



Volunteer Essentials

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Adventure Ahead!

Girl Scout volunteers are community-builders, champions of fun, and role models for what it means to lead with your heart. And because of your support, Girl Scouts of all ages are emboldened to chase their dreams and make a positive impact in their communities and across the globe. Your mentorship and encouragement are powerful and make a difference—and your girls will carry that support throughout their lives. Thank you for all you do.

This guide is designed to support busy troop volunteers 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.

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Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington

Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington (GSOSW) is a 501(c) non-profit organization, and one of 110 councils that make up Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA).

Questions? Need help resolving an issue? We've got you! Reach out any time by either clicking "Contact" on any page of our website, girlscoutsw.org, or by emailing answers@girlscoutsw.org. During business hours 8 a.m. - 5 p.m., you can reach a customer service specialist by calling 1-800-338-5248.

Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Service Centers

Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington is located at four service centers across the council.

Bend Service Center

3188 N Hwy 97, Suite 109
Bend, OR 97703
800-338-5248

Medford Service Center

2001 N Keene Way Dr
Medford, OR 97504
800-338-5248

Eugene Service Center

72C Centennial Loop, Suite 300
Eugene, OR 97401
800-338-5248

Portland Service Center

9620 SW Barbur Blvd Portland, OR 97219
800-338-5248

Don't forget to follow us on social media at:

Facebook: facebook.com/GirlScoutsOSW

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All About Girl Scouts

Girls' dreams are our dreams, and Girl Scouts is where they'll see the limitless possibilities ahead of them and aim for the stars—and reach them. Whether she's making a new friend on the playground, raising her hand in class, starting her own nonprofit, or advocating for climate justice, a Girl Scout builds a better world—just as Girl Scouts have been doing for over a century. And with programs in every zip code from coast to coast and across the globe, every girl can find her place in Girl Scouts and start creating the world she wants to see.

Who Can Join Girl Scouts—and How?

If you believe in the inherent power of girls to change the world and you're ready to be their champion, you belong with Girl Scouts.

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 (of any gender, who is 18 years or older and has passed their council's screening process), your unique skills and experiences and your mentorship can open your Girl Scouts' eyes to all the possibilities ahead of them.

All members are united by the values in [the Girl Scout Promise and Law](#), as well as by 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 either \$400 or \$200 for alum under the age of 30.

Girls at Every Grade Level

Girls can join in the fun at any grade level:

[Girl Scout Daisy \(grades K–1\)](#)

[Girl Scout Cadette \(grades 6–8\)](#)

[Girl Scout Brownie \(grades 2–3\)](#)

[Girl Scout Senior \(grades 9–10\)](#)

[Girl Scout Junior \(grades 4–5\)](#)

[Girl Scout Ambassador \(grades 11–12\)](#)

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Everything centers around the girl in Girl Scouts: 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.

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 Girl Scouts do exciting [badge activities](#), [earn a Girl Scout Journey award](#), attend an amazing program or event, or go camping, you are helping them discover who they are, what excites them, and what their talents are.
- Girl Scouts connect when they collaborate with others—their troop, leaders, or community experts—and expand their horizons. This helps them care about, support, inspire, and team with others locally and globally.
- With your guidance, your Girl Scouts will deepen their relationship with the world around them, and they'll be eager to take action to make the world a better place.

As for how they do it? The Girl Scout Leadership Experience draws on three unique processes that help girls unlock their inner leader.

- Girl-led means Girl Scouts of every age take an active and age-appropriate role in figuring out the what, where, when, why, and how of all the exciting activities they'll do. The girl-led process is critically important to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience—when girls actively lead and shape their experiences, they know their voices matter, they feel empowered to make decisions, and they stay engaged in their activities.
- Girl Scouts 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, Girl Scouts share knowledge and skills in an atmosphere of respect, teamwork, and collaboration 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 your Girl Scouts make decisions about the activities they 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, all girls have the opportunity to lead within their peer groups.

By the time girls are Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors, they'll be using the leadership skills they've developed to take more ownership of their activities, mentor younger Girl Scouts, and take action to make the world a better place.

One last tip about following these processes: 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 Girl Scouts don't have to fill their vests and sashes with badges. What matters most is the fun and learning that happens as they make the experiences their own, so 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 your troop 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 your Girl Scouts explore the "whats" and "whys," they'll 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 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*. 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 when we say progressive, or progression, we're talking about gradual, step-by-step growth!), 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 your Girl Scouts can test their skills and be unafraid to fail.

Keep in mind that good progression drives success for your troop. We've outlined some suggestions that will help you determine when your girls are ready for their next [outdoor challenge](#), [their next troop trip](#), or [their next cookie-selling challenge](#).

Inclusion

Girl Scouts has a strong commitment to inclusion, equity, 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,

cognitive or physical abilities, family structure, religious beliefs, political beliefs, sexual orientation, gender identity, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, planning, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all Girl Scouts involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.

The National Program Pillars

Girl Scouts lead their own adventures and team up with their fellow troop members to choose the hands-on activities that excite them most. Our program focuses on [four areas \(pillars\) that form the foundation](#) of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience:

- [Outdoors](#): When Girl Scouts 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, Girl Scouts become better problem-solvers and critical thinkers through STEM activities and learn how they can use STEM to help others.
- [Life skills](#): Girl Scouts discover they have what it takes to become outspoken community advocates, make smart decisions about their finances, and form strong, healthy relationships—skills that inspire them to accept challenges and overcome obstacles, now and always.
- [Entrepreneurship](#): By participating in the Girl Scout Cookie Program or fall product program, or by earning one of the new entrepreneurship badges, girls spark their curiosity, confidence, and innovation as they learn the essentials of running their own businesses and how to think like entrepreneurs.



The Volunteer Toolkit provides inspiring ideas so you can engage your troop in a mix of activities all year long. For example, if you want to take your troop outside when doing a badge activity, look for the evergreen icon, which tells you that activity can be taken outdoors, or the globe icon, which lets you know you can bring a global perspective to the activity.

The Important Difference Between Journeys and Badges

Journeys and badges are designed to give girls different leadership-building experiences, all while having fun!

- [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, build and test a toy race car, or take great digital photos. It may even spark an interest at school or plant the seed for a future career. And remember: you'll have fun and learn by doing right alongside your troop!
- [Journeys](#) are multi-session leadership experiences through which girls explore topics such as bullying, media literacy, design thinking, environmental stewardship, and more! They'll do hands-on activities, connect with experts, and take the reins on age-appropriate Take Action projects. Because of their leadership focus, Journeys are also a prerequisite for the highest awards in Girl Scouting: the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.

If they choose, your Girl Scouts can pursue badges 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 Journey awards and skill-building badges far outweigh the quantity of badges she earns.

As a volunteer, you don't have to be the expert in any badge or Journey work. In fact, when you show that you're not afraid to fail and willing to try something new, you are modeling what it is to be a Girl Scout. And, our badge and Journey requirements are structured so your girls can learn new skills without you having to be an expert in all the topics, including STEM.

The Difference Between Community Service and Take Action Projects

As your Girl Scouts 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. Both projects serve essential needs, but at different levels.

- When a Girl Scout performs community service, she's responding to an immediate need in a one-off, "doing for" capacity. In other words? She's making an impact right now!
- Through Take Action/service learning, girls explore the root causes of a community need and address it in a lasting way; they truly make the world—or their part of it—a better place.

If your troop members want to pursue their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award, they'll develop a Take Action project on an issue that's close to their hearts. To make Take Action projects even more impactful for your Girl Scouts, set time for them to reflect on their projects. When they 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 fellow trailblazers 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.
- [World Thinking Day](#), February 22, celebrates international friendship. It's an opportunity for Girl Scouts and Girl Guides to connect with each other and explore a common theme around the world.
- 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 they're making cool SWAPS to share with new friends or closing 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 Girl Scouts discover the power of their voices, they'll want to take on an issue that's close to their hearts 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; the prerequisite is one Junior Journey and its associated Take Action project. The Bronze Award is earned by the group.
- [The Girl Scout Silver Award](#) can be earned by Cadettes; the prerequisite is one Cadette Journey and its associated Take Action project. The Silver Award can be earned by an individual girl or by a small group.
- [The Girl Scout Gold Award](#) can be earned by Seniors and Ambassadors who have completed either two Girl Scout Senior/Ambassador level Journeys and the associated Take Action project or earned the Silver Award and completed one Senior/Ambassador level Journey.

Did you know that a Gold Award Girl Scout is entitled to enlist at a higher pay grade when she joins the U.S. military? A Gold Award Girl Scout's achievements also prime her for the fast track when it comes to college admissions and make her an outstanding candidate for academic scholarships and other financial awards.

Girl Scouts are eligible to earn any recognition at the grade level in which they are registered. Any Girl Scout is eligible to earn the Gold Award even if she joined Girl Scouts for the first time in high school.

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 major inspiration, consider inviting a local Gold Award Girl Scout to speak to your troop 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, grit, problem-solving, time and project management, and team-building expertise they gain while doing so!

Girl Scout Travel and Destinations

Girl Scouts try new things and see the world with new eyes, both inside and outside of their usual troop meetings. As COVID-19-related travel restrictions are lifted across the globe and you and your troop feel safe doing so, you may be excited to explore the world again as a troop.

Traveling as a Girl Scout is a more engaging experience than traveling with family, school, or other groups because [girls take the lead](#). They'll make important decisions about where to go and what to do and take increasing responsibility for the planning of their trips, all while growing their organizational and management skills—skills that will benefit them throughout their lives.

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 our travel program,

[Destinations.](#)

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

1. **Short trips** to local points of interest (Daisies and older) (Requires Girl Scouts Inside and Out, Part 1): A walk to the nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to the firehouse or courthouse is a great first step.
2. **Day trip** (Daisies and older) (Requires Girl Scouts Inside and Out, Part 1): An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a day-long trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal). Younger girls can select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home. Note: Full-day trips may be very challenging for Daisies, especially for kindergarteners who have not experienced short trips. Make sure girls take some short trips before they progress to a full day trip.
3. **Overnight trips** (Brownies and older) (Requires Girl Scouts Inside and Out, Part 1 and Girl Scouts Inside and Out, Part 2): A trip of one (or possibly two) nights away could start with staying at a Girl Scout property, and progress to visiting to a state or national park or nearby city for sightseeing, staying in a hotel, motel, or even an overnight at a museum or the zoo! These short trips are just long enough to whet their appetites, but not long enough to generate homesickness. Note: A Daisy troop may participate in an indoor overnight if the girls have had appropriate progressive experiences. Brownie troops can participate up to two nights.
4. **Camping trips** (Brownies and older) (Requires Girl Scouts Inside and Out, Part 1 and Part 2, and Outdoor Skills Training): Camping is a staple of the Girl Scout experience. Spend a night or two camping in tents or yurts using outdoor cooking equipment.
5. **Extended overnight trips** (Juniors and older*) (Requires Girl Scouts Inside and Out, Part 1 and Part 2, Extended Travel, and Outdoor Skills Training [if camping]): Four nights or more camping or staying in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington council region (within 200 miles of the council boundaries).
6. **National trips** (Cadettes and older*) (Requires Girl Scouts Inside and Out, Part 1 and Part 2 and Extended Travel Training): Travel anywhere in the country, often lasting a week or more. Try to steer clear of ordinary recreational trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component such as incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country. Perhaps the girls want to plan a trip to some national parks as part of the Girl Scout Ranger program.
7. **International trips** (Seniors and older*) (Requires Girl Scouts Inside and Out, Part 1 and Part 2 and Extended Travel Training): Travel around the world, often requiring one or two years of preparation. International trips may be approved for older Girl Scout Cadettes if they have appropriate extended travel progression.

*Grade levels update at the start of the Girl Scout membership year – October 1. Trips planned for the summer before may not be approved. For example, Juniors bridging to Cadettes who want to take a summer trip outside the council region may not have their trip approved.

Check out the [Adult Training page](#) of the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington website for information on training opportunities specifically designed to prepare Girl Scout volunteers for troop or group travel.

You can also find specific requirements for troop or group travel by activity type in [Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Policies and Procedures](#).

Planning Ahead for Adventure

Get in touch with Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington as you start thinking about leaving your regular meeting place, time, or date. Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington offers a robust adult training progression covering each step of the travel progression. This training progression prepares adults to work with girls to plan activities and events.

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. For required training and the approval process, check the Travel section of [Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Council Volunteer Policies and Procedures](#). 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. You'll also want to refer to the COVID-19 guidelines in Safety Activity Checkpoints as well as any COVID-19 guidelines for your destination.

Note that extended travel (more than three nights) is not covered under the basic Girl Scout insurance plan and will require additional coverage.

Girl Scout Program Connections

It's easy to tie eye-opening travel opportunities into the leadership training and skill building your girls are doing in Girl Scouts! When it's safe to travel together, girls can use their creativity to connect any leadership Journey theme into an idea for travel. For example, girls learn where their food comes from in the *Sow What?* Journey. That would connect well with a 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, Coding for Good, and, of course, all the financial badges that help girls budget and earn money for their trips.

Want to include 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.

And if your troop is looking to stay closer to home this year? Ask your council about council-owned properties .

As your Girl Scouts excitedly plan their next trip, remember to 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

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.

Girl Scout Daisies	
At the Girl Scout Daisy level (kindergarten and first grade), girls...	This means...
Have loads of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.	They'll enjoy going on nature walks and outdoor scavenger hunts.
Are great builders and budding artists, though they are still developing their fine motor skills.	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.
Love to move and dance.	They might especially enjoy marching like a penguin, dancing like a dolphin, or acting out how they might care for animals in the jungle.
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	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.
Are only beginning to learn about basic number concepts, time, and money.	You'll want to take opportunities to count out supplies together—and, perhaps, the legs on a caterpillar!
Are just beginning to write and spell, and they don't always have the words for what they're thinking or feeling.	That having girls draw a picture of something they are trying to communicate is easier and more meaningful for them.
Know how to follow simple directions and respond well to recognition for doing so.	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.

Girl Scout Brownies

At the Girl Scout Brownie level (second and third grade), girls...	This means...
Have lots of energy and need to run, walk, and play outside.	Taking your activities outside whenever possible.
Are social and enjoy working in groups.	Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects and performances.
Want to help others and appreciate being given individual responsibilities for a task.	Letting girls lead, direct, and help out in activities whenever possible. Allow girls as a group to make decisions about individual roles and responsibilities.
Are concrete thinkers and focused on the here and now.	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.
Need clear directions and structure and like knowing what to expect.	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.
Are becoming comfortable with basic number concepts, time, money, and distance.	Offering support only when needed. Allow girls to set schedules for meetings or performances, count out money for a trip, and so on.
Are continuing to develop their fine motor skills and can tie shoes, use basic tools, begin to sew, and the like.	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.
Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.	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.
Know how to follow rules, listen well, and appreciate recognition of a job done well.	Acknowledging when the girls have listened or followed the directions well, which will increase their motivation to listen and follow again!

Girl Scout Juniors

At the Girl Scout Junior level (fourth and fifth grades), girls...	This means...
Want to make decisions and express their opinions.	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.
Are social and enjoy doing things in groups.	Allowing girls to team up in small or large groups for art projects, performances, and written activities.
Are aware of expectations and sensitive to the judgments of others.	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.
Are concerned about equity and fairness.	Not shying away from discussing why rules are in place and having girls develop their own rules and agreements for their group.
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.	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.
Have strong fine and gross motor skills and coordination.	Engaging girls in moving their minds and their bodies. Allow girls to express themselves through the written word, choreography, and so on.
Love to act in plays, create music, and dance.	Girls might like to tell a story through playwriting, playing an instrument, or choreographing a dance.
May be starting puberty, which means beginning breast development, skin changes, and weight changes. Some may be getting their periods.	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.

Girl Scout Cadettes

At the Girl Scout Cadette level (sixth, seventh, and eighth grades), girls...	This means...
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.	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.
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.	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.
Can be very self-conscious—wanting to be like everyone else but fearing they are unique in their thoughts and feelings.	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.
Are beginning to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults at school and at home.	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.

Girl Scout Seniors

At the Girl Scout Senior level (ninth and tenth grades), girls...	This means...
Are beginning to clarify their own values, consider alternative points of view on controversial issues, and see multiple aspects of a situation.	Asking girls to explain the reasoning behind their decisions. Engage girls in role-play and performances, where others can watch and offer alternative solutions.
Have strong problem-solving and critical thinking skills and are able to plan and reflect on their own learning experiences.	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.
Spend more time in peer groups than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	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.
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.	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.
Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, and other sources.	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.
Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults at school and at home.	Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience "fun failure," which is learning from trying something new and making mistakes.

Girl Scout Ambassadors

At the Girl Scout Ambassador level (eleventh and twelfth grades), girls...	This means...
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.	Inviting girls to develop stories as a group and then individually create endings that they later discuss and share.
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.	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.
Spend more time with peers than with their families and are very concerned about friends and relationships with others their age.	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.
Frequently enjoy expressing their individuality.	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.
Feel they have lots of responsibilities and pressures—from home, school, peers, work, and other sources.	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.
Are continuing to navigate their increasing independence and expectations from adults—at school and at home—and are looking to their futures.	Trusting girls to plan and make key decisions, allowing them to experience “fun failure,” which is learning from trying something new and making mistakes.

Creating a Safe Space for Girls

A safe space is where girls feel they can be themselves, without explanation or judgment. As a volunteer, the environment you create 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 the 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.
- 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 to 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 in a nonjudgmental manner](#), keeping in mind that 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.

You'll also find conflict resolution activities in some of the Journeys, such as the Amaze Journey for Cadettes or the Mission Sisterhood Journey for Seniors.

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

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:

Listening

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.

Being 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.

Being 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. Also seek help from council staff if you need assistance or more information than you currently have.

Showing 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.

Offering 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.

Staying 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 “guide on the side”— 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. When girls take the lead in establishing group rules, they’re more likely to stick to them!
- 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—understanding that “speaking up” may look different for each girl. For some girls, it might mean sharing their ideas in front of the entire group; for others that could mean submitting a written response or contributing as part of a 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). See the “report concerns” section below to understand the guard rails.

When Sensitive Topics Come Up

It’s an amazing feeling when your Girl Scouts 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.

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.

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

We at Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington want to do everything we can to support you when sensitive topics come up. If you ever need support, contact council staff at girlscoutsw.org. Parents should also be kept in the loop if sensitive topics come up in a troop setting. Before having any discussions about sensitive topics with girls in your troop, notify and get permission from parents with the [Individual Permission Form & Health History \(form #117\)](#).

Parents/caregivers 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 your council's guidelines for obtaining written permission.

Report Concerns

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

As a Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington volunteer, you are a mandatory reporter, and are therefore responsible for reporting suspected child abuse. All Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington volunteers who directly supervise girls are required to take Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington's mandatory reporter training in gsLearn. If you have already completed mandatory reporter training as part of another organization, you can contact answers@girlscoutsow.org to record your completion. You will still need to complete a portion of the council training, which provides organization-specific information.

Contact a council staff member to find out how to refer the girl and her parent/guardian to experts at school or in the community.

Share your concern with the girl's family, if this is feasible.

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

Engaging Families

You want your Girl Scouts to have fun, be inspired, take risks, and learn about themselves and the world—that’s why you’re a Girl Scout troop leader or troop volunteer! 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 and themselves 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

When families step up and play an active part in troop life, your troop can shine its brightest! 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:

- Families understand what Girl Scouting can do for their girl.
- Families and leaders identify ways they will work as a team to support the troop.
- Families 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.
- Families know how the troop will communicate things like upcoming events or schedule changes.
- Families 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- to 90-minute meeting will make all the difference in the year ahead.

Another meeting you don't want to miss is the **Cookie Program Girl & Family Meeting** in the Volunteer Toolkit. Just like the parent and caregiver meeting at the beginning of the year, this meeting is your chance to share what girls gain through the cookie program, outline expectations, and find the support you need for a successful cookie season. The cookie program is a team effort and you'll want to get families on board!

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 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 members 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. You can get everyone in on the fun and keep Girl Scouts strong at home by sharing the family badge guides on the Volunteer Toolkit.

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. Here’s how you’ll do that with your troop!

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 your troop! 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. Here are a few basic concepts that outline what leadership means in Girl Scouting.

Leadership is teaching your Girl Scouts:

- 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:

- Advises, discusses, and cheers on your troop, not as a teacher with a planned lesson or activity.
- Ensures each member understands and can carry out their responsibilities within the troop.
- Encourages Girl Scouts 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 your Girl Scouts 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 and coaching 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 your Girl Scouts so that their activities are girl-led and that they learn by doing, individually and as 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 troop 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 volunteer support team council staff.
- Facilitating a safe experience for every Girl Scout.

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? Which uniform components will the troop provide for each girl?
- 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 and decisions girl-led? Use the Volunteer Toolkit 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, or with very little cost.
- **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 talking points to get started? Try:

- “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 answers@girlscoutsosw.org or your service unit team for help with a troop meeting place.

Virtual Meetings

If your group or troop can't meet in person, there are so many ways to bring the power of Girl Scouting home! Meeting virtually can be a fun, engaging option for your troop.

[Before setting up a virtual meeting](#), you'll want to:

- Partner with troop families to make sure the girls are safe online.
- Select a meeting platform that allows families who may not have internet access to call in.
- [Think about logistics](#): work with the girls to set up ground rules, and consider how you'll incorporate in-person meeting traditions in your virtual space and how you'll keep the meeting on track.
- Talk with families on [how to keep activities girl-led](#) if your girls will be completing them from home.

And don't worry if your girls want to use a web or social platform you're not as familiar with, because you'll learn alongside them! For more tips on successful virtual meetings, check out the [For Troop Leaders section of Girl Scouts at Home](#).

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. Though the ideal troop size is 12 girls, groups should be no fewer and no larger than:

- Girl Scout Daisies: 8–12 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

Troop size exceptions to the above include but are not limited to supported and accommodated troop members with special or additional needs, and Senior or Ambassador troops that will be bridging to adults within 1-3 years.

A Girl Scout troop/group must have *at minimum* five girls and two approved adult volunteers to be considered “a troop in good standing”. (Double-check the volunteer-to-girl ratio chart to make sure you've got the right amount of coverage for your troop!)

A Girl Scout troop that is unable to maintain troop membership of at least two troop leaders, and at least three girls (with at least two open spots available in the troop catalog), will need to disband. In that case, any continuing Girl Scouts will be able to join another troop, or continue participating as a Girl Scout Juliette (or individually participating Girl Scout).

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.

Pre-registration 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). Adults under 30 years of age, and volunteers with ten or more years of service can become lifetime members at a discounted rate.

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 your council's Opportunity Catalog or Troop Catalog.

If you're looking for recruitment supplies, check with your service unit team, or contact answers@girlscoutsosw.org.

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 Scout— regardless of her socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, physical or cognitive ability, sexual orientation, primary language, political belief, 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, everyone 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 everyone and focus on building community.
- Emphasize cooperation instead of competition.
- Provide a safe and socially comfortable environment
- Teach respect for, understanding of, and dignity toward all Girl Scouts and their families.
- Actively reach out to Girl Scouts and their families who are traditionally excluded or marginalized.
- Foster a sense of belonging and 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 Scout, please reach out to Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington at answers@girlscoutsosw.org.

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 them or their 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 Scout 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 Scout who is with visual impairment might be given permission to touch the pieces.
- If an activity requires running, a Girl Scout who is unable to run could be asked to walk or do another physical movement.

Focus on a person’s abilities—on what they can do rather than on what they cannot. In that spirit, use people-first language that puts the person before the disability.

Say...	Instead of...
She has a learning disability.	She is learning disabled.
She has a developmental delay.	She is mentally retarded; she is slow.
She uses a wheelchair.	She is wheelchair-bound.

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

- When talking to a Girl Scout with a disability, speak directly to her, not through a family member or friend.
- It’s okay to offer assistance to a Girl Scout 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 someone’s wheelchair is invading their space and is considered annoying and rude.
- When speaking to a Girl Scout who is hearing impaired and using an interpreter, speak to the person themselves, not to the interpreter.
- When speaking for more than a few minutes to someone who uses a wheelchair, place yourself at eye level.
- When greeting someone 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. Make any adaptations for the Girl Scout 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

Just as your Girl Scouts rally around each other for support, you’ll also have a dedicated Girl Scout support team, consisting of council staff and passionate volunteers just like you. Your area, called a service unit, is led by a service unit team, who is ready to offer local learning opportunities and advice, as well as [answer your questions](#) about the Girl Scout program, working with girls, product programs, 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 is a customizable digital planning tool for troop leaders to easily manage their troop year-round and deliver easy, fun troop meetings. Accessible via desktop and mobile devices, the Volunteer Toolkit saves you time and energy so that you can focus on having fun with your Girl Scouts.

With the Volunteer Toolkit, 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.
- 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 attendance at meetings and their troop's badge and Journey achievements.
- Add council or custom events to the troop's calendar.
- 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.
- 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.

Get started by visiting girlscoutsosw.org, logging into your My GS account, then clicking on the Volunteer Toolkit tab!

The Girl Scout Handbook and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting

What does it mean to be a go-getting Girl Scout? It’s all in The Girl Scout Handbook and The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting. These grade level-specific resources will help you break it down for your girls.

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.

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](#) 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. 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 any time by either clicking "Contact" on any page of our website, girlscoutsw.org, or by emailing answers@girlscoutsw.org. During business hours 9am-5pm, you can reach a customer service specialist by calling 1-800-338-5248.

Newsletters/Communication

Bookmark the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington website: Find resources, ideas, Girl Scout news, and important information at girlscoutsw.org.

Juliette Connect

Juliette Connect is a monthly email newsletter for Girl Scout Juliette families, featuring timely updates and reminders, enrichment and connection, and upcoming opportunities for your girl. All caregivers of currently registered Girl Scout Juliettes that have opted in to receive email from Girl Scouts (via their My GS account) will automatically receive troop connect each month.

Troop Connect

Troop Connect is a monthly email newsletter for Girl Scout troop leaders, featuring timely updates and reminders, opportunities for adult learning, enrichment and connection, and tips and tools for successful troop leadership. All currently registered troop leaders that have opted in to receive email from Girl Scouts (via their My GS account) will automatically receive troop connect each month.

Virtual Volunteer Meetings

[Virtual Volunteer Meetings](#) are geared towards those with an active volunteer role at Girl Scouts. This series of council-led virtual meetings will help keep you informed and updated on new program opportunities, policy changes, and various topics that impact your area. Join us for a night of information, learning, and fun and be sure to bring your questions!

Girl Scouts of the USA Spanish Resources

Many Girl Scout program resources are available from GSUSA in Spanish, including several Girl Scout Journey programs. To order, visit girlscoutshop.com.

Spanish	English
¡Las Girl Scouts Brownies Cambian El Mundo!	Brownie Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting
¡Las Girl Scouts Juniors Apuntan A Las Estrellas!	Junior Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting
El Jardín Florido de Daisy	Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden
Entre La Tierra Y El Cielo	Between Earth and Sky
La Búsqueda Brownie	Brownie Quest
¡WOW! Maravillas del Agua	WOW! Wonders of Water
Agente del Cambio	Agent of Change
¡En Movimiento!	GET MOVING!
Inspirar	Breathe!
¡Qué Lío!	aMAZE!
¿Como Qué?	Sow What?
Tu Voz, Tu Mundo	Your Voice, Your World
Justicia	Justice

Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Spanish Resources

Many Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington resources and forms are available in Spanish, including—but certainly not limited to—the resources below. Newly translated materials are available frequently. For more information and additional resources, please visit girlscoutsofsw.org.

Spanish	English
Membresía para niñas o adultos	Girl Scout Membership – Girl & Adult
Información Fundamental Para Voluntarios	Volunteer Essentials & Safety Training Module
Adiestramiento de finanzas de tropa	Troop Finance Volunteer Training Module
Conceptos básicos para voluntarios	Volunteer Essentials

Políticas y procedimientos para voluntarios	
del consejo	Volunteer Policies & Procedures
Guía familiar para el programa de galletas	Girl Scout Cookie Program Family Guide
Compromiso de ética	Girl Scout Cookie Program Ethics Pledge
Preguntas para prepararse	Summer Camp Readiness Quiz

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 council staff to ask about ongoing learning opportunities that will help you grow your skills and confidence.

gsLearn

gsLearn is a movement-wide online learning platform that houses online, self-paced, required and supplemental training opportunities for adults in all involvement levels of Girl Scouts.

New volunteers will be able to access their required online training through gsLearn, and seasoned volunteers will find additional learning opportunities such as virtual meeting tutorials, service team member training, and leadership development classes. Keep an eye out for more new content added frequently by both GSUSA and Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington.

Other features of gsLearn:

- Free and accessible on any device, with complete user control so you can start, pause, and come back to courses at your own convenience.
- Achievement list of your complete training record, both online and in person. (If you do not see a training listed that you have taken since 2010, please contact answers@girlscoutsosw.org).
- Printable completion certificates for most Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington trainings.
- CPR/First Aid certification submission.
- Learning paths curated for your specific volunteer role.

Getting Started with gsLearn

1. If you are a registered adult member with a background check and a valid email, you can access gsLearn by logging into My GS in the upper right-hand corner of any page at girlscoutsosw.org. If you are not a current volunteer, you can still access the site, but it may take up to 30 minutes for you to start seeing available courses.
2. After logging in to My GS, you'll see three options: Volunteer Toolkit, Member Profile, and GS Learn. Click on the third green box to enter gsLearn.
3. Your homepage contains courses and learning paths that have been assigned to you, as well as any in-progress courses.
4. To view additional optional courses and learning paths, click on "Content Library" in the left navigation bar.
5. In the Content Library, you can either search for specific content or scroll down to see all of the courses and learning paths (collections of courses) available to you. You can also narrow down the results with the options to the left of the list.

Online Training Requirements

Along with the launch of gsLearn, GSUSA released a suite of new volunteer training. With the addition of these new online courses, training requirements for Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington volunteers have been altered, and may continue to be updated throughout the 2021-22 membership year. One of these changes is that GS 101 will no longer appear as a training requirement for any Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington volunteer.

All required online volunteer training will be viewable to volunteers on their gsLearn homepage. When volunteers are assigned to a volunteer role in gsLearn, the required training for that role will appear on the volunteer's home page.

The chart in the Volunteer Learning section of [*Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Council Volunteer Policies and Procedures*](#) displays the general online training requirements by volunteer position.

Live Training Opportunities

In addition to the online training progression, Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington offers a compliment of additional live in-person training. Troops are required to have one attending adult with the required training in order to participate in specific activities, and all troop leaders are required to take Girl Scouts Inside and Out, Part 1 within three months of receiving their troop number.

For a full breakdown of all Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington in-person trainings, check out the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington [Training page](#).

For a complete breakdown of training requirements based on volunteer role or activity type, check out [*Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Council Volunteer Policies and Procedures*](#).

Registering For Live Training

All live council training available can be found at girlscoutsosw.org/events. All volunteers attending a training, regardless of where the training takes place, must register online.

To Register for a Training:

1. Go to girlscoutsosw.org
2. Click on the "Events" tab.
3. Use the search function to find the desired training. Be sure to confirm the date, time and location, as several of the same training may be happening on the same day.
4. Click Register Now
5. Follow the on-screen prompts to complete the registration process.

If you experience trouble registering for a training online, contact answers@girlscoutsosw.org.

Knowing How Much You're Appreciated

What begins with Girl Scouts speaking up at a troop meeting can go all the way to speaking in front of their city council for a cause they champion—and they'll have your support to thank for that. Your volunteer role makes a powerful difference. Thank you for all you do.

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, be sure to let your council support team know how you'd like to be a part of girls' lives in the future—whether in the same position or in other, flexible ways. 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.

Interested in nominating a volunteer for a national or council award? Check out the volunteer recognition criteria and processes at <https://www.girlscoutsosw.org/en/for-volunteers/adult-awards.html>.

Volunteer Appreciation Month

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

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 certain risks or challenges for Girl Scouts. For this reason, councils are encouraged to avoid joint recruiting and/or joint participation in community events or activities.

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 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.

Protecting Use of Girl Scout Materials

Girl Scout materials are intended for the exclusive use of Girl Scouts and are protected as the intellectual property of Girl Scouts of the USA. Materials include but are not limited to: Girl Scout logo, tag lines, and/or program and badge requirements.

Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Fall Product Program

Learning to think like an entrepreneur? Developing business smarts? Getting to know customers and building lasting relationships? There's so much more to that box of Thin Mints®.

Whether they participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program or the Girl Scout Fall Product Program (or both!), everything your Girl Scouts learn prepares them to take on the world. Plus, Girl Scout Cookie proceeds stay local in your community to power amazing year-round experiences—experiences that broaden their worlds and spark their sense of wonder.

Five Essential Skills

Girl Scouts develop five essential skills through the Girl Scout Cookie Program—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.

But building their business know-how isn't just tied to the cookies themselves! Girl Scouts at any level can continue honing their entrepreneurial skills by earning the [Cookie Business badges](#), [Cookie Entrepreneur Family pin](#), and the [Financial Literacy badges](#) year over year.

Before your cookie bosses open shop, be sure to check out these [helpful troop leader 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.
- Plan activities to help her earn cookie pins and badges
- Understand just how much your girls are capable of by grade level and [how their entrepreneurial skills progress](#).

Girl Scout Cookie History

What started with Girl Scouts selling home-baked cookies to raise money grew into enlisting professional bakers in 1936 to handle the growing demand—and the rest is history. Explore [Girl Scout Cookie History](#) to find out how cookies have helped build generations of female

entrepreneurs and leaders 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.

Your council will provide a breakdown of how cookie program proceeds support Girl Scout activities locally. 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 the [Cookies+ section](#) of the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington website 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.

Your Council'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, your council 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. Visit the [Cookies+ section](#) of the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington website 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 Girl Scouts of the USA to produce Girl Scout Cookies: [Little Brownie Bakers](#) and [ABC Bakers](#). You can also [Meet the Cookies](#) and find additional info on cookie

varieties, including nutritional details.

Councils also work with vendors to offer magazine subscriptions, nut and candy products, and more for the fall product program. These companies are [Ashdon Farms](#), [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 your council for more details.

Your Role

You play an exciting role in giving your Girl Scouts opportunities to practice the five skills as they learn how to think like entrepreneurs. Some of the things you'll do include:

- Get girls excited about the opportunities to support the troop (but allowing their 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 Scout's family](#) to ensure cookie season success, whatever that may look like for her. The [Creating Cookie Success](#) and [Coaching Your Budding Businesswoman](#) resources will help you build a positive partnership with girls and families, and the [Cookie Entrepreneur Family pin](#) is designed to help families support girls' growth at home.

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. Your local council has additional guidance and processes to market and ensure every booth is in a safe and appropriate location.

As your Girl Scouts 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

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 [troop leader resources](#) section of girlscoutcookies.org and in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

Communicate with Parents

Ensure that the parents/guardians of all girls participating in product sales are fully informed about the activity including the:

- Participation in product sales program training and/or meeting.
- Safety precautions in place.
- Need for appropriate clothing and/or supplies.
- Need for advance arrangements for all transportation and confirmation of these plans.
- Need for written permission from them in order for their daughter to participate.
- Location of designated sale areas, which are also communicated to the council.

Prepare for Emergencies

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

Arrange for Adult Supervision

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

Adults who oversee Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors must:

- Be aware of how, when and where the girls are selling products.
- Be on call when girls are participating in product sales.
- Be readily available to them should they need assistance.
- Help girls understand how to be safe in their surroundings, and always enforce the use of the buddy system.

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

Plan for Safeguarding Money

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

- Never walking around with large amounts of money.
- Keeping the cash box against a wall or behind a barrier of cookie boxes.
- Never keeping money at home or school.
- Giving cookie money to supervising adults, who will deposit the money as soon as possible.

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. Before girls use their Digital Cookie or Smart Cookie site, they should partner with their families to learn how to safely run their business online.

A few more online safety practices to keep in mind:

- The Girl Scout Cookie Program is a girl-led program, so online marketing and sales efforts should always be led by a Girl Scout, with the supervision of her parent or caregiver.
- Girl Scouts engaging in online sales and marketing must review and apply the [Digital Marketing Tips for Cookie Entrepreneurs and Their Families](#).
- Girls, volunteers and parents must review and adhere to the [Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge](#), the [Digital Cookie Pledge](#), the [Supplemental Safety Tips for Online Marketing](#), and Girl Scouts' [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for Computer and Internet Use and Cookie and Product Sales (with the exception that they may share beyond friends and family).
- Sales links should never be posted to resale sites (Craigslis, eBay, Facebook Marketplace etc.).
- Girls must adhere to all terms and conditions on Digital Cookie and Smart Cookie platforms. For copies of terms and conditions, please contact GSUSA, ABC, or M2 as needed.
- Girl Scouts of the USA reserves the right to remove or disable the link for any reason including violation of guidance, inventory fulfillment issues, safety issues, or if sales and marketing activity goes viral and otherwise creates unanticipated disruption.

Additionally, families, girls, and volunteers should contact and collaborate with their councils and Girl Scouts of the USA in advance on any national news media opportunities tied to girls online marketing and sales efforts.

The Buddy System

Using the buddy system, the troop is divided into teams of two. Each Girl Scout 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 Girl Scouts 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 council guidelines with regard to setting up, running, and taking down a booth.

Please check your local COVID-19 guidelines for any restrictions on booth locations and other safety considerations, or [consider a virtual cookie booth](#) or [virtual cookie rally](#) if it makes sense for your troop.

Create a great cookie booth experience for your Girl Scouts by:

- Using your best judgment in setting up cookie booths in locations that will be open, accessible, and safe for all Girl Scouts 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 Girl Scouts 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:

- A minimum of two volunteers (at least one of whom is a registered Girl Scout volunteer with the required background check) and one Girl Scout should be present at the booth at all times. With two or more volunteers, you’ll have adequate booth coverage if the girls need to be accompanied to the restroom.
- 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 or Smart 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 younger Girl Scouts 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, consult your council guidelines.

Troop Finances

With your guidance, your Girl Scouts will learn money skills that will serve them throughout their lives. Your Girl Scout troop will 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.

Remember that all funds collected, raised, earned, or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting belong to the troop and must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Funds are administered through the troop and do not belong to individuals.

Troop/Group Bank Accounts

Helping girls decide what they want to do, and coaching them as they earn and manage money to pursue their goals, is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE). With your guidance, your Girl Scout group will plan and finance its own activities while the girls learn valuable financial skills that serve them throughout their lives.

Girl Scout groups are funded by a share of money earned through council-sponsored product sale activities (such as Girl Scout Cookie activities), group money-earning activities (council-approved), and any dues your group may charge. This chapter gives you the ins and outs of establishing a group account and helping girls manage their group's finances and understand how to collaborate with sponsors and causes.

Because Girl Scout troops earn and spend money, every troop/group needs to have a bank account. If you are taking over an existing group, you may inherit an existing checking account, but if you are starting a new group, you'll want to work with your service unit treasure or council treasurer liaison to open a new account as soon as possible. All troops/groups must have an open bank account before they can be approved to participate in any money earning or product programs.

Keep in mind the following when working with troop funds:

- All money in the troop or group's account belongs to the girls, and should be treated as such.
- Receipts and records are required for all use of group funds. They must be kept for at least two years plus the current year and may be requested at any time by Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington.
- Commingling of personal funds with group funds is never allowed.
- Avoid withdrawing cash from the group account. Debit cards are the preferred method of payment for groups and troops because of the ease of record keeping. Checks may also be used by the troop if needed. If it is absolutely necessary to carry group cash, receipts must be turned in and kept with the group records showing the amount of cash withdrawn from the account, and how it was spent. Excess cash must then be deposited into the group account when the event is over.

Please review the Group Finance section of the [Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Council](#)

[Volunteer Policies and Procedures](#) for additional requirements and processes for opening bank accounts under the bank account section.

Disbanding/Merging Troops and Unused Troop Funds

Decisions on spending and/or donating the remaining funds of a disbanding or merging troop must always be girl-led. The group may decide to spend any portion of the remaining funds on a final trip, troop activity, a Girl Scout program such as camp, or make a donation to another troop, established charity, or nonprofit of their choice. Remaining funds can be submitted to Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington and will be held for one year. See [Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Council Volunteer Policies and Procedures](#) for more information.

If the troop does not spend all funds, the girls may elect to send a portion of the remaining funds to troops the girls will be joining. No amount of remaining funds may be given directly to girls, parents, or guardians. This includes any form of cash, check, or cash equivalents such as gift cards.

All transactions and any use of troop funds must be finished while girls and volunteers have current memberships, prior to disbanding. At the time of disbanding, follow the disband procedure in [Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Council Volunteer Policies and Procedures](#).

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 your council. All girl members are eligible to participate in two council-sponsored product program activities each year with volunteer supervision: the cookie program and one other council-authorized product program. 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 program activities and group money-earning projects is based upon the following:

- Voluntary participation
- Written permission of each girl's parent or guardian
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed
- An understanding that money earning should not exceed what the group needs to support 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.

- All rewards earned by girls through the product program activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel, and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).
- Rewards are based on sales ranges set by councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
- Troops are encouraged to participate in council product programs as their primary money-earning activity; any group money earning shouldn't compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or other council product programs.
- Obtain written approval from your council before a group money-earning event; most councils ask that you submit a request for approval.
- 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' 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 program donation programs.
- 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.
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the ages and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- 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 programs. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group according to council procedures.

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 programs 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 program 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 programs—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 an application for approval from your council 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 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.

Girl Scout Daisies
The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and does all group budgeting.
Parents/guardians may decide they will contribute to the cost of activities.
Girls can participate in Girl Scout Cookie activities and other council-sponsored product programs.
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.
Girls should be given the opportunity to practice identifying money and counting back change with an adult during each transaction.

Girl Scout Brownies
The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and shares some of the group- budgeting responsibilities.
Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on) with guidance from their volunteer(s).
Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.
Girls may decide to pay dues to contribute to the cost of activities.
Girl Scout Brownies

Girl Scout Juniors
The group volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.
Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.
Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer selected by the girls.
Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group based on their plans and income from the group dues.

Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.

Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Bronze Award, if they are pursuing it.

Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

Girls estimate costs based on plans.

Girls determine the amount of group dues, if any, and the scope of money-earning projects.

Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.

Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning projects.

Girls budget for extended travel, Take Action projects, and leadership projects.

Girls may be involved in seeking donations for Take Action projects with council approval.

Girls keep their own financial records and give reports to parents and group volunteers.

Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Silver or Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.

Working with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Local sponsors can help councils power innovative programs for Girl Scouts. 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 your council, which can give you guidance on the availability of sponsors, recruiting guidelines, and any council policies or practices that must be followed. Your council may already have relationships with certain organizations or may know of some reasons **not** to collaborate with certain organizations. When collaborating with any other organization, keep these additional guidelines in mind:

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 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.

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.

What is the difference between Money-Earning and Adult Fundraising?

“Money-earning” refers to budgeted activities that are planned and carried out by girls in partnership with adults to earn money for the troop/group treasury. Money-earning activities have program value for girls with “earning” being the operative word. The girls provide products or services in exchange for payment. Adult fundraising refers to a relationship between a Girl Scout volunteer and a donor; one in which the donor lends support to the troop/group in the form of money or products/services to benefit the troop/group’s budgeted activity, and receives a tax deduction, as allowable by law. Fundraising is the responsibility of adult members. Girls are not allowed to solicit funds.

Safety in Girl Scouting

The emotional and physical safety and well-being of Girl Scouts is our top priority. [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) outlines the Safety Standards and Guidelines used in Girl Scouting, which apply to all Girl Scout activities.

For current COVID-19 guidelines, check Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington's [Girl Scouts Together](#).

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.

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 Girl Scouts of the USA 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 Girl Scouts 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 your council is required before girls participate in a specific activity.

Responsibilities of Parents and Caregivers

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

- Provide permission for their girls to participate in Girl Scouting as well as provide additional consent for activities that take place outside the scheduled meeting place. This can include such activities as: product sales, including Digital Cookie; day/overnight travel; the use of special equipment; or sensitive issues.
- Make provisions for their daughters to get to and from meeting places or other designated sites in a safe and timely manner, and inform you if someone other than a parent or guardian will drop off or pick up their child.
- Provide their girls with appropriate clothing and equipment for activities, or contact group/troop leadership before the activity to find sources for the necessary clothing and

equipment.

- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines and encourage their girls to do the same.
- Assist you in planning and carrying out program activities as safely as possible.
- Participate in parent/guardian meetings.
- Understand what appropriate behavior is for their daughters, as determined by the council and you.
- Assist volunteers if their girls have special needs or abilities and their help is solicited.

Responsibilities of Girls

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

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

Emergency Procedures

Although we always hope the worst never happens, all volunteers must be prepared to observe council procedures for handling accidents and fatalities. At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the injured person. Follow established council procedures for obtaining medical assistance and immediately reporting the emergency. To do this, you must always have on hand the names and telephone numbers of council staff, parents/guardians and emergency services such as the police, fire department or hospital. Use the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Emergency Blue Card (obtainable at any council service center) to report any incidents to the 24-hour emergency service. Always call 911 first for immediate help.

Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington procedures to be followed in the event of a serious accident, emergency or fatality:

1. First adult: Give priority attention to providing care for the injured person.
2. Second adult: Call 911 to secure police, ambulance, fire, etc.
3. Call the Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington 24-hour emergency number: **800-626-6543**.
4. Give YOUR name, troop number, exact location and phone number where you can be reached.
5. Stay by the phone until you receive a return call from a Girl Scout representative. That individual will guide you and secure additional assistance as needed. If you cannot stay by the phone, leave all important information with the answering service.
6. Work with emergency personnel. Refer all media inquiries (press, radio, TV) to Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington. Do not speak to the media.

Emergency 24-hour Answering Service: **800-626-6543**.

After receiving a report of an accident, council staff will immediately arrange for additional assistance at the scene, if needed, and will notify parents/guardians, as appropriate. If a Girl Scout needs emergency medical care as the result of an accident or injury, first contact emergency medical services, and then follow council procedures for accidents and incidents. Your adherence to these procedures is critical, especially with regard to notifying parents or guardians. If the media is involved, let council-designated staff discuss the incident with media representatives.

In the event of a fatality or other serious accident, the police must be notified and a responsible adult must remain at the scene at all times. In the case of a fatality, do not disturb the victim or surroundings and follow police instructions. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the police, Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

Emergency Care

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

- **Know what to report.**
- **Establish and practice procedures for weather emergencies.** Know the type of extreme weather to expect in your area (e.g. tornadoes, hurricanes and lightning). Please consult with Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington for the most relevant information for you to share with girls.
- **Establish and practice procedures for such circumstances as fire evacuation, lost persons and building-security issues.** Every girl and adult must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the girls, with the help of a fire department representative, should design a fire evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group.
- **Assemble a well-stocked first aid kit that is always accessible.** First aid administered in the first few minutes can make a significant difference in the severity of an injury. In an emergency, secure professional medical assistance as soon as possible, normally by calling 911, and then administer first aid, if appropriately trained.

First Aiders

A first aider is an adult volunteer with a current, Girl Scout-approved certification in First Aid & CPR/AED for adults and children. Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington accepts certifications from most certifying bodies as long as an in-person skills test is part of the certification process. Inclusion of child CPR must be indicated on the documentation from the course and submitted to Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington. If, through the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, or American Heart Association, you have a chance to be fully trained in first aid and CPR, doing so may make your activity planning go a little more smoothly.

A child and adult trained volunteer is not required for regular troop/group meetings, however all activities outlined in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) require a first aider with certification to be present.

Since activities can take place in a variety of locations, the presence of a first aider and the qualifications they need to have are based on the remoteness of the activity. For example, if at any point on your outing you are either without cell service or it would take 30 minutes or longer for an ambulance (emergency medical services, EMS) to reach your location, Wilderness First Aid certification is required.

Access to EMS	Minimum Level of First Aid
Less than 30 minutes	Current certification in First Aid/CPR & AED for adults and children.
More than 30 minutes	Current certification in Wilderness First Aid (WFA) or Wilderness First Responder (WFR).*
*Although a WFR is not required, it is strongly recommended when traveling with groups in areas that are greater than 30 minutes from EMS.	

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

Note: The presence of a first aider is required at overnight camp. For large events—200 people or more—there should be one first aider for every 200 participants. The following healthcare providers may also serve as first aiders: physician; physician’s assistant; nurse practitioner; registered nurse; licensed practical nurse; paramedic; military medic; and emergency medical technician. Your current certification or license must be on file with GSOSW, and indicate you are available to administer first aid and CPR to both adults and children. Please use the certification submission course in gsLearn to submit your certifications.

Any overnight activity also requires a first aid/CPR-trained adult in attendance. Please refer to the travel section of the [Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington Council Volunteer Policies and Procedures](#) for further information.

First Aid Kits

Make sure a general first aid kit is available at your group meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity (including transportation to and from the activity). Please be aware that you may need to provide this kit if one is not readily available at your meeting place. The Red Cross offers a list of potential items in its Anatomy of a First Aid Kit (<http://www.redcross.org/prepare/location/home-family/get-kit/anatomy>). Please note that the Red Cross’s suggested list includes aspirin, which you may not be at liberty to give to girls without direct caregiver/parent/guardian permission.

Knowing How Many Volunteers You Need

From camping weekends to cookie booths, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure their Girl Scouts 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 Girl Scouts; councils may also establish maximums due to size or cost restrictions, so be sure to check with them as you plan your activity.

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