ADVENTURE AHEAD!

Welcome to the great adventure that is Girl Scouting! Thanks to volunteers and mentors like you, generations of girls have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world. Have no doubt: You, and nearly a million other volunteers like you, are helping girls make a lasting impact on the world.

This guide, Volunteer Essentials, is designed to support busy troop leaders on the go. You can easily find what you need to get started on your Girl Scout Journey and search for answers throughout the troop year.

Think of Volunteer Essentials as your encyclopedia to Girl Scout volunteering—it’s here when you need it, but there’s no need to read it all today.

Get started by browsing through the sections in the table of contents.

New troop leader? We’ve got you covered. Check out the New Leader’s Guide to Success, a resource designed especially for you! Find it at gssem.org/leadersguide.

Whatever your volunteer position, your hard work means girls will embark on new adventures, make friendships that last a lifetime, and deepen their connection to their community and the world. We’re calling on all members of society to help girls reach their full potential, and you’ve answered that call. So thank you from the bottom of our hearts!
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ALL ABOUT GIRL SCOUTS

Girl Scouts was founded in 1912 by trailblazer Juliette Gordon Low, the original G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ powerhouse. We are the largest leadership development organization for girls in the world and a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts, a sisterhood of close to 10 million girls and adults in 150 countries. With programs from coast to coast and across the globe, Girl Scouts offers every girl the chance to practice a lifetime of leadership, adventure, and success.

Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How?
Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and the inherent power of girls and women in an inclusive, supportive, girl-led environment!

Girl Scout volunteers are a dynamic and diverse group, and there’s no one “type” of volunteer. Whether you’re a recent college grad, a parent, a retiree, or really, anyone with a sense of curiosity and adventure (female or male, who has passed the necessary screening process), your unique skills and experiences help make Girl Scouting a powerful leadership experience for girls.

What all members share are the Girl Scout Promise and Law, as well as our extraordinary strengths as go-getters, innovators, risk-takers, and leaders. Each member also agrees to follow safety guidelines and pay the annual membership dues of $25. Adults have the option to purchase a lifetime membership for $400.

Girls at Every Grade Level
Girls can join in the fun at any grade level:
- Girl Scout Daisy (grades K–1)
- Girl Scout Brownie (grades 2–3)
- Girl Scout Junior (grades 4–5)
- Girl Scout Cadette (grades 6–8)
- Girl Scout Senior (grades 9–10)
- Girl Scout Ambassador (grades 11–12)

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience
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. It’s what makes Girl Scouts truly unique—our program is designed by, with, and for girls.

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is what girls do and how they do it. When girls participate in the GSLE, they experience five measurable leadership benefits or outcomes that will fuel their success. And although girls may start building their leadership skills in school and on sports teams, research shows that the courage, confidence, and character they develop as Girl Scouts stay with them throughout their lives.

What girls do in Girl Scouting all fits within three keys: discover, connect, and take action.
- When girls do exciting badge activities, earn a Girl Scout Journey award, attend an amazing event, or go camping, you are helping them discover who they are, what they care about, and what their talents are.
- Girls connect when they collaborate with other people, learn from others, and expand their horizons. This helps them care about, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.
- With your guidance, these budding leaders will connect with and care about others, and they’ll be eager to take action to make the world a better place.
As for how they do it? The GSLE draws on three unique processes that help girls unlock the leader within.

- Girl-led means girls of every age take an active and age-appropriate role in figuring out the what, where, when, why, and how of all the exciting troop activities they’ll do. The girl-led process is critically important to the GSLE—when girls know their voice matters, they feel empowered to make decisions and they stay engaged in their activities.
- Girls enjoy hands-on activities and learn by doing. Then, after reflecting on their activities, girls gain a deeper understanding of the concepts and skills the activities require.
- Through cooperative learning, girls learn to share knowledge and skills in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation as they work toward a common goal.

As a volunteer, you’ll draw on these Girl Scout processes as you lead girls of any age. Girl-led at the Daisy level will look very different from the Ambassador level, of course. What’s most important is that girls make decisions about the activities to do together and that they also make choices within that activity. As they learn from their successes and failures—and gain a major confidence boost in the process—their girl-led process will give them the opportunity to lead within their peer group. By the time girls are Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, they’ll be using the leadership skills they’ve developed in order to mentor younger girls.

One last tip about using the processes: 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. Projects don’t have to come out perfectly—in fact, it’s a valuable learning experience when they don’t—and girls don’t have to fill their vests and sashes with badges. Because what matters most is the fun and learning that happens as girls make experiences their own, don’t be afraid to step back and let your girls take the lead.

Reflection
Was a badge-earning activity a resounding success? Or was it derailed by something the girls hadn’t factored in? No matter an activity’s outcome, you can amplify its impact by encouraging your girls to reflect on their latest endeavor.

Reflection is the necessary debrief that reinforces what the girls learned. As they explore the “whats” and “whys,” girls make meaningful connections between the activity at hand and future challenges that come their way. In other words, reflection gives girls the confidence boost they need to pick themselves up, try again, and succeed.

Reflection doesn’t need to be a formal process, but you can kick-start the conversation with three simple questions: What?, So what?, and Now what?

- Go over with girls the what of the activity. For example, ask, “What did we do today? What part was your favorite? If we did it again, what would you want to do differently and what would you repeat?”
- Then move to the so what elements. You might ask, “So what did you learn by doing this activity? So what did you learn about yourself? So what did you learn about your community (or environment, school, or others) that you didn’t know before?”
- Lastly, review the now what with the girls. Say something like, “Now that we’ve done this, what would you like to do next? Now that you know this about yourselves, what would you like to try next? Now that we did this Take Action project, what do you think we should do next to make sure it continues on?”

What?, So what?, and Now what?—or whatever style of reflection you choose to use with your girls—are powerful elements of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, and they’ll carry these lessons with them for the rest of their lives.
Progression
Although program elements—like outdoor expeditions or entrepreneurial ventures—align across all grade levels, Girl Scout Brownies and Juniors won’t be doing the same activities as seasoned Seniors and Ambassadors. But with your support, they will get there!

Girl Scout programming is designed to be progressive, and it’s what makes Girl Scouting fun and effective! By building on the knowledge and skills they gain year after year, your girls’ confidence will grow exponentially, and they’ll be eager to take the next steps. As a volunteer, you will cultivate a supportive, nonjudgmental space where girls can test their skills and be unafraid to fail.

Keep in mind that good progression drives success for girls. We’ve outlined some suggestions that will help you determine when your girls are ready for their next outdoor challenge or their next troop trip.

Inclusion
Girl Scouts has a strong commitment to inclusion and diversity, and we embrace girls of all abilities and backgrounds into our wonderful sisterhood.

Inclusion is at the core of who we are; it’s about being a sister to every Girl Scout and celebrating our unique strengths. Part of the important work you do includes modeling friendship and kindness for your girls and showing them what it means to practice empathy. Here’s how you can nurture an inclusive troop environment.

Equal Treatment: Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, planning, 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.

The National Program Pillars
At Girl Scouts, girls lead their own adventures and team up with their fellow troop members in an all-girl environment to choose the exciting, hands-on activities that interest them most. Girl Scouts focuses on four areas (pillars) that form the foundation of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience:

• Outdoors: When girls embark on outdoor adventures, they learn to confidently meet challenges while developing a lifelong appreciation of nature.
• Science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM): Whether they’re building a robot, developing a video game, or studying the stars, girls become better problem-solvers and critical thinkers through STEM activities.
• Life skills: Girls discover they have what it takes to become outspoken community advocates, make smart decisions about their finances, and form strong, healthy relationships. As you help girls plan their activities, give them opportunities to explore and up their game in each of the pillar areas.
• Entrepreneurship: By participating in the Girl Scout Cookie Program or fall product program, girls learn the essentials of running their own business and how to think like entrepreneurs.

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) can provide inspiring ideas so you can engage your troop in an exciting mix of activities all year long. For example, if you want to take your girls outside when doing a badge activity, look for the evergreen icon, which tells you that activity can be taken outdoors.
The Important Difference Between Journeys and Badges
Journeys and badges are designed to give girls different leadership-building experiences, all while having fun!

- Journeys are topic-specific experiences through which girls explore their world by doing hands-on activities and taking the reins on age-appropriate Take Action projects. Because of their leadership focus, Journeys are also a prerequisite for the prestigious Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.
- Badges are all about skill building. 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!

If they choose, girls can pursue the badges they’re excited about and Journey awards in the same year; encourage them to find the connections between the two to magnify their Girl Scout experience! While you’re having fun, keep in mind that 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.

The Difference Between Community Service and Take Action Projects
As your girls look for meaningful ways to give back to their community, you can help sharpen their problem-solving skills and expand their definition of doing good by discussing community service and Take Action projects.

- **Community service projects** are all about making an impact right now and filling an immediate need in the community.
- Through their Take Action projects, girls change the world—or their part of it—and make it better, going forward. Take Action projects focus on creating a lasting, sustainable impact.

Both projects serve important needs, but at different levels. If your troop members want to pursue their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award, they’ll need to understand the kinds of projects that qualify. To make Take Action projects even more impactful for your girls, set time for them to reflect on their projects. When girls make time to internalize the lessons they’ve learned, they’re more likely to find success in their future projects—or anything else they put their minds to.

Traditions, Ceremonies, and Special Girl Scout Days
Time-honored traditions and ceremonies unite Girl Scout sisters—and the millions of Girl Scout alums who came before them—around the country and around the globe and remind girls how far their sisters have come and just how far they’ll go.

A few of those extra special days, when you’ll want to crank up the celebrations, include:

- Juliette Gordon Low’s birthday or Founder’s Day, October 31, marks the birth in 1860 of Girl Scouts of the USA founder Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia.
- Girl Scouts’ birthday, March 12, commemorates the day in 1912 when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the organization’s first 18 girl members in Savannah, Georgia.

Whether you are making cool SWAPS to share with new friends or closing your meetings with a friendship circle, your troop won’t want to miss out on these traditions, ceremonies, and special Girl Scout days.
**Highest Awards**

As your girls discover their passions and the power of their voices, they’ll want to take on an issue that’s captured their interest and is meaningful to them. Encourage them to turn their vision into reality by taking on the ultimate Take Action projects in order to earn Girl Scouts’ highest awards.

The Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards honor girls who become forces for good and create a lasting impact on their communities, nationally and around the world.

- The Girl Scout Bronze Award can be earned by Juniors who have completed one Junior Journey.
- The Girl Scout Silver Award can be earned by Cadettes who have completed one Cadette Journey.
- The Girl Scout Gold Award takes making the world a better place to a new level by solving society’s grand challenges. Seniors and Ambassadors who have completed either two Girl Scout Senior-level Journeys, two Ambassador-level Journeys, or one of each can pursue their Gold Award.

Did you know that a Girl Scout who has earned her Gold Award immediately advances one rank in all four branches of the U.S. military? A number of college scholarship opportunities also await Gold Award Girl Scouts. A girl does not, however, have to earn a Bronze or Silver Award before earning the Girl Scout Gold Award. She is eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which she is registered.

Ask your council about the Gold Award Girl Scouts in your community and how they’re doing their part to make the world a better place. For some serious inspiration, consider inviting a local Gold Award Girl Scout to speak to your girls about how she took the lead and made a difference. You’ll be inspired when you see and hear what girls can accomplish as leaders—and by the confidence, values, and team-building expertise they gain while doing so!

**Girl Scout Travel and Destinations**

From their first local field trip as Daisies to exploration of another country as Cadettes, Seniors or Ambassadors, girls will find that Girl Scouts is the best way to travel. They’ll challenge themselves in a safe environment that sparks their curiosity, and they’ll create lifelong memories with their Girl Scout sisters. And the Girl Scout Cookie Program can help to make travel dreams a reality!

Traveling with Girl Scouts is very different from traveling with family, school, or other groups because girls take the lead. As they make the decisions about where to go and what to do and take increasing responsibility for the planning and management of their trips, girls build important organizational and management skills that will benefit them in college and beyond.

Girl Scout travel is built on a progression of activities, so girls are set up for success. Daisies and Brownies start with field trips and progress to day trips, overnights, and weekend trips. Juniors can take adventures farther with a longer regional trip. And Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors can travel the United States and then the world. There are even opportunities for older girls to travel independently by joining trips their councils organize or participating in Destinations. There’s a whole world of possibilities for your girls!

**Planning Ahead for Adventure**

Get in touch with Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan as you start thinking about planning a trip. They likely have training programs that will raise your confidence as a chaperone as well as an approval process for overnight and extended travel.
Troop/Group Travel – International Trip or Cruise Requirements

- There are many opportunities for troops/groups to visit other countries on trips they have planned themselves or through organized tour groups, such as EF Tours.
- Troops/groups must always consult the U.S. State Department Web site at state.gov/travel/ for travel alerts, warnings, requirements for passports, travel safety tips, etc.
- International Travel forms that troops/groups are required to complete are available on Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan’s website, at www.gssem.org/forms.
  - Intent for International Travel form
  - Parent Permission Form
  - Permission for Minors to Travel Internationally
  - Authorization for Medical Treatment for Adults
  - Authorization for Medical Treatment for Minors
- Intent for International Travel form must be completed and submitted to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan by all troops/groups three to six months prior to international travel. Please submit the form even if you cannot provide all of the information in its entirety due to planning with a tour company. Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan staff will work with each individual group as they progress through the planning process.
- The form includes directions for submitting to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan. (This form is NOT required for travel to Canada). You will be notified of the decision of your request within (10) business days of receipt of this form. The Intent for International Travel Form must be approved before girls proceed with further planning. Please submit the following documentation with the Intent for International Travel form:
  - An itinerary of the trip listing hotels, cities, modes of transportation.
  - A roster of all participants (girls and adults) along with their emergency contact information.
- For international trips, troops/groups must contact Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan at least 4-6 weeks prior to the start of your trip to purchase Additional Accident and/or Sickness Insurance. Additional insurance must be purchased for the entire period of the travel (including departure and return days) for 100% of the participants. PLAN 3PI (International Accident and Sickness Insurance, is REQUIRED for International Travel). Refer to Volunteer Essentials for information about insurance coverage. For questions or to purchase insurance, contact our Office Manager at (313) 870-2514.

Visiting Canada

Day Trip or Overnight: Due to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan’s unique geographic border with Canada, troops/groups crossing the border from Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan’s jurisdiction and staying for one night or less do not need to submit an Intent for International Travel form to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan. Remember that the international Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI) requires U.S. and Canadian travelers to present a passport or other document that denotes identity and proof of citizenship when entering the US or Canada. A valid U.S. passport, an enhanced driver’s license or NEXUS card meet the requirements of WHTI. Children under 16 need a birth certificate.

It is always recommended to consult with the U.S. State Department’s website for travel information for U.S. citizens traveling into Canada (especially when traveling with minors), as requirements may change without notice. travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/country/canada.html

- Two nights or More: Troops/Groups who are staying in Canada overnight two nights or longer, or are entering Canada from areas outside of Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan’s jurisdiction, must follow the Troop/Group Travel – International Trip or Cruise Requirements.
  - Any specialized equipment that will be used, if applicable
  - Required agreements or contracts (for example, hiring a bus, use of premises)
Not sure where to begin? Check out the Girl Scout Guide to U.S. Travel. This resource is designed for Juniors and older Girl Scouts who want to take extended trips—that is, longer than a weekend—but also features tips and tools for budding explorers who are just getting started with field trips and overnights.

Once girls have mastered planning trips in the United States, they might be ready for a global travel adventure! Global trips usually take a few years to plan, and the Girl Scout Global Travel Toolkit can walk you through the entire process.

**Safety First**

If you’re planning any kind of trip—from a short field trip to an overseas expedition—the “Trips and Travel” section of *Safety Activity Checkpoints* is your go-to resource for safety. If your troop or group is planning an activity that requires approval, please contact volunteerexp@gssem.org. Be sure to follow all the basic safety guidelines, like the buddy system and first-aid requirements, in addition to the specific guidelines for travel.

Note that extended travel (more than two* nights) is not covered under the basic Girl Scout insurance plan and will require additional coverage. (*On Federal holiday weekends only (e.g. Labor, Memorial Day) basic insurance is extended to three nights. All other trips three nights or more require additional coverage). Please refer to the Insurance Overview for more information.

**Girl Scout Connections**

It’s easy to tie eye-opening travel opportunities into the leadership training and skill building your girls are doing in Girl Scouts! Your girls can use their creativity to connect any leadership Journey theme into an idea for travel, like a *Sow What?* trip focusing on sustainable agriculture and, naturally, sampling tasty food!

There are abundant opportunities to build real skills through earning badges too. The most obvious example is the Senior Traveler badge, but there are plenty more, such as Eco Camper, New Cuisines, Photography, and, of course, all the financial badges that help girls budget and earn money for their trips.

Looking to incorporate Girl Scout traditions into your trip? Look no farther than the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace in Savannah, Georgia! Your girls also have the chance to deepen their connections to Girl Scouts around the world by visiting one of the WAGGGS (World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) World Centers, which offer low-cost accommodations and special programs in five locations around the world.

**Travel to an Epic Girl Event**

And there’s no better way to combine travel and Girl Scouting than by attending the epic G.I.R.L. 2020 convention, taking place October 23–25, 2020, in Orlando, Florida! It’s the world’s largest girl-led event for girls, young women, and everyone who supports them. This premier gathering for Girl Scouts happens every three years, and they’ll meet fellow go-getters, innovators, risk-takers, and leaders from around the country and the world—it’s an amazing opportunity your girls won’t want to miss!

Are your girls looking to stay closer to home this year? Check the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Calendar of Events for information about camp opportunities at gssem.org/calendar.

Lift up the Girl Scout Leadership Experience at every opportunity in your planning, but limit your role to facilitating the girls’ brainstorming and planning, never doing the work for them. Share your ideas and insight, ask tough questions when you have to, and support all their decisions with enthusiasm and encouragement!
## ENGAGING GIRLS AND ENGAGING FAMILIES

Creating the kind of environment in which girls are unafraid to try new things and to be who they want to be starts with you! By meeting your girls where they are, you’ll help them develop the leadership skills they’ll use now and as they grow.

### Understanding Healthy Development in Girls

It sounds simple, but just being attentive to what girls are experiencing as they mature is a big help to them—and to you, as you guide and mentor them!

You’ll experience different joys and challenges with each Girl Scout level, but here are some guidelines for meeting girls’ needs and abilities at different grade levels; you’ll also find these listed in the adult guide of each leadership Journey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girl Scout Daisies</th>
<th>At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grade), girls . . .</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<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>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<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>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<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>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<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>
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<td></td>
<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></td>
<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>
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<td></td>
<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>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Brownies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>At the Girl Scout Brownie level</strong></td>
<td><strong>This means . . .</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(second and third grade), girls . . .</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have lots of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.</td>
<td>Taking your session activities outside whenever possible.</td>
<td></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>
<td></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>
<td></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>
<td></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 those at the start.</td>
<td></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>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and can tie shoes, use basic tools, begin to sew, and the like.</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>
<td></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 to tell a story through dance or creative movement.</td>
<td></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>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Girl Scout Juniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Girl Scout Junior level (fourth and fifth grades), 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, to share their visions of their roles in the future, and to 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 the written word, choreography, 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>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Cadettes</strong></td>
<td><strong>This means . . .</strong></td>
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<td>------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the Girl Scout Cadette level (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades), girls . . .</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 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>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>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>Encouraging girls to share, but only when they are ready. 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>Can be very self-conscious—wanting to be like everyone else but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.</td>
<td>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions and allowing them to experience “fun failure,” which is learning from trying something new and making mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults at school and at home.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volunteer Essentials - Aug 2019
### Girl Scout Seniors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At the Girl Scout Senior level (ninth and tenth grades), girls . . .</th>
<th>This means . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Are beginning to clarify their own values, consider alternative points of view on controversial issues, and see multiple aspects of a situation.</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>Have strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills and are able to plan and reflect on their own learning experiences.</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>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. 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>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, and other sources.</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>Are continuing 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 “fun failure,” which is learning from trying something new and making mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Ambassadors</strong></td>
<td><strong>This means . . .</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>At the Girl Scout Ambassador level (eleventh and twelfth grades), girls . . .</strong></td>
<td><strong>Inviting girls to develop stories as a group and then individually create endings that they later discuss and share.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can see the complexity of situations and controversial issues—they understand that problems often have no clear solution and that varying points of view may each have merit.</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>Have strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills and can adapt logical thinking to real-life situations. Ambassadors recognize and incorporate practical limitations to solutions.</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>Spend more time with peers than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.</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>Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.</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>
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<tr>
<td>Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, and other sources.</td>
<td>Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience “fun failure,” which is learning from trying something new and making mistakes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home—and are looking to their futures.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Creating a Safe Space for Girls
A safe space is where girls feel they can be themselves, without explanation or judgment. As a volunteer, you create an environment that is just as important as the activities girls do; it’s the key to developing the sort of group that girls want to be part of! Cultivate a space where confidentiality is respected and girls can express their true selves.

Recognizing and Supporting Each Girl
You’re a role model and a mentor to your girls. Since you play an important role in their lives, they need to know that you consider each of them an important person too. They can weather a poor meeting place or an activity that flops, but they cannot endure being ignored or rejected.

• Give a shout-out when you see girls trying their best, not just when they’ve had a clear success.
• Emphasize the positive qualities that make each girl worthy and unique.
• Be generous with praise and stingy with rebuke.
• Help your 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 how responsibilities are shared, in handling of disagreements, and in your responses to performance and accomplishment.

• When possible, ask the girls 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 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. You’ll also need to show them that you won’t betray their confidence.

• Show girls you trust them to think for themselves and use their own judgment.
• Encourage them make the important decisions in the group.
• Give them assistance in correcting their own mistakes.
• Support girls in trusting one another—let them see firsthand how trust can be built, lost, regained, and strengthened.

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 the important things happening in their lives.

• 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.
Managing Conflict
Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, but if handled constructively, they show girls that they can overcome their differences, exercise diplomacy, and improve their communication and relationships. Respecting others and being a sister to every Girl Scout means that 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.) Talking in this way might feel uncomfortable and difficult now, but it lays 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 Troop Support Specialist. If they cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily, the issue can be taken through the Volunteer RelationsSM Process. For more information on this process, please view the Volunteer RelationsSM Process Short & Snappy found on gsLearn.

Communicating Effectively with Girls of Any Age
Make sure your words and intentions create connection with the girls. Keep in mind how important the following attitudes are.

Listen
Listening to girls, as opposed to telling them what to think, feel, or do (no “you shoulds”) is the first step in building a trusting relationship and helping them take ownership of their Girl Scout experience.

Be Honest
If you’re not comfortable with a topic or activity, it’s OK to 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
Outside of Girl Scouts, girls may be dealing with issues like relationships, peer pressure, school, money, drugs, and other serious topics. When you don’t know, listen. Please contact your Troop Support Specialist 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 young adults reinforces that their opinions matter and that they deserve respect.

Offer Options
Girls’ needs and interests change and being flexible shows them that you respect them and their busy lives. Be ready with age-appropriate guidance and parameters no matter what the girls choose to do.

Stay Current
Show your girls that you’re interested in their world by asking them about the TV shows and movies they like; the books, magazines, or blogs they read; the social media influencers they follow; and the music they listen to.
Remember to LUTE: Listen, Understand, Tolerate, and Empathize

Try using the LUTE method to thoughtfully respond when a girl is upset, angry, or confused.

**Listen:** Hear her out, ask for details, and reflect back what you hear; try “What happened next?” or “What did she say?”

**Understand:** Show that you understand where she’s coming from with comments such as, “So what I hear you saying is . . .” or “I understand why you’re unhappy,” or “Your feelings are hurt; mine would be, too.”

**Tolerate:** You can tolerate the feelings that she just can’t handle right now on her own. Let her know that you’re there to listen and accept how she is feeling about the situation. Say something like: “Try talking to me about it. I’ll listen,” or “I know you’re mad—talking it out helps,” or “I can handle it—say whatever you want to.”

**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

Let these simple tips guide you in working with teenage girls:

- Think of yourself as a partner, a coach, or a mentor, 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).

When Sensitive Topics Come Up

It’s an amazing feeling when your girls put their trust in you—and when they do, they may come to you with some of the issues they face, such as bullying, peer pressure, dating, athletic and academic performance, and more. Some of these issues may be considered sensitive by families, and they may have opinions or input about how, and whether, Girl Scouts should cover these topics with their girls.

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 Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan.

When Girl Scout activities involve sensitive issues, your role is that of a caring adult volunteer who can help girls acquire skills and knowledge in a supportive atmosphere, not someone who advocates a particular position.

Neither GSSEM nor GSUSA 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 caregivers, along with schools and faith communities, are the primary sources of information on these topics.
Girls should not be singled out for any of their religious or political beliefs or whether or not they opt out of any program activity. Girls should be the driver of all topics. Adults may not impose their own religious or political beliefs at any time. Parents/guardians make all decisions regarding their girl’s participation in Girl Scout program that may be of a sensitive nature.

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. 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 obtain parent permission using the Parent Permission Form. 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 Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan’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 front lines 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/caregiver 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 Troop Support Specialist will guide you in addressing these concerns.

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
You want the girls in your troop to have fun, be inspired, take risks, and learn about themselves and the world this year—that’s why you’re a Girl Scout troop leader or troop volunteer! The thing is, parents and caregivers want the same thing for their girls, but getting families to pitch in and play an active role in the troop while also enhancing the experience for their own girl can be tricky for many volunteers. It doesn’t have to be this way!

**Kick the Year Off Right by Engaging Parents and Other Caregivers**

Girl Scouting provides the best opportunities for girls when families step up and play an active part in the troop. Without meaningful support from parents and caregivers, it’s difficult for a troop to be all it can be. Plus, girls feel a special sense of pride when their families take part and show interest in the things they are doing!

**What Is a Parent and Caregiver Meeting?**

It’s the first meeting you have to start each troop year—whether you are a new or returning troop. It is valuable for all troops.

**Why Hold a Meeting?**

Kicking off each year with a parent and caregiver meeting sets the troop up for success. Outlining clear expectations, building a team, and engaging parents in the Girl Scout experience is a great way to start off on the right foot. When parents are involved, leaders have support, the troop has a plan, and girls benefit! The meeting helps:

- Parents understand what Girl Scouting can do for their girl.
- Parents and leaders identify ways they will work as a team to support the troop.
- Parents and leaders agree about what the troop pays for and what families pay for individually.
- You fill key troop positions—you never know which parent will make an awesome assistant leader or troop cookie manager.
- Parents know how the troop will communicate things like upcoming events or schedule changes.
- Parents learn about uniforms, books, and other important basics.

Check out our step-by-step guide and “Parents & Caregivers Meeting Outline” on the Volunteer Toolkit. This 60–90 minute meeting will make all the difference in the year ahead.

For even more tips on working with troop families, check out Girl Scouts’ Tips for Troop Leaders hub.

**How to Keep Parents and Other Caregivers on Board**

**Make the Ask(s)**

The main reason people don’t take action is because they were never asked to in the first place. That’s why hearing one out of three Girl Scout parents say no one had communicated expectations around involvement with their girl’s troop is so troubling. Parents may have many talents, but they’re certainly not mind readers! If you’re nervous about getting turned down, don’t be. Sure, a few parents might be unable to lend a hand, but the helpers you do get will be worth their weight in gold. And just because someone wasn’t available a month or two ago doesn’t mean they won’t be free to help now. Loop back, follow up, and ask again!

**Make Sense of “Why”**

Explain that not only does the whole troop benefit with extra help from parents and other caregivers, but also that girls feel a special sense of pride in seeing their own family member step up and take a leadership role. Getting involved can strengthen the caregiver/girl bond and is a meaningful way to show daughters that they are a priority in their parents’ lives.
Make It Quick and Easy
Everybody’s got a full plate these days, so instead of starting conversations with a list of tasks or responsibilities that parents and other caregivers could take on (which can be intimidating!), ask how much time each week they might be able to dedicate to the troop, then go from there. For instance, if a troop mom or dad has 15 minutes each week to spare, they could organize and manage the calendar for troop snacks and carpools. If a grandparent has one to two hours, they could assist with leading the troop through a specific badge on a topic they’re already comfortable with. For more ways parents and other caregivers can help out when faced with a tricky schedule, check out the Family Resources tab in the Volunteer Toolkit.

Make Family Part of the Formula
While Girl Scout programming is always focused on the girls themselves, it’s important and helpful to open up a few events to their families throughout the year. Inviting the whole crew to celebrate her accomplishments in Girl Scouting—whether at a holiday open house, a bridging ceremony, or a fun “reverse meeting” where girls take the role of leaders and guide the adults, including caregivers, through an activity—will help parents better understand the value of Girl Scouts and they’ll be more likely to invest their time and talents to the troop.

That said, there’s no need to wait for one of these special events to engage families in their girls’ Girl Scout lives! Keep communication lines open throughout the year—whether it’s through your troop’s social media page, personal emails, or in-person chats—to keep parents in the loop on what the girls are doing and learning during each meeting, and encourage them to let their daughters “be the experts” at home, explaining or teaching the new skills they’ve learned.
TROOP MANAGEMENT

Leadership is more than “being in charge” or having a title; it’s recognizing that you’re part of a team and understanding that team’s needs and interests.

Your Role as a Volunteer

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience is based on three keys—discover, connect, and take action—but it’s not just for the girls! As a Girl Scout leader, you’ll embark on your own leadership journey as you help girls develop the vital leadership skills they’ll use to make the world a better place. The Girl Scout perspective on leadership is permeated with a few basic, but all-important, concepts.

Leadership is teaching girls:

• That they can do and be anything!
• That they are decision makers and should own their decisions.
• How to live the Girl Scout Law by modeling it for them.

As a leader, see yourself as a coach who:

• Guides and instructs, not as a teacher with a canned lesson or activity or as someone who has to perform for the girls each week.
• Advises and discusses.
• Ensures each girl can carry out her responsibilities within the troop.
• Encourages girls to build their skills and their ethics.
• Gives more responsibilities to the girls as they grow and develop.

It’s important to remember that:

• You cannot know everything that the girls might ever want to learn.
• You’ll explore and learn alongside your girls and grow your confidence in the process.
• You’re not expected to know everything about Girl Scouting, but you should know where to go for information—and to ask for help when you need it.

Your Responsibilities as a Girl Scout Volunteer

Your 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 and that they learn by doing, individually and a group. 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’ families on a regular and ongoing basis through a variety of tools, including email, 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 Troop Support Specialist and other Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan staff.
• Facilitating a safe experience for every girl.

Planning for Your First Troop Meeting
Depending on the ages of your girls, you might take the lead in guiding the structure and experiences of your troop—from how and when meetings are held to how the troop communicates, from steering girl-led activities to setting financial expectations. You’ll make these decisions collaboratively with your volunteer team or co-leader, as well as with input from the girls and their parents and caregivers.

Use these questions to guide your conversation with your troop committee volunteers or co-leader before discussing these topics with parents and caregivers.

• When will we meet and for how long? How frequently should we schedule troop meetings?
• Where will we meet? Your meeting space should be somewhere safe, clean, and secure that allows all girls to participate. Some great meeting space ideas include schools, places of worship, libraries, and community centers. If working with teens, consider meeting at coffee shops, bookstores, or another place they enjoy.
• Which components of the uniform will families need to purchase?
• Will our troop be a single-grade level or facilitated as a multi-level troop with girls of many grade levels combined into one troop? If multi-level, how will we make sure they each get an age-appropriate experience?
• How will we keep troop activities girl-led? Use the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) to help you through this process by exploring options for activities and reviewing the meeting plans and resources lists.
• How often are we going to communicate to troop families? Which channels will we use to keep families in the loop? Effective communication will help set expectations and clarify parent/caregiver responsibilities.
• Will our troop charge dues, use product program proceeds, and/or charge per activity? How much money will we need to cover supplies and activities? What should our financial plan look like?

Choosing a Meeting Place
What makes a great meeting space? It depends on your troop, but here are a few considerations as you visit potential spaces:

Cost: The space should be free to use.

Size: Make sure the space is large enough for the whole group and all planned activities.

Availability: Be sure the space is available for the day and the entire length of time you want to meet.

Resources: Ask if tables and chairs come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby of some sort where you could store supplies or a safe outdoor space for activities.

Safety: Potential spaces must be safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards, and have at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure first-aid equipment is on hand.

Facilities: It goes without saying, but make sure that toilets are sanitary and accessible.

Communication-friendly: Check for cell reception in the potential space and whether Wi-Fi is available.
**Allergen-free:** Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won’t bother susceptible girls during meetings.

**Accessibility:** Your space should accommodate girls with disabilities as well as parents with disabilities who may come to meetings.

Need a few speaking points to get started? Try:

“All I’m a Girl Scout volunteer with a group of [number of girls] girls. We’re doing lots of great things for girls and for the community, like [something your group is doing] and [something else your troop is doing]. 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 [reason why you’d like to meet there].”

Stuck and need additional support? Contact your Troop Support Specialist or your service unit support team for help with a troop meeting place.

**Girl Scout Troop Size**

The troop size “sweet spot” is large enough to provide an interactive and cooperative learning environment and small enough to encourage individual development. Research has shown that the ideal troop size is 12 girls; recommended group sizes, by grade level, are:

- Girl Scout Daisies: 5–12 girls
- Girl Scout Brownies: 10–20 girls
- Girl Scout Juniors: 10–25 girls
- Girl Scout Cadettes: 5–25 girls
- Girl Scout Seniors: 5–30 girls
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: 5–30 girls

A Girl Scout troop/group must have, at minimum, three girls and two approved adult volunteers. (Double-check the volunteer-to-girl ratio chart to make sure you’ve got the right amount of coverage for your troop!) Adults and girls registering in groups of fewer than five girls and/or two approved, unrelated adult volunteers, at least one of whom is female, will be registered as individual Girl Scouts to more accurately reflect their status and program experience. Individual girls are always welcome to participate in Girl Scout activities and events.

**Registering Girls and Adults in Girl Scouting**

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 cannot be transferred to another member and are not refundable.

Preregistration for the upcoming membership year occurs in the spring. Girls are encouraged to register early to avoid the fall rush. Early registration allows for uninterrupted receipt of forms and materials from the council, helps girls and councils plan ahead, and gets girls excited about all the great stuff they want to do as Girl Scouts next year. Girl Scout grade level is determined by the current membership year beginning October 1.

Lifetime membership is available to anyone who accepts the principles and beliefs of the Girl Scout Promise and Law, pays the one-time lifetime membership fee, and is at least 18 years old (or a high school graduate or equivalent).
Adding New Girls to Your Troop

Growing your troop is a great way to share the power of the Girl Scout experience and there are many ways to get the word out, like hanging posters at your girl’s school, using social media to reach families in your community, or including your troop in Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan’s Opportunity Catalog or Troop Catalog.

If you are interested in adding new girls to your troop, please contact your Recruitment Specialist for assistance with marketing and recruitment materials. To list your troop in the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan opportunity catalog and to ensure your troop’s meeting information is up to date, please complete the Troop Update form at gssem.org/troopupdate.

Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion

Girl Scouts is for every girl, and that’s why we embrace girls of all abilities and backgrounds 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.

We believe inclusion is an approach and an attitude, rather than a set of guidelines. Inclusion is about belonging, all girls being offered the same opportunities with respect, dignity, and celebration of their unique strengths. It’s about being a sister to every Girl Scout! 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.

If you have questions about accommodating an individual girl, please reach out to your Troop Support Specialist or call 800-482-6734.

As you think about where, when, and how often to meet with your group, consider the needs, resources, safety, and beliefs of all members and potential members. Include the special needs of any members who have disabilities or whose parents or caregivers 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.

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 or caregiver. If you are open and honest, they’ll likely 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.

Focus on a person’s abilities—on what she can do rather than on what she cannot. In that spirit, use people-first language that 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><em>She is learning disabled.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She has a developmental delay.</td>
<td><em>She is mentally retarded; she is slow.</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She uses a wheelchair.</td>
<td><em>She is wheelchair-bound.</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When interacting with a girl (or parent/caregiver) with a disability, consider these tips:
• When talking to a girl with a disability, speak directly to her, not through a family member 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 twenty-first year, and then move into an adult membership category.

**Getting Support for Your Troop**

It takes a village to lift up the next generation of female leaders, but you won’t do it alone. You can count on a dedicated Girl Scout support team, consisting of council staff and passionate volunteers just like you. Your Service Unit support team is ready to offer local learning opportunities and advice as well as answer your questions about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, product sales, and so much more.

Before you hold your first troop meeting with girls, consider the support and people resources you’ll need to cultivate an energizing troop experience. Parents, friends, family, and other members of the community have their own unique strengths and can provide time, experience, and ideas to a troop, so get them involved from the very beginning as part of your volunteer troop team. This team is made up of troop leaders (like you) and troop committee volunteers.
Your troop committee volunteers are the extra set of eyes, ears, and hands that help the troop safely explore the world around them. Depending on your troop’s needs, they can play a more active role—for instance, someone can step up as a dedicated troop treasurer—or simply provide an occasional helping hand when you need to keep a meeting’s activity on track.

If a parent or caregiver isn’t sure if they can commit to a committee or co-leader role, encourage them to try volunteering in a smaller capacity that matches their skill set. Just like your young Girl Scouts, once troop parents and caregivers discover they can succeed in their volunteer role, they’ll feel empowered to volunteer again.

**Troop Management Tools and Resources**

From toolkits and guides to regular contact with experienced people, you’ll have all the support you need to be a Girl Scout volunteer. Here’s a list of some important resources you’ll want to check out.

**The Volunteer Toolkit**

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is a customizable digital planning tool for troop leaders and co-leaders to easily manage their troop year-round and deliver easy, fun troop meetings. Accessible via desktop and mobile devices, the VTK saves you time and energy all year long, so that you can focus on unleashing the G.I.R.L (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)™ in every girl, ensuring she has every opportunity she deserves to build a lifetime of leadership, success, and adventure.

Girls have more fun when they can shape their own experiences, do hands-on activities, and work together as teams. With the VTK, girls and leaders can explore meeting topics and program activities together, and follow the fun as they plan their Girl Scout year.

Through the Volunteer Toolkit, troop leaders can:

• Plan the troop’s calendar year and meeting schedule.
• Email parents/caregivers with one click.
• View the troop roster, renew girls’ membership, and update girls’ contact information.
• View meeting plans for Journeys and badges, including suggested tracks for multi-level groups (K–5 and 6–12).
• Customize meeting agendas to fit your unique troop.
• Explore individual meeting plans that show a breakdown of every step, including a list of materials needed, editable time allotments for each activity within a meeting, and printable meeting aids.
• Record girls’ attendance at meetings and their badge and Journey achievements.
• Add council or custom events to the troop’s calendar.
• Submit troop’s finance reports via the Volunteer Toolkit Finances Tab.
• Easily locate both national and local council resources, such as *Safety Activity Checkpoints*.

Parents and caregivers can:

• View the troop’s meeting schedule and individual meeting plans to stay up to date on the badges and Journeys they are working on.
• Renew their memberships, and update their contact information.
• View their Girl Scout’s attendance and achievements.
• See upcoming events the troop is planning or attending.
• Easily locate both national and local council resources, such as the Family Hub.
• View the troop’s finance report (depending on the council’s process).

Get started by visiting gssem.org.
The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting

What does it mean to be a go-getting Girl Scout? It’s all in The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting. These grade level-specific binders will help you break it down for your girls. It’s part handbook, part badge book, and 100 percent fun! The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting may be purchased at any Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan council shops or by visiting girlscoutshop.com.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Safety is paramount in Girl Scouting, and this resource—Safety Activity Checkpoints—contains everything you need to know to help keep your girls safe during a variety of exciting activities outside of their regular Girl Scout troop meetings. View the Safety Activity Checkpoints at gssem.org/safety.

Tips for Troop Leaders

When you’re looking for real-world advice from fellow troop leaders who’ve been there, this volunteer-to-volunteer resource, called Tips for Troop Leaders, on the Girl Scouts of the USA website has what you need for a successful troop year.

Girl Scout Volunteers in Your Community

Remember that Girl Scout support team we mentioned? You’ll find them in your service unit! Troops are organized geographically into service units or communities. You’ll find a local network of fellow leaders and administrative volunteers ready to offer tips and advice to help you succeed in your volunteer role.

Customer Care Contacts

Questions? Need help resolving an issue? We’ve got you! Reach out anytime by either clicking on the “Contact Us” form at www.gssem.org or email customercare@gssem.org. During business hours (8:30 AM-5 PM Monday-Friday) you can reach our Customer Care team by calling 800-482-6734.

Newsletters and Communication

Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan publishes several electronic newsletters for our members and friends. Each newsletter is tailored to a specific audience.

- **Leaders** - This bi-weekly electronic newsletter contains important information relevant to running your troop and sharing opportunities for your girls. Upon membership registration and/or renewal, administrative volunteers are automatically added to the distribution list. Other volunteers may be added by emailing communications@gssem.org.
- **Juliette News** – This monthly e-publication is intended to provide information and support for Juliette Girl Scout families.
- **CONNECT Magazine** is your year at a glance view of Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan news, events, and tips to help you and your girls’ families get the most out of the Girl Scouting year. One printed copy of CONNECT is mailed to the homes of all members each September. Additional copies of CONNECT are available at Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan service centers, and CONNECT is also available for download at gssem.org.

Taking Advantage of Learning Opportunities

We know that when you have the knowledge and skills you need to manage your girls, both you and your troop will thrive. Contact the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Volunteer Experience team at volunteerexp@gssem.org to ask about ongoing learning opportunities that will help you grow your skills and confidence.

For more information on Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan’s learning opportunities, please visit gssem.org/learning or log onto gsLearn at gslearn.litmos.com.
Knowing How Much You’re Appreciated
Whatever your volunteer position, your hard work means the world to girls, to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan staff, and to Girl Scouts of the USA. We’re calling on all members of society to help girls reach their full potential, and you’ve answered that call. So thank you, from the bottom of our hearts!

Just as you’ll receive support throughout your volunteering experience, when you reach the end of the term you signed up for, you’ll talk with your support team about the positive parts of your experience as well as the challenges you faced, and you’ll 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 with Girl Scouts!

If you’re ready for more opportunities to work with girls, be sure to let Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan staff 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. Are you ready to organize a series or event? Take a trip? Work with girls at camp? Work with a troop of girls as a yearlong volunteer? Share your skills at a council office, working behind the scenes? The possibilities are endless and can be tailored to fit your skills and interests.

Do you know an amazing volunteer who goes above and beyond? If so, please nominate them for one of the Volunteer National Awards! Learn more about the Volunteer National Awards at gssem.org/volrecognition.

Volunteer Appreciation Month
Without our passionate and dedicated volunteers, there would be no Girl Scouting. That’s why we celebrate Volunteer Appreciation Week in April! And get ready to crank up the party as we ring in national Girl Scout Leader’s Day on April 22.

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 when daylight saving time ends. What can we say—we love our volunteers!

Volunteers honored with one of the Volunteer National Awards will be recognized at the annual Volunteer National Awards banquet held in March.

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 may now create risks or challenges for Girl Scouts. 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.

Protecting Use of Girl Scout Materials
Girl Scout materials are to be used only for purposes of Girl Scouts and are protected as intellectual property of Girl Scouts of the USA.
GSUSA & GSSEM Policies for Volunteers
All appointed volunteers participating in the Girl Scout movement shall meet GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan membership requirements, be registered as a member of GSUSA (annual or lifetime membership), and shall agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan.

Membership dues are $25 per year for both girls and adults. For information on registration please visit gssem.org.

Financial Assistance
Financial Assistance is available for membership and program resources for girl members whose families meet the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan income eligibility requirements (see the Financial Aid Application Form for more information). Girls receiving financial aid are required to participate in the Cookie Program. Girls will be issued a My GS Kit certificate and/or Program certificate (depending on completed FA form). The My GS Kit certificate should be used for program resources and uniform components (please see the Financial Aid Application for more detail). The Program certificate should be used for GSSEM Council events or Community events.

Customer Care
Customer Care is here to assist volunteers and parents in navigating the registration process. For general customer service needs and technical assistance, please contact our Customer Care. Customer Care Associates are available Monday through Friday from 8:30am until 5:00pm at 1-800-482-6734 or by email at customercare@gssem.org.

Computer Needs/In-Person Assistance
Visit one of our Council service centers! Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan staff is available to help you if you would like hands-on assistance with your computer needs. Visit gssem.org for service center sites.

Volunteer Compensation vs. Volunteer Benefits: Compliance with IRS Regulations
Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan staff and volunteers must be mindful to not inadvertently cause a volunteer to become liable for payment of taxes by offering taxable benefits to a volunteer.

The U.S. Department of Labor generally defines a volunteer as an individual who donates his or her services, usually on a part-time basis, for charitable objectives, and without the expectation of receiving compensation. Compensation is generally defined as pay or another tangible benefit that is tied to an individual’s productivity or hours worked. Compensation does not include reimbursement for an individual’s expenses incurred while volunteering, reasonable benefits, or nominal fees.

Everyone--both staff and volunteers--should be very careful when designing volunteer reward and recognition programs to ensure that the program is not providing what the IRS determines is income or another tangible benefit that is tied to productivity or hours worked.

The following examples help illustrate when volunteer benefits may cross the line to become compensation, thereby risking a reclassification of a volunteer’s status and thereby triggering the need for the volunteer to pay income taxes on the benefit.
Non-Discrimination
Girl Scouts is an inclusive organization. There shall be no discrimination on the basis of race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, creed, national origin, marital or socioeconomic status, disability, or age. In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, affirmative action policies and procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers. Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan is committed to having its membership reflect the diversity of population groups within its jurisdiction.

Code of Ethics
Volunteers are required to conduct themselves in a professional manner, keeping in mind that adult volunteers serve as role models to the girls they serve. This conduct will be reflected in appropriate dress, language and conduct. Dress, grooming, and personal cleanliness standards contribute to the morale of girls and other volunteers and affect the image that Girl Scouts present to members and the community. Volunteers will serve to the best of their ability, but not beyond their capabilities. Confidentiality must be maintained at all times in order to protect the dignity and rights of individuals. Violation of confidentiality may be a cause for release from duties.

Sexual Harassment
Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan is committed to an environment in which volunteer and staff relationships are characterized by dignity, courtesy, respect, and equitable treatment and an environment free of all forms of discrimination, including sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is defined as “unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.” Sexual harassment is a form of illegal discrimination on the basis of an individual’s gender. It frequently involves an expression of sexual conduct that seeks to exploit a relationship in which there is an imbalance of power (e.g., supervisor/subordinate). It can also occur where there is a perception of power among or between colleagues or between individuals with no formal business relationship.
No volunteer, man or woman, may sexually harass another volunteer, employee, or Girl Scout member of the same or opposite sex, and may not advocate, solicit, or promote a particular personal lifestyle or sexual orientation.

Any volunteer who believes she/he has been the subject of sexual harassment should report the incident(s) to either her/his immediate supervisor and/or Chief Executive Officer.

Retaliation against anyone who has reported an allegation of sexual harassment is expressly prohibited and, if it occurs, will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including release.

**Duty to Report Threatening or Inappropriate Behavior by Other Adults**

At Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan, staff and volunteers have a particular responsibility to girl and adult members. Therefore, if a volunteer witnesses behavior or relationships that could be potentially detrimental or developmentally inappropriate, volunteers are required to report immediately the behavior/relationship to their Troop Support staff contact, Customer Care, or the GSSEM Chief Executive Officer.

Any adult engaging in behavior threatening the health or welfare of girls will be released from acting in an official Girl Scout capacity. Threatening behavior may include but is not limited to: neglect, physical abuse, withholding of food, lack of supervision, emotional maltreatment including verbal, physical or sexual abuse, abuse of prescription or illegal drugs, use of alcohol, or careless management of firearms.

**Reporting Child Abuse or Neglect by Parents**

Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan paid staff is required by law to report suspected child abuse and neglect to the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. Volunteers are not specifically named as mandated reporters under the law, but are strongly urged as citizens to report suspected child abuse or neglect by parents to the Department of Health and Human Services or any law enforcement agency.

Department of Health and Human Services staff and law enforcement officers are required by law to preserve the confidentiality of the citizen reporter, so citizens can make anonymous reports. Contact Central Intake at 1-855-444-3911 to report abuse and neglect at any time 24 hours per day. Volunteers who suspect child abuse or neglect but are not comfortable or are unsure about reporting it should contact Council staff. Department of Health and Human Services staff are trained in evaluating such situations and your report will not necessarily result in immediate action, but may often result in services being provided to keep the family intact.

**Tobacco, Drugs, and Alcohol**

Volunteers may not use tobacco, consume alcohol or use illegal drugs in the presence of girl members or while engaged in any official Girl Scout duty or function. Possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages, illegal substances, or use of tobacco shall not be allowed at Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan offices or on Council property at any time for any reason by any person (whether staff or volunteer, outside groups, members or non-members) prior to, or during Girl Scout activities.

**Use of Weapons**

Weapons such as handguns, shotguns, rifles, pellet guns, knives, or other objects used with the intent of causing harm, injury, death, etc. are not permitted at any Girl Scout activity or on any property owned or leased by Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan. There are two exceptions: law enforcement personnel who are required to carry their weapons while on or off duty, and Council approved program-related activities.
PRODUCT PROGRAM

As the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world, the Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Girl Scout fall product program are foundational experiences during which girls learn to think like entrepreneurs and to develop vital business skills. Plus, Girl Scout Cookie proceeds power fun and enriching experiences for Girl Scout troops year-round!

Teaching Essential Skills for a Lifetime of Leadership

Through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, girls as young as five develop these five essential skills that will help them be successful today and throughout their lives:

- Goal setting: Girls learn to create a plan to reach their goals.
- Decision making: Girls learn to make decisions on their own and as a team.
- Money management: Girls learn to create a budget and handle money.
- People skills: Girls find their voice and up their confidence through customer interactions that build relationships.
- Business ethics: Girls learn to act responsibly and honestly, both in business and in life.

Check out our 5 Skills for Girls Toolkit to see how you can foster these keys to success with your troop.

But the exciting skill building isn’t just tied to the cookies themselves! Girls continue to hone their entrepreneurial skills and go-getting spirit by earning Cookie Business badges and Financial Literacy badges.

Before your cookie bosses open shop, be sure to check out these helpful resources that will empower you to:

- Manage your troop’s funds.
- Learn how girls participate in money earning.
- Discover how your troop can reach its financial goals.
- Understand just how much your girls are capable of by grade level and how their entrepreneurial skills progress.

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—and the rest is history. Explore Girl Scout Cookie History to find out how cookies have bolstered generations of girls who make the world a better place.

Where Cookie Proceeds Go

After paying for the cost of cookies and materials, Girl Scout Cookie proceeds stay local and help councils provide Girl Scout programs in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM), the outdoors, life skills, entrepreneurship, and more—in camps, through leadership training, and multiple other ways. A portion of the proceeds is directly managed by girls, and it’s up to them to decide how to invest their troop’s share of the earnings. Check out the “Where the Cookie Money Goes” handout to learn more.

Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan will provide a breakdown of how cookie program proceeds support Girl Scout activities locally, available annually in your troop cookie materials. Please share this information with girls and their families so everyone understands that product program sales make it possible for your Girl Scout council to serve girls.
Troop members share in the proceeds from a successful product program; proceeds aren’t distributed to individual girl members. Girls, however, may be eligible for rewards and credits that they put toward council-sponsored camps, programs, and Girl Scout swag. The council plan for rewards applies equally to all girls participating in the product program activity. Visit gssem.org/cookies for more information about individual rewards and troop proceeds locally.

The Girl Scout *Blue Book of Basic Documents* specifies that:

“All money and other assets, including property, that are raised, earned, or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be held and authorized by a Girl Scout council or Girl Scouts of the USA. Such money and other assets must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting.”

—“Ownership of Assets,” Blue Book of Basic Documents (May 2018), page 22

Making s’mores under the stars, creating a lasting impact on your community, or ordering supplies for an eye-opening STEM project—there are limitless ways to put troop proceeds toward dynamic Girl Scout experiences! There are a few things, however, that don’t qualify for “purposes of Girl Scouting,” for instance, using troop proceeds to purchase memberships in or uniforms for another organization. We encourage all councils to remind their volunteers of this policy in order to protect the all-girl environment and to avoid diversion of Girl Scout funds.

**Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigans’s Role**

When you are set up for success, you are better able to set up your girls for success! That’s why every year, Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan provides trainings, guidelines, and procedures for conducting the Girl Scout Cookie Program and fall product program and determines how the proceeds and product rewards system will be managed. Check www.gssem.org/cookies to find the answers you need as well as local trainings and resources.

Each council also selects the vendors of its choice to provide the products for their product programs. Two commercial bakers are licensed by GSUSA to produce Girl Scout Cookies: Little Brownie Bakers and ABC Bakers. For additional information on cookie varieties, including nutritional details, visit the Meet the Cookies section on girlscoutcookies.org.

Councils also work with vendors to offer magazine subscriptions, nut and candy products, and more for the fall product program. Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan uses Trophy Nut and M2 Media group. Each provides online tools and activities for girls to download. Magazine selection and sales may take place online—check with the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Product Program team for more details at productsales@gssem.org.

**Your Role**

You play an exciting role in giving your girls opportunities to practice the five skills in a girl-led, cooperative setting. Some of the things you’ll do include:

- Get girls excited about the opportunities to support her troop (but allowing her participation to be voluntary).
- Support both competitive and apprehensive cookie bosses, helping all your girls set meaningful goals for themselves.
- Fostering partnerships with each girl’s family to ensure cookie season success, whatever that may look like for her. Check out the Creating Cookie Success and Coaching Your Budding Businesswoman resources that will help you build a positive partnership with girls and families.
Not only can girls sell individually, both in-person and using the online tools provided by each vendor, they can also participate in group booth sales during product programs. Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan has additional guidance and processes to market and ensure every booth is in a safe and appropriate location for girls.

As your girls grow, your role will evolve from a hands-on one to providing oversight and support where needed. No matter their ages, remember that volunteers and parents/caregivers do not sell the product. Your role is to encourage your girls and let their entrepreneurial spirit soar. Learning by doing is exactly how your girls develop the business savvy and communication skills that will empower them to reach any goals they set for themselves.

Another critical task for each troop is to establish a clear accounting system for all proceeds and product during the programs. It’s up to you to make sure that money is spent wisely, that excellent records are kept (remember to keep copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and that all product is tracked. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work as they learn to keep impeccable records. Be sure to attend product program orientation or training so you are aware of the systems and helpful tools available.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program and the fall product program can be exhilarating and busy times during the troop year, but you’re never alone in your efforts! You can reach out to your service unit product program manager when you’re feeling stuck, or you can build a cookie team to provide the support your troop needs.

Product Program Safety
Girl safety is the top priority while selling Girl Scout Cookies and other products. Volunteers, families, and girls should be familiar with and practice the safety guidelines outlined in local program resources as well as those available in the safety section of girlscoutcookies.org.

Should an accident or incident form occur at a cookie booth, as soon as possible after the incident has occurred, please complete the Volunteer Report of Accident or Unusual Incident found at gssem.org/forms, then contact Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan.

Selling Cookies Online
Will your troop use the Digital Cookie® platform to manage its cookie business? Check the specific guidelines provided by each cookie vendor before participating. Remember that:

- Girls may only post about their participation on Digital Cookie in a way that allows them to restrict access to family and friends, such as on Facebook.
- Parents/guardians must approve the content of a girl’s Digital Cookie webpage before it goes live.
- For girls under age 13, a parent/guardian must manage the girl’s web site and be responsible for all content.

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 if needed. Girls are encouraged to stay near the group or buddy with another team of two so that in the event someone is injured, one person cares for the patient while two others seek help.

Preparing for Your Girl Scout Cookie Booth
Cookie booths—that is, cookie pop-up sales in areas with lots of foot traffic—are a fun way for girls to connect with their community and practice their sales pitch with new customers. Booth locations must be approved
by councils, facilitated within council jurisdiction, and participants must follow all Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan guidelines with regard to setting up, running, and taking down a booth.

Troops select cookie booths and mall kiosks in mid-January. Please refer to the Troop Cookie Manager Handbook for more information on booth and kiosk selection.

Create a great cookie booth experience for your girls by:

• Using your best judgment in setting up cookie booths in locations that will be open, accessible, and safe for all girls and potential customers.
• Choosing a high traffic area—this could be your local supermarket, mall, or park—where you’ll maximize the number of visitors to your booth.
• Checking out your booth site ahead 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.
• Respecting the surrounding businesses by making sure your booth isn’t blocking a store entrance or exit.
• Encouraging your girls to unleash their creativity—and work on their advertising skills—to make colorful signs and booth decorations that potential customers can’t resist! Remind girls to be polite and to have their sales pitch ready for interested customers.

And keep in mind:

• If your Daisies are still learning how to make correct change, help them handle money as needed. But remember that girls make all sales at the booth!
• Changing your cookie booth hours or location? Keep your customers in the loop and update your baker’s Digital Cookie system with the new details. All scheduled booths are available on the Cookie Finder App (IOS or Android).

• Certain locations may be inappropriate for young girls based on the standards of your local community, may negatively impact the cookie program experience for girls, and/or may negatively impact our brand in your community. For additional clarity, girls should not sell in or in front of establishments that they themselves cannot legally patronize.
• Additionally, with respect to marijuana dispensaries, we have been steadfastly combating the unauthorized uses of the Girl Scout trademark by the cannabis community, which has been marketing—without our authorization—certain cannabis products under our youth-appealing brand. We are continuing to aggressively fight these unauthorized uses of the Girl Scout brand and hope that our councils and volunteers will join Girl Scouts of the USA’s efforts by discouraging cookie booth locations at such locations.

For more tips to make your booth a success, check out our Cookie Booth Essentials. For additional information about setting up a booth and safety and security suggestions, please contact the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Product Program team.

Cookie Donation Programs
Cookies also help girls make a big impact in their community! Every year, Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan establishes a cookie donation program where customers can purchase cookies that will be donated to an organization. Cookie donations are not only a great talking point for girls to share with their customers—they’re also a thoughtful way to show girls how cookies can help them give back.
With cookie donations, remember that:
- All cookie donation programs must be approved by Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan.
- Donated cookies must stay within the council jurisdiction unless Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan 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 jeopardize the integrity of the Girl Scout brand.

**Handling Product Complaints**
Girl Scout Cookies are well loved and for good reason—it has always been the practice of Girl Scout councils and the bakers to guarantee customer satisfaction with their delicious cookies. If a customer is not satisfied with the quality of their cookies for some reason, they can contact the baker via the phone number printed on the side of the cookie package.

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

**Recognizing Cookie Sellers in the Media**
The Girl Scout Cookie Program has always been about and focused on the program outcomes through which girls learn important entrepreneurial and life skills and invest their earnings to positively affect their local communities. The cookie program has never been about and does not focus on individual girls’ sales results.
- There are many impressive cookie bosses throughout the United States, and the Girl Scout organization will continue to recognize dynamic cookie sellers for various achievements tied to the Girl Scout Cookie Program.
- Girl Scouts of the USA does not currently track the top seller(s) of Girl Scout Cookies on a national level and does not identify a specific Girl Scout as the number one or “record-breaking” national cookie seller.
TROOP FINANCES

How do girls become financially empowered women? Through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE), that’s how! Your Girl Scout troop should plan and finance its own activities, and you’ll coach your girls as they earn and manage troop funds. Troop activities are powered by proceeds earned through council-sponsored product program activities (such as the Girl Scout Cookie Program), group money-earning activities (council approved, of course!), and any dues your troop may charge.

With your guidance, girls will learn key money skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Establishing a Troop Account

No matter how much your troop plans on saving or spending, you’ll need a safe place to deposit your troop dues, product sale proceeds, and other funds. If you’ve stepped up to lead an existing troop, you may inherit a checking account, but with a new troop, you’ll want to open a new bank account.

Here are a few helpful tips:

• Please utilize one of the preferred banks listed in the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Troop Banking Package when establishing your troop’s bank account. Free monthly checking accounts, debit cards and online banking are available to all Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan troop accounts. Be sure and contact a bank representative listed on page 2 of the package prior to visiting your closest branch to ensure correct account setup.

• Use the “Authorized Persons to Open Troop Account” form on page 3 of the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Troop Banking Package to open an account. Statements should be mailed to the primary account holder’s address, but online access should be established with the co-signer on the troop account to enhance transparency and review of troop finances. (Alternatively, the statement can be mailed to the co-signer and online access to the primary signer.)

• There must be two unrelated signers on the bank account who are approved volunteers (volunteers who have completed their Girl Scout membership and background check, been approved by Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan staff, and paid their current year’s GSUSA membership). For internal control purposes, any checks written from the bank account to a bank account signer must be signed by the other signer. Any debit card purchases by a signer must also be reviewed and approved by the other signer. Note that two Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan staff signers are included on all troop accounts via a Master Signing Agreement. As such, Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan can access and even close the troop account in the case of misuse or mismanagement of funds or disbanding of the troop.

• Designate a “troop treasurer,” that is, one person who is responsible for troop funds and for keeping a daily account of expenditures.

• Ensure your account comes with a debit card that you can use during activities or trips. These transactions are easier to track at the end of the year.

• Be prepared like a Girl Scout, and make sure another troop volunteer has accessible a debit card (credit cards are prohibited) for the troop account in case the main card is lost.

• Handle a lost troop debit card the same way you would a personal debit card: cancel it immediately.

• Keep troop funds in the bank before an activity or trip, and pay for as many items as possible in advance of your departure.

Managing a Troop Bank Account

• Monies raised jointly by members of a troop for any purpose belong to the troop as a whole and are not available to individual girl members.
• Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan volunteers who are check signers are responsible for all overdrafts that they initiate. Non-sufficient funds checks written to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan are immediately turned over to a collection agency that may assess a fee for their services. The fee is payable by the offending party.
• In the event a troop receives a bad check, if still uncollected after being presented to the bank twice for payment, the troop has the option to forward the bad check to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan for collection agency follow-up.
• Payment to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan for the Cookie Program and Fall Product Program will be made through electronic Automated Clearing House (ACH) withdrawal from the troop bank account. ACH withdrawals will continue to be deducted from the bank account until all monies due to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan have been collected. If there are not enough funds in the account to cover the ACH withdrawal, bank non-sufficient funds charges incurred by Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Finance Department will be added to the troop debt for each ACH rejection.
• Personal use of troop funds at ANY TIME is illegal. Personal funds and troop funds should never be co-mingled.
• Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan takes misuse of troop funds extremely seriously. If personal use of troop monies occurs, Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan will begin collection procedures, taking legal action as necessary. Volunteers who misuse funds for which they are responsible will be released from all positions with Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan. Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan will pursue all available criminal and/or civil charges involving misuse of funds.

Record Keeping and Annual Reporting
• Receipts should be written and collected for any transaction made using the troop’s bank account.
• Receipts from troop bank account transactions should be retained for 3 years.
• Accurate and complete financial records must be maintained for the troop and open for review at any time by parents of girls in the troop, or council staff. An Annual Financial report is due to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Finance Department by June 21st each year. Records should be retained (with receipts) for at least 3 years.
• Accurate financial records and reports may be a condition of reappointment for troop volunteers for the next membership year.
• Troop financial records are subject to random or periodic audits by Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan staff. All financial records must also be available to parents and girls. Financial information should be reviewed with girls at least annually. Parents will be advised by newsletter that they should receive a troop financial report at least annually and that troop financial records are available for their review. Troop Leaders should also communicate goal setting objectives to parents when planning for Cookie or Fall Product Programs. Parents will demonstrate stronger support if they know both the troop goals and the activities or community take action projects planned for use of troop proceeds.

Merging and Splitting of Troops
Money does not belong to any individual girl members. Thus, if one girl transfers to another troop, money does not transfer with her.

If a troop divides into two troops, the money and materials of the original troop should be divided between the two troops in proportion to the number of girls moving into each new troop. The Troop Leader should contact their Troop Support Specialist to inform them of the split and obtain new troop number(s), if necessary.
If one or more troops merge, money and material of each troop involved should be combined. Troop Leader(s) should contact their Troop Support Specialist regarding the merger and which troop is disbanding.

**Disbanding Troops**

The Troop Support Specialist should be informed of the Troop Leader’s decision to resign or other reason the troop is at-risk of disbanding. If this is a situation where the Troop Leader simply wants to resign, they should ask if any other parents or adults are interested in taking over as the leader.

When a Troop Leader leaves her/his position with a troop and a new Troop Leader is immediately recruited, the retiring Troop Leader should transfer all supplies, financial records, debit card, check book, bank account information and materials to the new Troop Leader. The signatures on the bank account should be changed to reflect the new troop leadership. The retiring Troop Leader will need to notify GSSEM-finance@gssem.org of the change, so a letter can be issued instructing the bank to authorize the change of signer on the troop account.

If new leadership has not been recruited, Troop Leaders should contact all the parents to inform them of their decision to no longer lead the troop, to determine if other parents or adults are interested in taking over as the leader, and to identify opportunities to place the girls in another troop or as Juliettes so girls can remain active in Girl Scouts. If no adults agree to take over the troop, the Troop Leader should contact their Troop Support Specialist for support with additional alternatives to keep the troop from disbanding.

If a replacement Troop Leader cannot be identified and there are girls still interested in troop participation, the Troop Support Specialist will then communicate with parents and work to place the girls in new troops. The departing Leader(s) will then complete steps to close out troop business and the troop will disband.

**Unused Troop Funds**

Before a troop disbands, the currently registered girls in the troop should decide what to do with the troop’s funds. *Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan encourages all disbanding troops to consider using troop funds to spread the spirit of Girl Scouting to others by donating all funds or a portion of remaining funds back to GSSEM to assist new troops.* Troops may also elect to use remaining funds on Girl Scout activities, such as a community service/Take Action project or to the troops favorite cause. Please note that the use of the remaining troop funds must be a girl-led decision by current girl members. Funds may not be spent on girls who are not registered in the current membership year. Please remember that according to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan and GSUSA policy (and to avoid having to pay taxes to the IRS), troop funds may not be refunded or paid out directly to girls or adults.

For troops that may disband due to lack of adult leadership, the remaining troop funds must be submitted to the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Finance Department, who will hold the remaining troop funds for up to twelve months pending reorganization. If new leadership is recruited for that particular troop, council will provide the new troop leadership the funds that remained in that particular troop bank account.

**Unused Troop Supplies**

Leaders of disbanding troops/groups are responsible for donating any supplies which were paid for with troop funds to another troop or give to their Troop Support Specialist or Service Unit Manager for re-distribution to a troop in need.
Closing the Troop Account
Troop Leaders are responsible for closing the bank account and submitting any remaining funds to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan. Be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account. Remember, you may have to close the account in person. Even if there are no funds remaining, you must still submit the following to the GSSEM Finance Department:

- a cashier’s check, made payable to “Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan”, with the remaining balance of the troop bank account
- the most recent bank statement
- notification from the bank that the account has been closed
- the disbanding troop number and contact information of Troop Leaders to:
  Chief Financial Officer
  Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan
  1333 Brewery Park Blvd
  Suite 500
  Detroit, MI  48207

If the troop disbands, the troop number becomes available for use anywhere else in the council.

Financial Assistance to Girls
• Families are welcome to apply for financial aid for girls to support their experience by completing a Financial Aid Application Form.
• Based upon funding availability and the family’s financial need, girls will be approved for a comprehensive package to ensure that they have a high-quality GSLE for their entire first year of membership. The package includes a Girl Member Starter Kit (with sash or vest, membership pins, journey book, and Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting), along with credits to participate in a council-wide or community-sponsored series or event.
• Once approved for financial aid, girls will be required to participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program in order to enhance their financial literacy skills.
• All girl members are welcome to apply for financial aid to attend Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan week-long summer camp programs. Eligibility is determined based upon funding availability and financial need. Families complete the Financial Aid Application Form. A minimum deposit of $50 is required for all attendees.

Understanding the Girl Scout Cookie Program
Money-Earning Basics for Troops
Troops flex their financial muscles in two distinct ways:
• The Girl Scout Cookie Program and other sales of Girl Scout–authorized products (such as calendars, magazines, or nuts and candy), organized by Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan. All girl members are eligible to participate in two council-sponsored product sale activities each year with volunteer supervision: the cookie program and one other council-authorized product sale. Please remember, volunteers and Girl Scout council staff don’t sell cookies and other products—girls do.
• Group money-earning activities organized by the troop (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with volunteers) and that earn money for the group.

Participation Guidance
Girls’ participation in both council-sponsored product sale 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 its program 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

Additional Guidelines
Keep these specific guidelines—some of which are required by the Internal Revenue Service—in mind to ensure that sales are conducted with legal and financial integrity.
• Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product sales. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group according to council procedures.
• Troops are encouraged to participate in council product sales as their primary money-earning activity; any group money earning shouldn’t compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other council product sales.
• All rewards earned by girls through the product sale 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 councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
• Girl Scouts’ Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash. Girls can collect partial payment toward the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and other Girl Scout–authorized products through participation in council-approved product sale donation programs.
• Girl Scouts discourages the use of games of chance. Any activity which could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo) must be approved by the local Girl Scout council and be conducted in compliance with all local and state laws.
• Girl Scouts forbids product demonstration parties where the use of the Girl Scout trademark increases revenue for another business, such as in-home product parties. Any business using the Girl Scout trademark or other Girl Scout intellectual property must seek authorization from GSUSA.
• Obtain written approval from the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Fund Development team before a group money-earning event using the Money Earning Project Request Form for any event raising more than $250.00.

Sample Money-Earning Activities
Collections/Drives
• Cell phones for refurbishment
• Used ink cartridges turned in for money
• Christmas tree recycling

Food/Meal Events
• Lunch box auction (prepared lunch or meal auctioned off)
• Themed meals, like a high tea or a build-your-own-taco bar, related to activities girls are planning (For instance, if girls are earning money for travel, they could tie the meal to their destination.)
Service(s)

• Service-a-thon (people sponsor a girl doing service and funds go to support a trip or other activity)
• Babysitting for holiday (New Year’s Eve) or council events
• Raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, shoveling snow, walking pets
• Cooking class or other specialty class

The Girl Scout Cookie Program and other council-sponsored product sales are designed to unleash the entrepreneurial potential in your girls. From there, your troop may decide to earn additional funds on its own.

**Help Your Troop Reach Its Financial Goals**

We get it—there's something exciting about opening that first case of Girl Scout Cookies. However, before your girls take part in all the cookie program fun, it’s important they have a clear plan and purpose for their product sale activities. As a volunteer, you have the opportunity to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps for the girls:

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 present themselves?
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, projected cookie proceeds, and so on).
3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn.** Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.
4. **Make a plan.** The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans. Will cookie and other product sales—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the group’s goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference? 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 on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out a Money Earning Project Request Form and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created.

*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!

**Financial Management and Product Program Abilities by Grade Level**

As with other Girl Scout activities, girls build their financial and sales savvy as they get older. Every girl will be different, but here you’ll find some examples of the abilities and opportunities for progression of girls at each grade level.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Girl Scout Daisies</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and does all group budgeting.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents/guardians may decide they will contribute to the cost of activities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls can participate in Girl Scout Cookie activities and other council-sponsored product sales.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daisies are always paired with a volunteer when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but volunteers handle the money and keep the girls secure.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls should be given the opportunity to practice identifying money and counting back change with an adult during each transaction.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Girl Scout Brownies</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and shares some of the group-budgeting responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on) with guidance from their volunteer(s).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls may decide to pay dues to contribute to the cost of activities.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Girl Scout Juniors</strong></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The group volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer selected by the girls.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group based on their plans and income from the group dues.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Working with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Every girl deserves an empowering leadership experience like Girl Scouts, and local sponsors can help councils make that vision a reality. 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. Encourage your girls to celebrate a sponsor’s contribution to the troop by sending 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 the Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan Fund Development team, which can give you guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting guidelines, and any council policies or practices that must be followed. Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan 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:

Avoid Fundraising for Other Organizations

Girl Scouts are not allowed to solicit money on behalf of another organization when identifying themselves as Girl Scouts by wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. However, you and your group can 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.”

Steer Clear of Political Activities or Fundraisers

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Girls estimate costs based on plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls determine the amount of group dues, if any, and the scope of money-earning projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product sales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls budget for extended travel, Take Action projects, and leadership projects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls may be involved in seeking donations for Take Action projects with council approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls keep their own financial records and give reports to parents and group volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Silver or Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Be Respectful When Collaborating with Religious Organizations
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.

Avoid Selling or Endorsing Commercial Products
A commercial product is any product sold at a retail location. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell such products.
SAFETY

In Girl Scouting, the emotional and physical safety and well-being of girls is our top priority. Safety Activity Checkpoints outlines the Safety Standards and Guidelines used in Girl Scouting, which apply to all Girl Scout activities.

All volunteers should review the Safety Activity Checkpoints manual when planning activities with girls in order to manage safety and risk in Girl Scout-sanctioned activities. gssem.org/safety

In Safety Activity Checkpoints, you’ll find:
- Girl Scout Activity Safety Standards and Guidelines with requirements for adult supervision, permission slips, preparation, field trips and overnight trips, and other vital information
- Activities that are not permitted by GSUSA, and actions that girls and volunteers should not take
- Policies surrounding chartered aircraft trips and aviation
- First-aid and overall health information you’ll need from the girls
- Standards for well-being and inclusivity, including working with girls with disabilities and ensuring emotional safety
- A breakdown of specific activities—such as camping, internet use, and water sports—and their individual safety checkpoints

Following the Safety Standards and Guidelines is an Activity-at-a-Glance chart which details two critical points to keep in mind:
- Age-appropriate activities and participation by grade level
- Whether prior approval from Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan is required before girls participate in a specific activity

Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

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

Not sure just how many adults you’ll need for your activity? The following chart breaks down the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls; councils may also establish maximums due to size or cost restrictions, so be sure to check with them as you plan your activity.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Meetings</th>
<th>Events, Travel, and Camping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Two</strong> unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for up to this number of girls:</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>One</strong> additional volunteer to each additional:</td>
<td><strong>One</strong> additional volunteer to each additional:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Daisies</strong> (grades K–1)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Brownies</strong> (grades 2–3)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Juniors</strong> (grades 4–5)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Cadettes</strong> (grades 6–8)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Seniors</strong> (grades 9–10)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Girl Scout Ambassadors</strong> (grades 11–12)</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
INSURANCE OVERVIEW

Basic Supplemental Accident Insurance for Girl Scout Members through Mutual of Omaha (paid for by GSUSA)

Every registered girl and adult Girl Scout member enjoys the benefit of being automatically covered under GSUSA’s basic supplemental accident insurance through Mutual of Omaha. 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, after the individual’s primary health insurance pays out. The entire premium cost for this protection is borne by Girl Scouts of the USA.

The basic plan is effective during the regular program year (October 1 to September 30). Up to 14 months of insurance coverage is provided for new members who register in the month of August. This is one reason that all adults and girls benefit by being registered members. Non-registered parents, tagalongs (brothers, sisters, friends), and other persons are not covered under this basic accident insurance coverage.

This basic insurance coverage is not intended to diminish the need for or replace family health insurance. This Mutual of Omaha insurance is considered supplemental to the family’s insurance coverage. When $130 in benefits has been paid for covered accident medical or dental expense, any subsequent benefits will be payable only for expenses incurred that aren’t compensable under another insurance policy. If there is no family insurance or healthcare program, a specified maximum of medical benefits is available.

- PLAN 1 (BASIC ACCIDENT INSURANCE): Coverage is automatically provided to girls and adults who register as Girl Scout members. The basic plan covers every registered Girl Scout and Adult Member for any approved, supervised activity of the Girl Scouts, except activities lasting more than two (2) consecutive nights (a third night is covered if the event is over an official federal holiday). [This plan is secondary insurance coverage].

Purchasing Additional Accident &/or Sickness Insurance (paid for by troop/group)

- PLAN 2 (ACCIDENT INSURANCE): This is the same type of coverage as Basic Insurance but designed specifically for: 1) events/activities lasting more than two (2) nights (or more than three nights if over an official federal holiday) or 2) non-Girl Scout members for any approved, supervised activity of the Girl Scouts. If covering non-members for a program when the exact numbers are not available, use a reasonable estimate to determine the number of non-member participants. [This plan is secondary insurance coverage.]
- PLAN 3E (ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE): This is the same coverage as Insurance Plan 2, but also includes sickness coverage and is designed for the same type of events as Plan 2. [This plan is secondary insurance coverage.]
- PLAN 3P (ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE): This is the same accident and sickness coverage as Plan 3E, but is not subject to the “non-duplication provision.” Plan 3P is for travel within the United States. [This plan is primary insurance coverage.]
- PLAN 3PI (INTERNATIONAL ACCIDENT AND SICKNESS INSURANCE, REQUIRED FOR INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL): This plan includes essentially the same coverage found in Plan 3P, but with a Travel Assistance Services, “safety net” feature added for International travel purposes. Should a medical or other emergency occur while abroad, or if there are concerns before making a trip abroad, the Council staff or group leader is a free telephone call away from mobilizing AXA Assistance resources to provide their “hands-on” assistance as detailed in the Description of Coverage.
All above plans for additional insurance must be purchased for the entire period of the event and for 100% of the participants. When figuring cost, remember to count ALL days of the event, including the departure and return days.

How to Purchase Additional Accident &/or Sickness Insurance:
Complete the Additional Insurance Request – Mutual of Omaha form. Please note that the form is to be completed and submitted to Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan, not to Mutual of Omaha. At least two weeks prior to the trip/activity insurance is being purchased for, please send check payable to United of Omaha Life Insurance Company and form to:

Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan
Attention: Office Manager
1333 Brewery Park Blvd
Suite 500
Detroit, MI 48207

Mutual of Omaha–Optional Accident &/or Sickness Insurance Plans Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs):

Q. What is the difference between Mutual of Omaha Plans 1 and 2 and Plans 3E and 3P?
A. Plans 1 and 2 provide Accident only coverage. Plans 3E and 3P include both Accident and Sickness coverage.

Q. If an event lasts more than two overnights, will the event be covered under Plan 1?
A. No. The entire event is excluded from Plan 1, including travel to and from the event. Additional insurance would need to be arranged from Mutual of Omaha to cover the entire period of the event for all participants.

Q. Must Plan 2 be purchased for Members and nonmembers participating in single day Community Events or Field Trips?
A. It is NOT required to purchase additional insurance for single day Community Events or field trips. It is optional to purchase Plan 2-Accident Insurance for nonmembers.

Q. Is there a need to provide coverage for Members under Plan 2?
A. Yes, for events/activities lasting more than two (2) nights (or more than three nights if over an official federal holiday). Plan 2 also covers non-Girl Scout members for any approved, supervised activity of the Girl Scouts. If covering non-members for a program when the exact numbers are not available, use a reasonable estimate to determine the number of non-member participants.

Q. What is meant by an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity?
A. It is an activity carried out by Members of the Girl Scout Movement, under supervision of adults, in keeping with the Girl Scout Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Q. If an event begins Friday after school and ends Sunday afternoon, does this meet the definition of a two-night event?
A. Yes, it is covered under Plan 1.
Q. Are program activities, such as cookie sales, covered under Plan 1?
A. Yes, if they are approved and supervised.

Q. Is coverage provided under Plan 1 if Members of our troop travel outside the United States on a Girl Scout project or activity?
A. Yes, only if the trip lasts less than two consecutive nights (three if one of the official federal holiday). For example, a simple day trip to Ontario is covered. Other trips outside the USA would usually involve more than two consecutive nights, therefore, Additional Accident and Sickness Insurance is needed. Plan 3PI is recommended for International Travel, although 3E and 3P are available.

Q. Would coverage be provided under Plan 1 for medical expenses of a Member who became ill during an approved activity?
A. No. Sickness is not covered; only medical expenses arising out of an accident during an approved, supervised activity is covered. Sickness Insurance, along with Accident Insurance, is only provided for events lasting more than two consecutive nights and only available under one of the Plan 3 options (i.e., Plans 3E, 3P, 3PI).

Q. Are nonregistered adults or other persons assisting the Leader covered?
A. Only registered girl and adult members are covered by the Mutual of Omaha basic accident insurance as a benefit of membership. The only coverage available to non-registered girls and adults while they are performing duties related to Girl Scouts and during a supervised activity in keeping with the Girl Scout Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints is Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan's general liability insurance.

Q. Are “Tagalongs” (brothers, sisters, friends) covered under Plan 1?
A. No. If a Tagalong is a registered Member of a different troop, but is not of the proper age for the activity and is not participating as a service project, there is no coverage. For example, a registered Daisy tagging along with the parent who is leading a Cadette troop has no accident coverage. Conversely, a Cadette assisting at a Daisy meeting does have coverage.

Q. What are typical events for which Plan 2 is used?
A. Community events, recruitment events, family events, programs held in conjunction with other organizations where Girl Scouts is the primary sponsor are just a few events which can be covered under Plan 2.

Q. What are examples of events that could last more than two nights and could be covered by Plan 3E or Plan 3P?
A. GSUSA Destinations Program, and all sorts of trips and travel, including bike, canoe, white water rafting, etc. are just a few examples that may be covered.

Q. When counting the number of days of an activity/event on the application form, do you include the beginning day and ending day of the event?
A. Yes. Since coverage for travel directly to and from an activity/event is covered, all days, including days traveled, should be included, for example, a group leaves home on Friday afternoon and returns home on Tuesday morning. Coverage must be arranged for five calendar days.
Automobile Insurance

It is the volunteer’s responsibility to arrange private auto insurance protection appropriate for their own circumstances. Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan will not reimburse for the cost of physical damage, deductibles or liability claims. Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan strongly recommends, but does not require, that vehicle owners carry collision and comprehensive coverage. Under Michigan no-fault insurance law, if an accident should occur with an allegation of negligence, the car owner’s auto liability insurance provides coverage first, and then if applicable, Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan’s general liability insurance will take effect.

General Liability Insurance (paid for by Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan)

Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan general liability insurance is different and separate from the various types of supplemental accident and health insurance coverage available through Mutual of Omaha.

General Liability coverage is intended to provide coverage in response to allegations of negligence or liability on the part of Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan, its employees, volunteers, officers or directors resulting in injury to people or damage to someone else’s property. Coverage also extends to allegations of libel, slander, or false arrest.

Girl Scouts of Southeastern Michigan liability insurance covers all volunteers whether or not they are registered adult Girl Scout members as long as they are performing duties related to Girl Scouts and during a supervised activity in keeping with the Girl Scout Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints. The Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints are common sense rules that everyone should follow.