip has been approved.
Space Use Request Form	Used by troops and Service Units to request council space for events and meetings.	Approval: Completed forms are electronically sent to GSSC for approval. Troops and Service Units will be notified if space is approved.

# Forms & Documents *(Cont'd)*

Name of Form / Document	What is it needed for?	Does it need to be approved or reviewed? / Who approves it or collects the completed version?
Tag-Along Insurance	Used by troops to pay for the required Tag-Along Insurance that covers certain individuals to be present at Girl Scout events.	Reviewed: GSSC receives submitted form and money from the troop annually.
Troop Additional Fundraising Application	Used by troops and Juliettes that are junior program level and up to request an additional fundraising activity.	Approval: Completed forms are received by SUC who approves. Once SUC approves, it is sent to Director of Mission Delivery at GSSC for final approval.
Troop Roster	Used by troops to submit with trip approval forms	Reviewed: The roster is sent with trip approval forms for approval.
Volunteer CPR/First Aid Verification Form	Completed annually by all registered volunteers to confirm active CPR/First Aid certification.	Reviewed: Completed forms are electronically sent to the SUC. This list needs to be reviewed annually to ensure all active volunteers within the Service Unit are in compliance.
Volunteer Expectations & Code of Conduct	Completed annually by all registered volunteers within the Service Unit.	Reviewed: Completed forms are electronically sent to the SUC. This list needs to be reviewed annually to ensure all active volunteers within the Service Unit are in compliance.
Volunteer Finance Acknowledgment	Completed annually by troop leaders, troop product sales managers, and designated Service Unit Team members.	Reviewed: Completed forms are electronically sent to SUC and council.



# Girl Scout Troop Finances

## Bank Accounts

- All troops must establish a bank account with two unrelated adult signers from the troop and two signers from the Service Unit team.
- All troop funds must go through the account including collection of troop dues (optional), payment for troop supplies and activities, and funds related to the cookie and/or fall product programs.
- The Service Unit Treasurer in your service unit will work with you on the proper procedures for opening your troop's account.
- Troop funds should be spent on activities troops vote on as the funds are owned by the troop.
- Money should be spent down annually (Daisy/Brownies \$20-\$50) .
- Older girls may budget savings for trips or activities.

## Troop Budgets

Keeping good financial records is a must! Keep receipts and track troop activity costs. Troops should share financial information with parents 2-3 times a year. When planning, make sure to keep the troop budget in mind and to save money to help fund next year's activities, too.

## Income

- Troop Dues
- Product Sales
- Additional Fundraisers (Junior+)
- Donations (\$250+ goes to GSSC for processing)

## Expenses

- Badges and patches
- Event fees
- Activity supplies (first aid kit)
- Training and resources
- Leader and Girl renewals
- Tagalong Insurance (\$4 annually)



# Girl Scout Troop Finances

## Troop Dues

Many troops decide to collect troop dues to help supply start-up funding for troop activities and supplies. Make sure to be flexible with families when collecting troop monies. Troop dues should be just enough to cover the cost of supplies, activity fees, and badges/patches.

**If you are a new troop, it's wise to collect troop dues. This may not be necessary to cover troop costs after participation in the product sales programs.**

**Dues are typically collected at the beginning of the year or per meeting and can be determined based upon \$1.00-\$4.00 per girl per meeting with a maximum of \$16.00 per girl per month. Payments must be accepted in check or cash only.**

## Fundraising

A troop's primary money earning should come from the fall product sale and Cookie Program. For junior level troops and up, once a troop has participated in both programs, they are able to [request approval](#) for supplemental money earning activities, such as garage sales or car washes.

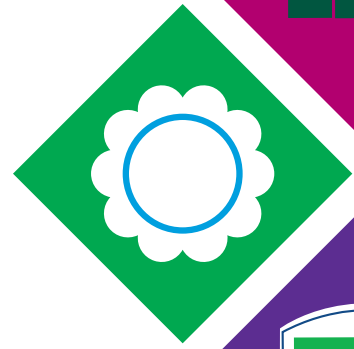
## Financial Assistance

Financial difficulties shouldn't stand in the way of a girl's participation. Any member needing financial assistance for membership can request it as part of the online membership registration process. Other financial assistance is available for books, badges, uniforms, and programs. Information can be found on our [website](#) or via the Membership Specialist.

## Troop Finance Report

Use this to track troop finances. A completed Troop Finance Report must be submitted each year and will be available via the Resources tab of the VTK.

**Please refer to the Troop Finances module in your New Leader Onboarding Path on gsLearn for further details on how to manage your troop account.**



# Product Programs

The [Fall Product Program \(Munchies & More\)](#) and the [Girl Scout Cookie Program®](#) are financial literacy programs where girls become entrepreneurs and learn these five important skills:

## **Goal Setting**

Girl Scouts learn how to set goals and create a plan to reach them.

## **Decision Making**

Girl Scouts learn to make decisions on their own and as a team.

## **Money Management**

Girl Scouts learn how to create a budget and handle money.

## **People Skills**

Girl Scouts find their voice and build confidence through customer interactions.

## **Business Ethics**

Girl Scouts learn to act ethically, both in business and in life.

Each program gives girls the opportunity to earn money for their troop, rewards and badges.

The Fall Munchies & More Program takes place between September and November. Girls sell nuts, candy/chocolates, magazines, and more. The Girl Scout Cookie Program takes place between December and May. Girls sell a variety of different flavored cookies. Both programs allow girls to sell products online, individually, and as a troop at booth sales in their community.

Information about each campaign is emailed out to Service Units and communicated with leaders. Training is required by leaders and other volunteers to guide girls through the program.

As a reminder, each girl is eligible to participate in the program regardless of troop participation. Therefore, information about each campaign must be shared with parents/caregivers to give everyone an opportunity to subsidize costs with raised troop funds.

**For information about each campaign and updates, visit Cookies & More at [www.gssc.us](http://www.gssc.us)**

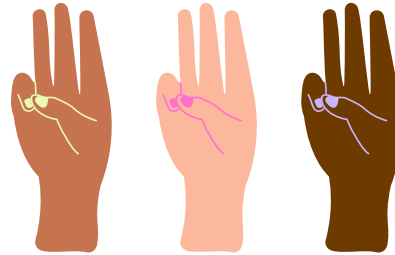


# Meeting Traditions

There are many kinds of traditions in Girl Scouting. What counts in Girl Scout traditions is that they are meaningful to the participants, that the girls are involved in the planning, and that everyone participates in the way they are able.

## Girl Scout Promise Sign

This is used to recite the Girl Scout Promise and to call a group to order or to ask for quiet. Made by holding up the right hand with the ring, middle, and pointer finger extended and the pinkie and thumb touching.



## Friendship Circle

Girls gather in a circle and cross their right arm over their left, then link hands with the next girl. With everyone silent, the co-leader starts the “friendship squeeze” by squeezing the hand of the girl to her right. One by one, each girl passes the squeeze until it travels the full circle. A great way to end meetings.

**Girl Scout Motto:** “Be prepared.”

**Girl Scout Slogan:** “Do a good turn daily.”

## SWAPS

*“Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere”* Small, handmade tokens of friendship exchanged with other Girl Scouts.

## Ideas for opening a troop meeting:

- Sit or stand in a circle and recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law
- Do a simple flag ceremony
- Sing a Girl Scout song (serious or silly!)
- Play an icebreaker game

## Ideas for closing a troop meeting:

- Gather in friendship circle and sing a song (“Taps”, “Make New Friends”, etc.)
- Close your circle with the friendship squeeze, a hand squeeze (or fist/elbow bump, etc.) that travels around a friendship circle from one person to another after someone starts it
- Make an archway - Girls make two lines facing each other, then reach up making arches with their arms; the pair farthest from the door goes through under the arches, then the next pair, etc. The last two go out under the arch made by the two adult leaders.

## 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 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.

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