

New Leader Guidebook



Welcome to Girl Scouts—we’re so glad you’ve joined us and we’re thrilled you’re embarking on this fun and exciting journey! You are integral to building the next generation of strong, confident girls and we want to make sure we’re here for you every step of the way.

As a CEO, mom, and troop leader myself, I know life can get busy! Thank you for volunteering as a Girl Scout troop leader. You truly are a superhero, and your power is making a difference in the lives of girls! Whether you were a Girl Scout yourself or this is your first introduction to our organization, we hope this guidebook gives you the information you need to have a great experience—for yourself AND for the girls in your troop!

Inside, you’ll find an introduction to the world of Girl Scouts—from setting up your troop, to hosting meetings, to preparing for all of the different kinds of adventures you’ll take together (and some nitty-gritty procedure tips along the way). There’s no way to cover everything you might need to know your first year in the following pages, but have heart in knowing that there is no “right” or “wrong” way to lead your troop! Spend quality time with the girls. Guide them, keep them safe, and have some fun. The rest will fall into place over time.

You’ll learn lots more about your Girl Scout resources and contacts throughout this guide, but always remember that support is just a call, click, or email away! Give us a call at 800-342-8389, visit us at girlscoutsiowa.org, or email us at info@gsiowa.org. We always love hearing from you!

Yours in Girl Scouting,



Beth Shelton, CEO



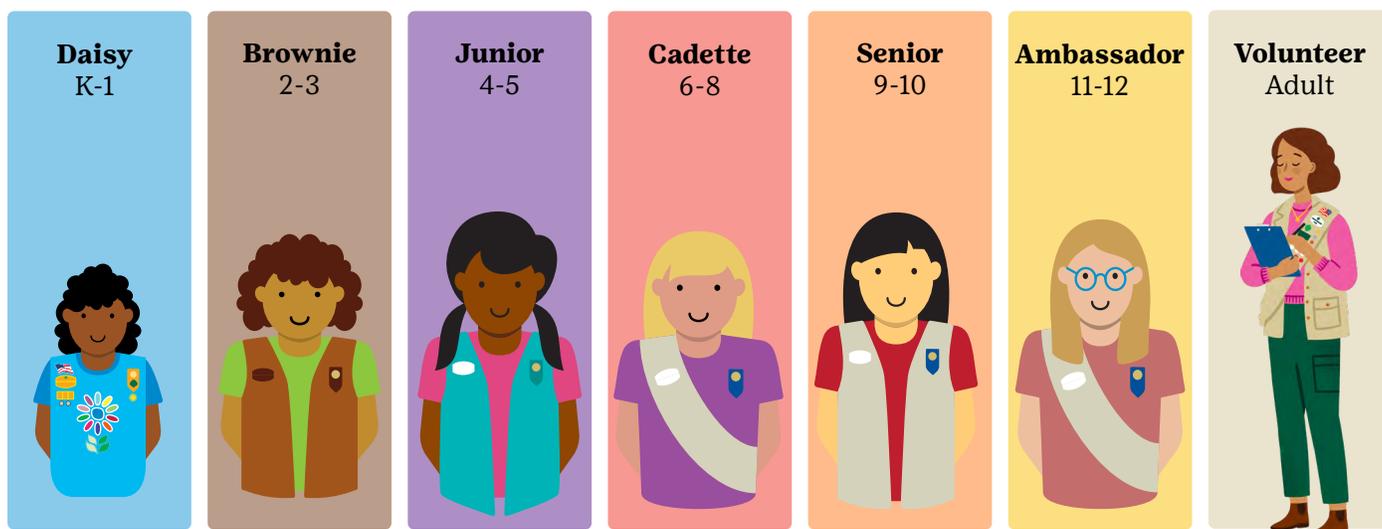
Bookmark these resources—they’ll be helpful for your entire Girl Scout journey!

RESOURCE	HOW TO FIND IT
<p>Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa website <i>Start here to log in to view troop information and online training. Pro-tip: Be sure to check out the events section of our website where you can find GSGI-led programs and events, and partner events through our Community Hub.</i></p>	<p>girlscoutsiowa.org <i>Click on the “myGS” link in the upper right corner for troop information, the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), and online training (gsLearn)</i></p>
<p>The Bridge <i>Your one-stop-shop for volunteer tools and information.</i></p>	<p>gsgibridge.com</p>
<p>Official Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa Facebook Leaders Group <i>Join other leaders to share ideas, celebrations, Girl Scout knowledge, and more.</i></p>	<p>girlscoutsiowa.org/GSGILeaders</p>
<p>GSGI Staff <i>We’re here to help you!</i></p>	<p>Phone: 800-342-8389 Email: info@gsiowa.org gsgibridge.com/meet-your-team</p>
<p>Award, Badge, and Journey Info <i>Check out this page to learn all about what your troop can earn!</i></p>	<p>girlscoutsiowa.org/gsawards</p>
<p>Parent Meeting Guide <i>Find tips for holding your first parent meeting here!</i></p>	<p>gsgibridge.com/first-parent-meeting</p>

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GIRL SCOUT LEVELS



GIRL SCOUT STRUCTURE

Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa serves nearly 9,000 girls and 4,000 adults in 67 counties in Iowa, two counties in South Dakota, and one county in Nebraska.

At Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa, it is our mission to show girls that they have the power to have a positive effect on not just their community, but the world. With the support and essential leadership skills that Girl Scouting provides, girls are empowered to truly aim for the stars. Whether it means pursuing her dream of being the first female President, or starting her own animal shelter, if she dreams it, she can do it. And together, we can help her get there.

MEMBERS

Members are girls, adult volunteers (like you!), and lifetime Girl Scouts who are joined together in the pursuit of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Members may be girls in troops, or may participate on their own—they're known as Juliettes.

TROOPS

Troops are the most common way girls participate in Girl Scouts. Troops are led by volunteers (often parents/guardians, friends, or family members). The average troop size is 8-10 girls, but we have troops with 20 girls—or more! Troops allow girls to work as a team and build lasting friendships.

SERVICE UNITS

Our council is made up of about 100 service units. Service units are comprised of volunteers and girl members in an immediate geographic area. These service units are led by experienced individuals who support leaders, troops, and individual members. You may hear from your service unit volunteers regarding events, trainings, cookies, and much more!

GIRL SCOUTS OF GREATER IOWA (GSGI)

Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa is one of 112 councils in the U.S. Our council includes nearly 11,000 girls in the western 2/3 of Iowa, as well as 2 counties in South Dakota and one in Nebraska. Our work is supported by more than 3,500 volunteers—including YOU! We get to know each volunteer as you and your troop ask questions, participate in programs and events, connect with us on social media, and more.

GIRL SCOUTS OF THE U.S.A. (GSUSA)

Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. (commonly referred to as GSUSA) is the national organization to which Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa belongs. Originally founded by Juliette Gordon Low in 1912, GSUSA now serves 2.6 million girls and adults. GSUSA is comprised of 112 Girl Scout councils in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

THE WORLD ASSOCIATION OF GIRL GUIDES AND GIRL SCOUTS (W.A.G.G.G.S.)

W.A.G.G.G.S. (The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts) is a 146-member international organization whose mission is “to inspire girls and young women to reach their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world.” Girl Scouts of the USA is a member.

WAYS TO VOLUNTEER

There are many different ways that adults can provide the behind-the-scenes support that makes it possible for girls to make amazing new memories at Girl Scouts. No matter what an adult chooses, volunteering with Girl Scouts is flexible and fun.

Adult Members are adults who choose to support Girl Scouts by joining the organization. For the safety of our volunteers and girls, adult members are not listed on any troop or service unit rosters unless they have selected a volunteer role and completed a background check.

TROOPS

Troop Leaders (or Co-Leaders) work with other enthusiastic people as a team to guide girls in building leadership skills and having fun. A successful troop leader will try new things with the girls, commit 5-10 hours per month, and hold 1-3 monthly meetings.

Troop Support Volunteers work regularly with the troop leaders on tasks such as assisting with field trips, managing troop records, coordinating product programs, or helping with general meeting activities. We encourage all troops to build your support network with friends and family!

Troop Product Managers (TPMs) oversee the Girl Scout Cookie and/or Fall Product Program for a troop—including hosting a kick-off meeting for girls and their parents/guardians, collecting money and forms, and submitting the final orders online. The TPM may also be a troop leader—or this is also a chance for another volunteer to step up and help out!

Troop First Aid/CPR Support (sometimes called Troop First Aider) is an adult volunteer certified in First Aid and CPR, who is responsible for the troop's safety while away from the regular meeting location. Your Troop First Aider may take a certification course offered by GSGL, or agencies such as the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, or American Heart Association. Healthcare providers may also serve as first-aiders, including physicians, physician's assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses, paramedics, military medics, and emergency medical technicians.

SERVICE UNITS

Think of service units as all the Girl Scouts within a specific geographic area—all volunteers, troops, and girls there. Service unit team members and troop representatives may meet several times throughout the year to share ideas, receive training, and talk about important announcements. By now, you've likely heard from your service unit, or will soon at a leader meeting. If not, let us know and we'll get you connected!

Some service units are very well established and even have committees that include additional roles than those listed below. If you're interested in volunteering with your service unit, or want to help make your service unit more established in your geographical area, we are here to help! Connect with your Volunteer Experience Manager (VEM) and they will get you set up with the resources you need.

The **Service Unit Manager (SUM)** leads the service unit, in collaboration with council staff. They focus on growth and support of girl and adult membership, through programs, activities, and communication.

The **Service Unit Product Chair (SUPC)** coordinates the Fall Product Program and Girl Scout Cookie Program in your service unit, assisting Troop Product Managers with orders and distribution, as well as encouraging participation.

WHERE TO START AS A TROOP LEADER

Being a troop leader is a very important job! You will serve as a role model for the girls in your troop, leading and inspiring them to becoming tomorrow's leaders. To do that, we at Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa (GSGI) want to make sure you have the support you need to be successful and lead like a Girl Scout!

While it may seem like there is a lot to do as a troop leader, there are a few things we recommend taking care of first that will set you up for success:

- **Set-up your meeting day, time, frequency, and location.** For many families, Girl Scouts is a year-round activity. That usually means troop meetings throughout the school year, and camp during the summer. Schedule your troop meetings around your availability.
 - Troops meet at many locations, including schools, churches, and local community centers. The meeting space should have room to accommodate your entire troop (plus occasional guests), and should ideally be a consistent location where you can meet as a troop throughout the whole year. Most troops meet twice a month for about an hour. When choosing a meeting time, you may also want to consider if girls will need a snack during meetings!
 - Once you have your meeting info finalized, **submit your troop meeting information to the Troop Catalog Update Form** (girlscoutsowa.org/forms) or contact us at info@gsiowa.org.
- **Contact your Girl Scout families.** New Girl Scouts are anxious to get started once they join, and they will be thrilled to hear from you! You will receive an email notification from us when a girl or volunteer has joined your troop. We recommend reaching out to your new troop members to introduce yourself within the first few days of receiving notice. You can view your troop roster and contact information any time on myGS (mygs.girlscouts.org).
 - **Pro-tip:** The email you used for your volunteer registration is your myGS username. If it's your first-time logging in, you will need to select "Forgot Password" to create a password!
- **Set-up and open your troop bank account.** The Bridge is a great online volunteer resource where you can find all of the information you will need during your time as a Girl Scout volunteer. Check out gsgibridge.com/bank-accounts for all the details you'll need to open your troop bank account.
- **Plan and host your first meeting!** Use your Troop Welcome Kit to get started planning your first meeting. Don't worry, we don't expect you to be a pro right away; we'll be checking in with you over the next few months to help you feel prepared and to provide you with additional kits to use with your troop. What is a Troop Welcome Kit? GSGI provides all new troops with three Troop Welcome Kits throughout your first year as a new troop! These kits have information to help you as troop leader as well as activities and supplies to get you started earning badges and having fun. If your troop did not receive your first Troop Welcome Kit, please contact us at info@gsiowa.org so we can get you started with this program.
- Be sure to **collect a completed Troop Activities Year Round Permission Form** for each girl in the troop (You can print copies for your troop at gsgibridge.org/safety.) and confirm each girl has completed her membership registration!
- **The most important thing** is to build relationships with your Girl Scouts and create positive experiences for them! Girl Scout badges, fun patches, and Journeys are a great way for a girl to explore and learn new skills, with your support as her troop leader.
- If you have additional troop support volunteers, make sure to reach out to them as you get started. **You DON'T have to do everything yourself!** Rely on other volunteers for support and as you get to know your families, don't be afraid to recruit parents/guardians to help as well!

WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

There are tons of volunteer resources available online, but we know sometimes it helps to be able to ask a question rather than look for an answer—that's where we come in! You can contact the GSGI customer care team during regular office hours by calling 800-342-8389 or emailing info@gsiowa.org.

Not sure when we're open? Check out our Hours & Locations page for up-to-date info on seasonal hours and closures at girlscoutsiowa.org/visitus.

There are also some specific staff members dedicated to helping you succeed! Your Volunteer Experience Manager (VEM) is your go-to person as a volunteer, and you can check out your whole support team on The Bridge (gsgibridge.com/meet-your-team).

We want to make sure you have all the tools you need to feel prepared as a new leader, so we're continually working on training opportunities to support you. Check out available training on gsLearn, our online training portal. Learn more about our training opportunities like gsLearn on The Bridge (gsgibridge.com/training).

Thank you for all you're doing to prepare for your troop's first year! You will truly make a difference for the Girl Scouts you will lead.



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A GIRL SCOUT

THE GIRL SCOUT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

Girl Scouts prepare for fun, friendship, and new adventures while making the world a better place. Girl Scouts look at our world and take action to change it for the better. They make friends, challenge themselves with new experiences, write their own stories, and develop the skills and confidence to say, “I know I can do this!”

So how do we do it? It’s all part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, and it’s what makes Girl Scouting a unique experience for girls.



GIRL-LED

Girl Scouts follow their own lead, no matter their age. From selecting the badges they’ll pursue to how they’ll organize an activity, Girl Scouts have the chance to follow their dreams and grow their skills—and the confidence that comes with that.



LEARNING BY DOING

Hands-on activities are fun for Girl Scouts of any age, but they also help them feel empowered to shape their own experience. Girl Scouts unlock their “I got this” attitude as they discover they can always dust themselves off and try again when things don’t go according to plan.



COOPERATIVE LEARNING

There’s power in having a tight-knit group of friends who will learn with you, grow with you, and always cheer you on. Girl Scouts see firsthand that teamwork, respect, and collaboration can fuel them through any challenge that comes their way.

By participating in fun activities through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, Girl Scouts:



DISCOVER

They’ll find out who they are, what they care about, and how to best use their unique talents.



CONNECT

They’ll collaborate with others, both locally and globally, to learn and expand their horizons.



TAKE ACTION

They’ll do what Girl Scouts always do: make the world a better place.

With the help of supportive adults and troop leaders who help bring these three unique processes to life, girls try new things, share their full selves, and see how good it feels to lead from the heart.

A NOTE ON INCLUSIVITY

Girl Scouts is inclusive, meaning we embrace girls of all abilities, backgrounds, and heritage, with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion. Inclusion is about belonging, about all girls being offered the same opportunities, about respect and dignity, and about honoring the uniqueness of and differences among us all.

You're accepting and inclusive when you:

- Welcome each girl and focus on building community.
- Provide a safe and socially-comfortable environment for girls.
- Teach respect for, understanding of, and dignity toward all girls and their families.
- Actively reach out to girls and families who are traditionally excluded or marginalized.

GIRL SCOUT HISTORY

Girl Scouts is over 2.5 million strong—1.7 million girls and 750,000 adults who believe girls can change the world. Our council, Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa (GSGI), receives a charter from Girl Scouts of the United States of America (you'll commonly hear it referred to as GSUSA). GSUSA is a member of the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (W.A.G.G.G.S.), which has member organizations in 150 countries, with a mission to inspire girls and young women to reach their fullest potential as responsible citizens of the world.

It began over 100 years ago with one woman, Girl Scouts' founder Juliette Gordon "Daisy" Low, who believed in the power of every girl. In 1912, Juliette began the first Girl Scout troop to provide an environment to prepare girls to meet their world with courage, confidence, and character. This first troop of 18 girls played basketball, hiked, camped, swam, and learned about the world around them.

Today we continue the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

We're the preeminent leadership development organization for girls. With programs for girls from coast to coast and across the globe, Girl Scouts offers every girl a chance to do something amazing.



WHO WAS JULIETTE GORDON LOW?

Juliette was born on October 31, 1860, which we celebrate yearly as Founder's Day. She was a compassionate, curious, and independent woman and was interested in nature, art, animals, and athletics. Throughout her childhood and young adulthood, she experienced several ear injuries. This contributed to an almost complete loss of hearing for the rest of her life. These experiences and interests played a strong role in the development of the ideals and values of Girl Scouts.

GIRL SCOUT TRADITIONS

MOTTO AND SLOGAN

The Girl Scout motto is Be prepared. In the 1947 Girl Scout Handbook, the motto was explained this way: “A Girl Scout is ready to help out wherever she is needed. Willingness to serve is not enough; you must know how to do the job well, even in an emergency.” The same holds true today.

The Girl Scout slogan, which has been used since 1912, is “Do a good turn daily”. Take time to teach girls the slogan—it is a reminder of the many ways girls can contribute positively to the lives of others.

UNIFORMS

Girl Scouts wear uniforms in ceremonies, when officially representing Girl Scouts, and when they want to show their Girl Scout pride. Official GSUSA badges are earned by completing steps, and are worn on the front of the vest or sash. Fun patches are available for attending events or participating in special activities and should be placed on the back of the vest or sash.

SIGN & HANDSHAKE

Raise three fingers of the right hand with the thumb holding down the pinky. The three fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise. Girls give the sign when they say the Promise or the Girl Scout Law.

The Girl Scout handshake is made by shaking hands with the left hand and making the Girl Scout sign with the right.

The left hand is nearest to the heart and signifies friendship.



SPECIAL DAYS IN GIRL SCOUTING

Juliette Gordon Low’s birthday or Founder’s Day, October 31, marks the birth in 1860 of Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia.

World Thinking Day, February 22 is a day of international friendship that has been celebrated by Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world since 1926.

Girl Scout Week is celebrated each year during the week of March 12, the date of the very first Girl Scout meeting in 1912. Girl Scout Week always starts on Sunday and ends on Saturday.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE

This circle represents the unbroken chain of friendship among Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world, and is often used to close troop meetings.

Directions: Start in a circle. Everyone should cross their arms right over left and then hold hands.

Discuss the purpose and the “rules” of the squeeze: “We are passing our friendship on to the next girl in the form of a gentle squeeze, reminding us that we are all connected to each other. There will be no hard squeezes and no fake squeezes.”

Anyone can start the squeeze. You can do it in silence, or you can have each person say something when it is their turn. It helps to have girls put their right foot in the circle once they have received their squeeze. For extra fun, after everyone has squeezed and on a 1-2-3 count, while still holding hands, each person lifts their crossed arms over their heads at once and turns facing outside of the circle, uncrossing their hands and bringing them down by their sides. Then they can release their hands.

GIRL SCOUT MISSION, PROMISE, AND LAW

Some troops choose to be more formal and others are more relaxed when it comes to Girl Scout traditions. It's customary to begin or end a Girl Scout troop meeting by reciting the Girl Scout Promise and Law while making the Girl Scout sign.



GIRL SCOUT MISSION

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

GIRL SCOUT PROMISE

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

GIRL SCOUT LAW

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,
and to
respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place, and
be a sister to every Girl Scout.

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

WHAT GIRLS CAN DO

There really is no limit to what Girl Scouts can accomplish—but badges and Journeys are some of the main ways that girls build their Girl Scout experience.

BADGES

When a girl earns a badge, it represents that she's learned a new skill. Topics of badges range from outdoor skills to civic engagement—you name it, there's a badge for it! Badges are worn on the front of the girl's uniform. Daisy Girl Scouts (grades K-1) earn special “petals” to wear on their uniforms.

Each “step” to complete a badge has several options for activities that qualify for completing it. Read through all of the different activities, and decide on which activities are going to be performed for the badge. You'll have choices to make all the way through!

Help girls plan and complete the required number of activities for each section. Once your troop has completed all the steps, you've earned your badge! You can either purchase and distribute badges as you go along with your year, or give girls all of the badges they earned at the end of the year in a special ceremony.

Girl Scout badges are designed to expose girls to new hobbies, skills, and fun activities. The emphasis is on trying new experiences, and not on getting the most badges!

JOURNEYS

Sometimes the journey is more important than the destination! In a Girl Scout Journey, leaders support girls through a series of activities, where together they will identify a problem, come up with a solution, and take action. Girls then earn Journey Awards that will go on the front of the uniform.

FUN PATCHES

Think of fun patches as collecting memories in Girl Scouts. They're often a part of the fun activities you can do in Girl Scouts without the requirements of official badges. On our “Girl Scouts at Home” page (under Events on our website), there are also some options for patch programs, where girls can earn patches by completing some requirements—but less than official badges. Patches are always worn on the back of the vest or sash.

HIGHEST AWARDS

There are three separate awards that Girl Scouts can earn—the Girl Scout Gold, Silver, and Bronze Awards! Girls can start building the foundation needed to earn these rewards even as Daisy Girl Scouts, but will start planning and earning these awards in grade four and up.

As Junior Girl Scouts, they can team up with other girls to make a difference in their community to earn their Bronze Award.

Cadettes earn their Silver Award by researching an issue, making a plan to address it, and then taking action to improve their community.

The highest award in Girl Scouting—the Gold Award—is earned by Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts. Girls earn this award by developing and carrying out lasting solutions to issues in their communities. Gold Award Girl Scouts truly are the world changers, rock stars, role models, and real-life heroes we all look up to. You can check out all the details on The Bridge (gsgibridge.com/highest-awards).

EVENTS

Check out the GSGI online events calendar for activities just for Girl Scouts! You can sign up your troop, or girls may attend events on their own. You won't want to miss annual events like our Cookie Kickoff celebrations or Girl Scout Day at the Capitol! You can also check out The Hub for other opportunities in communities across the council.

The Hub is an online resource for Girl Scout members, troops, and families to connect with our verified community program partners. With The Hub, you can find a full listing of community events, partner programs, and community service opportunities hosted by our community program partners. Girl Scout members can sign up for an event or contact a program partner to schedule an experience.

You can sign up for the Program Express—GSGI's event newsletter by visiting girlscoutsiowa.org/programexpress for additional information on upcoming events and activities!

CAMP

Learning in the outdoors is a special part of the Girl Scout experience, and we have amazing camp facilities and programs right here in Greater Iowa! Whether girls are looking to spend some time in the water or interested in taking a trail ride on horseback, we've got them covered! Summer camp is a BIG deal for Girl Scouts, but we also offer outdoor options throughout the year. Your troop can also plan a campout at one of our camp properties—or anywhere. You can find all information about camp on our website (girlscoutsiowa.org/camps)!

GIVE BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY

The girls in your troop may be eager to find ways to better their local communities. Giving back is always in season at Girl Scouts, so encourage your girls to harness that spirit of goodwill and bring their charitable intentions to life!

As they look for meaningful ways to contribute to their community, you can help sharpen their problem-solving skills and expand their definition of philanthropy by discussing community service and Take Action projects.

Community service projects make the world a better place right now. Whether your girls engage in a short-term community service project, like collecting toys for kids who live in shelters, or a long-term or recurring project, like weekly volunteer shifts at a soup kitchen, their work fills an immediate need in the community.

Take Action projects—also called service learning—take community service to the next level. Though the girls still identify areas in which they'd like to help their communities, a Take Action project addresses the root of an issue and creates a lasting effect. Something to consider: how will this continue to work after you have finished doing your part, as opposed to a service project that could be repeated several times but would end after the girls' involvement with it ends. You can also reference the Take Action Guide for Volunteers here (girlscoutsiowa.org/takeaction).

A community service project could be asking for canned food or non-perishable donations for a food bank, while a Take Action project would be setting up a program where you can get schools, individuals, or companies to regularly donate to the food bank and perhaps teach them about hunger. Helping girls understand the difference is part of your job as a troop leader! Note: Fundraising for other organizations (such as bell-ringing for Salvation Army, or advance ticket sales for athletics) is prohibited.

GIRL SCOUT SONGS

Singing is a huge part of the Girl Scout experience and is a great way to create sisterhood. Use songs as a time filler, a teaching opportunity for older girls working with younger troops, or a bonding experience for the troop. You'll find that every girl has her favorite.

Make New Friends

Make new friends, but keep the old.
One is silver and the other is gold.

A circle is round, it has no end.
That's how long I want to be your friend.

A fire burns bright, it warms the heart.
We've been friends from the very start.

I have a hand, and you have another.
Put them together and we have each other.

Silver is precious, gold is too.
I am precious and so are you.

You help me and I'll help you
and together we will see it through.

The sky is blue. The Earth is green
I can help to keep it clean.

Across the land, Across the sea
Friends forever we will always be.

Tip: Short on time or want to make things simpler for your younger Girl Scouts? Some troops only sing the first two verses.

Taps (with actions)

Day is done (wipe with right arm)
Gone the sun (wipe with left arm)
From the lakes, from the hills, from the sky
(point down, middle, and up)
All is well (put right hand on left elbow)
Safely rest (put left hand on right elbow)
God is nigh (slowly put both hands down)

Brownie Smile Song

I have something in my pocket
It belongs across my face
I keep it very close to me
In a most convenient place
I'm sure you couldn't guess it
If you guessed a long, long while
So I'll take it out and put it on
It's a GREAT BIG BROWNIE SMILE!

G for Generosity

She wears a G for generosity
She wears an I for interest too
She wears an R for real good sportsmanship
She wears an L for loyalty, for loyalty
She wears an S for her sincerity
She wears a C for courtesy
She wears an O U T for outdoor life, outdoor life
And that Girl Scout is ME



You can find many
songs (and their
actions!) on YouTube.

UNIFORMS

Girl Scouts wear uniforms in ceremonies, when officially representing Girl Scouts, and when they want to show their Girl Scout pride. We know girls LOVE acquiring patches, badges, and insignia for their uniforms, and this is definitely one of the most memorable pieces of Girl Scouts. Here are some basic tips:

- ▲ Sashes are worn from the right shoulder to the left hip.
- ▲ The insignia tab is worn on the left chest, over the heart.
- ▲ All unofficial awards go on the back of the uniform, including cookie, camp, and fun patches.
- ▲ Girl Scouts from each grade level have one official uniform item (a sash, vest, or tunic) to display badges, pins, awards, and other insignia. This item is required when you participate in ceremonies or officially represent Girl Scouts. You can wear your sash, vest, or tunic over official Girl Scout gear or over a white shirt and khaki pants or skirt. Depending on grade level, official uniform items may be blue, brown, green, or khaki.
- ▲ If you run out of space on the front of your uniform, you may place badges and awards on the back.
- ▲ Financial assistance is available for uniforms. Visit girlscoutsiowa.org for info!

Badges vs. patches...What's the difference? Official Girl Scouts of the USA badges are earned by completing steps and are worn on the front of the vest or sash. Fun patches are available for attending events or participating in special activities and should be placed on the back of the vest or sash.

Troop Crests: Some families have crests to show what they stand for. Well, Girl Scouts is like a family too! You and your troop can choose a crest to wear on your uniform. Be sure to talk about the symbol on each crest and choose the one you want your troop to stand for. Tip: Have your girls vote to make it a girl-led decision!



Our Girl Scout shop staff is awesome, and they understand how confusing finding all of the parts of a uniform can be! If you have any uniform questions, stop by one of our retail shops or contact our shop staff at 800-342-8389 and they will be able to answer any of your questions! You can also find specifics on each grade level's uniform on our website.

Visit any of our council shops (checkout the GSGI website for locations and hours at girlscoutsiowa.org/vistus) for all your troop needs!

Don't forget! You can shop online 24/7. Visit us at girlscoutsiowa.org/gsshop!

BADGE AND JOURNEY INFO

There really is no limit to what Girl Scouts can accomplish—but badges and Journeys are some of the main ways that girls build their Girl Scout experience.



BADGES

When a girl earns a badge, it represents that she's learned a new skill. Topics of badges range from outdoor skills to civic engagement— you name it, there's a badge for it! Badges are worn on the front of the girl's uniform. Daisy Girl Scouts (grades K-1) earn special "Petals" to wear on their uniforms.

JOURNEYS

Sometimes the journey is more important than the destination! In a Girl Scout Journey, leaders support girls through a series of activities, where together they will identify a problem, come up with a solution, and take action. Girls then earn Journey Awards that will go on the front of the uniform.



WHERE DO I FIND THEM?

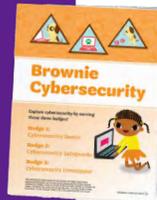
GIRL SCOUT HANDBOOK

Learn about the history of Girl Scouts, special ceremonies, badges, National Leadership Journeys, and awards.



BADGE REQUIREMENTS

Booklets that outline the steps to earn each badge. Customize the activities for your troop!



JOURNEY BOOK (GIRL BOOK)

Some Journeys come with a special book for girls, with stories and activities related to the Journey theme.



JOURNEY ADULT GUIDE

Guide for adults to lead girls through a Journey. Some Journeys have a printed adult guide, while others are available to view online.

DIGITAL DOWNLOAD

Option to purchase an electronic version of badge requirements.

BADGE ACTIVITY SET

A set of five badge requirement booklets, packaged together, related to a Journey. Add them to your Journey or complete them separately!



You can also earn fun patches as a Girl Scout or troop! Fun patches are a great way for girls to show what they're up to in Girl Scouts, and collect memories from their activities! Note: You can find some fun patches in the Girl Scout Shops or online! They should be placed on the back of the Girl Scout uniform.

National Proficiency Badges

Badge Category	Daisy	Brownie	Junior	Cadette	Senior	Ambassador
Animals		Pets	Animal Habitats	Animal Helpers	Voice for Animals	
Automotive Engineering I	Automotive Design	Automotive Design	Automotive Design			
Automotive Engineering II	Automotive Engineering	Automotive Engineering	Automotive Engineering			
Automotive Engineering III	Automotive Manufacturing	Automotive Manufacturing	Automotive Manufacturing			
Coding for Good I	Coding Basics	Coding Basics	Coding Basics	Coding Basics	Coding Basics	Coding Basics
Coding for Good II	Digital Game Design	Digital Game Design	Digital Game Design	Digital Game Design	Digital Game Design	Digital Game Design
Coding for Good III	App Development	App Development	App Development	App Development	App Development	App Development
Cybersecurity I	Cybersecurity Basics	Cybersecurity Basics	Cybersecurity Basics	Cybersecurity Basics	Cybersecurity Basics	Cybersecurity Basics
Cybersecurity II	Cybersecurity Safeguards	Cybersecurity Safeguards	Cybersecurity Safeguards	Cybersecurity Safeguards	Cybersecurity Safeguards	Cybersecurity Safeguards
Cybersecurity III	Cybersecurity Investigator	Cybersecurity Investigator	Cybersecurity Investigator	Cybersecurity Investigator	Cybersecurity Investigator	Cybersecurity Investigator
Digital Arts		Computer Expert	Digital Photographer	Digital Movie Maker	Website Designer	
Digital Leadership	Digital Leadership	Digital Leadership	Digital Leadership	Digital Leadership	Digital Leadership	Digital Leadership
Investigation		Senses	Detective	Special Agent	Truth Seeker	
Math in Nature I	Shapes in Nature	Shapes in Nature	Shapes in Nature			
Math in Nature II	Numbers in Nature	Numbers in Nature	Numbers in Nature			
Math in Nature III	Design with Nature	Design with Nature	Design with Nature			
Mechanical Engineering I	Board Game Design Challenge	Leap Bot Design Challenge	Paddle Boat Design Challenge			
Mechanical Engineering II	Roller Coaster Design Challenge	Flying Flyer Design Challenge	Crane Design Challenge			
Mechanical Engineering III	Model Car Design Challenge	Race Car Design Challenge	Balloon Car Design Challenge			
Robotics I	What Robots Do	Programming Robots	Programming Robots	Programming Robots	Programming Robots	Programming Robots
Robotics II	How Robots Move	Designing Robots	Designing Robots	Designing Robots	Designing Robots	Designing Robots
Robotics III	Design a Robot	Showcasing Robots	Showcasing Robots	Showcasing Robots	Showcasing Robots	Showcasing Robots
Science and Technology		Home Scientist	Entertainment Technology	Science of Happiness	Science of Style	
Space Science	Space Science Explorer	Space Science Adventurer	Space Science Investigator	Space Science Researcher	Space Science Expert	Space Science Master
STEM Career Exploration		STEM Career Exploration	STEM Career Exploration	STEM Career Exploration		

STEM (SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, AND MATH)

Ctd. on next page

Badge Category	Daisy	Brownie	Junior	Cadette	Senior	Ambassador
OUTDOORS	Adventure	Letterboxer	Geocacher	Night Owl	Traveler	
	Art in the Outdoors	Outdoor Art Maker	Outdoor Art Explorer	Outdoor Art Apprentice	Outdoor Art Expert	Outdoor Art Master
	Environmental Stewardship	Eco Learner	Eco Camper	Eco Trekker	Eco Explorer	Eco Advocate
	Naturalist	Bugs	Flowers	Trees	Sky	Water
	Outdoor Explorer	Outdoor Adventurer	Horseback Riding	Archery	Paddling	Ultimate Recreation Challenge
	Outdoor	Hiker	Camper	Trailblazing	Adventurer	
	Snow or Climbing Adventure	Brownie Snow or Climbing Adventure	Junior Snow or Climbing Adventure	Cadette Snow or Climbing Adventure	Senior Snow or Climbing Adventure	Ambassador Snow or Climbing Adventure
	Trail Adventure	Brownie Trail Adventure	Junior Trail Adventure	Cadette Trail Adventure	Senior Trail Adventure	Ambassador Trail Adventure
	Troop Camping	Buddy Camper	Cabin Camper	Primitive Camper	Adventure Camper	Survival Camper
	Artist	Painting	Drawing	Comic Artist	Collage Artist	Photographer
Athlete	Fair Play	Practice with Purpose	Good Sportsmanship	Cross-Training	Coaching	
Citizen	Good Neighbor	Celebrating Community	Inside Government	Finding Common Ground	Behind the Ballot	Public Policy
Civics	Democracy for Daisies	Democracy for Brownies	Democracy for Juniors	Democracy for Cadettes	Democracy for Seniors	Democracy for Ambassadors
College Preparation						College Knowledge
Cook	DAISY PETALS Lupe: Honest and Fair Sunny: Friendly and Helpful Zinni: Considerate and Caring	Snacks	Simple Meals	New Cuisines	Locavore	Dinner Party
Craft		Potter	Jeweler	Book Artist	Textile Artist	
Creative Play		Making Games	Playing the Past	Field Day	Game Visionary	
Do it Yourself		Household Elf	Gardener	Woodworker	Room Makeover	
First Aid		Brownie First Aid	Junior First Aid	Cadette First Aid	Senior First Aid	Ambassador First Aid
Girl Scout Way		Brownie Girl Scout Way	Junior Girl Scout Way	Cadette Girl Scout Way	Senior Girl Scout Way	Ambassador Girl Scout Way
Healthy Living		My Best Self	Staying Fit	Eating for You	Women's Health	
Manners		Making Friends	Social Butterfly	Netiquette	Business Etiquette	
Performance		Dancer	Musician	Public Speaker	Troupe Performer	
Practical Life Skills		My Great Day	Independence	Babysitter	Car Care	
Storytelling		My Family Story	Scribe	Screenwriter	Novelist	
Cookie Business I	My First Cookie Business	My Cookie Customers	My Cookie Team	My Cookie Venture	My Cookie Network	My Cookie Business Resume
Cookie Business II	Cookie Goal Setter	Cookie Decision Maker	Cookie Collaborator	Cookie Market Researcher	Cookie Boss	Cookie Influencer
Cookie Business III				Cookie Innovator		
Entrepreneur	Toy Business Designer	Budding Entrepreneur	Business Jumpstart	Business Creator	Business Startup	Entrepreneur Accelerator
Financial Literacy I	Money Counts	Money Manager	Business Owner	Budgeting	Financing My Future	On My Own
Financial Literacy II	Making Choices	Philanthropist	Savvy Shopper	Comparison Shopping	Buying Power	Good Credit
Financial Literacy III				Financing My Dreams		
Innovation		Inventor	Product Designer	Entrepreneur	Social Innovator	
ENTREPRENEURSHIP						

LEADING MULTI-LEVEL TROOPS

We know many of you lead multi-level troops as a Girl Scout troop leader. Leading a multi-level troop can be lots of fun, but also challenging!

Picture this: The troop meeting is in full swing. You notice that the Brownies and Juniors are absorbed in an activity, but the Daisies are distracted. Or the Juniors are ready to take on a more complex project, but the younger girls can't move at the same pace or don't get the concept. Or you see that the Daisies are having tons of fun doing an activity that completely bores the Brownies and Juniors.

HOW DO YOU MANAGE IT ALL?

Multi-level troops are naturally set up to create a more girl-led environment.

- Older girls have a unique opportunity to lead. They can serve as role models for younger girls, creating an enhanced leadership experience for all involved. They can explain more advanced concepts and the younger girls tend to look up to their older troop mates.
- Younger girls have aspiration built right into their experience. As they interact with the older girls, they learn what's possible for them.
- Multi-level troops offer all girls a diversity of perspective. When they do an activity together:
 - Older girls approach it with confidence and skill, based on their experience.
 - Younger girls bring a sense of wonder and imagination that makes the activity more creative and fun for the older girls.

FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO HELP MAKE YOUR MULTI-LEVEL TROOP EXPERIENCE FUN!

For those of you who are leading multi-level troops, Here are some tips for working with girls at different levels from GSUSA:

- Offer younger girls more concrete guidance to help them express their thoughts and come up with ideas.
- Older girls will have more nuanced understandings of interpersonal interactions and how Girl Scouts can take action, as well as more in-depth knowledge about the subject matter. They will bring up more complex concepts, which won't be familiar to younger girls. This is a great opportunity to ask older girls to share their knowledge with younger girls. Ask questions like, "Can you give us an example of that?" or "Can you describe that for everyone in the group?"
- Sometimes Daisies will outperform Brownies or you may have Juniors who perform at Brownie level. That's all OK; just customize your activities based on your experience with your troop.
- Younger girls will need more adult supervision and it's natural that older girls will help them, too. But make sure to treat older girls like troop members, not as mini-troop leaders.
- Help older girls feel welcomed and valued by giving them leadership opportunities, such as guiding a discussion or acting as a scribe. Juniors may want to earn their Junior Aide award by mentoring the younger girls.
- Give older girls more responsibility in troop decision-making. While all girls should be involved in decision-making at some level, older girls will be able to offer good insights about how to make things work better for them. When older girls make a suggestion that can reasonably be implemented, try it out and acknowledge their contribution.
- Encourage all girls to help hand out supplies and snacks.

We've included an easy cheat sheet on pages 15-16 to help you plan your badge activities for girls across all troop levels!

KEEP IT GIRL-LED

The main feature of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience is that Girl Scouting is girl-led. This means the girls should be in control of all aspects of their Girl Scout experience. We know sometimes this results in a less than strictly organized experience, but that's okay. We also know that girls of different grade levels are capable of different levels of leadership. For Daisies and Brownies, you may give girls a few options to choose from, but as they grow, gain experience, and learn responsibility you can begin to step back and leave more of the decision making to the girls. Here are some ways to make the experience girl-led at all grade levels:

DAISIES AND BROWNIES

Daisy/Brownie Circle: Have girls sit in a circle and take turns talking about their ideas and activities they want to do. As a leader, your job is to facilitate the discussion, make sure every girl contributes to the conversation and to help them plan. Give them 2-3 choices to pick from and let them vote!

Pro Tip: If girls talk over each other during a discussion, consider passing a talking stick (or object) around so that the girl with the talking stick is the only one talking.

JUNIORS, CADETTES, SENIORS, AND AMBASSADORS

Patrol or Team System: In this system, large troops divide into small groups of four to six girls. Patrols may be organized by interests or projects, with each team taking responsibility for some part of the total troop activities. Girls may enjoy coming up with names for their teams.

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

Town Meeting: Under the town meeting system, business is discussed and decisions are made at meetings attended by all the girls in the troop. Your role as leader is to act as a moderator, making sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that all ideas are considered.

The girls will get more out of their Girl Scout experience and enjoy themselves more as they are empowered to lead.

Badges and Journeys: You can find a list of the badges and Journey awards that Girl Scouts can earn, including badge requirements using the Badge Explorer (girlscoutsiowa.org/badgeexplorer). You can filter your results by grade level and topic and see the high-level requirements for each badge. This is a great tool to use to research the badges you want to earn with your troop and then build the detailed Year Plan in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)! Consider how to keep things girl-led by sharing the info you find in the Badge Explorer with girls and letting them give input on what badges they'd like to focus on this year!

VOLUNTEER TOOLKIT (VTK)

THE VTK IS YOUR BFF

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is an online platform available for leaders, designed to help you manage your troop. Once you're logged into the VTK, you can view meeting plans, create your troop's year plan, and communicate with parents. Quick tip: Anyone registered as a troop leader in your troop shares the same VTK view, so if one leader edits the troop's plan, the other leader will see it! Parents also have a version of the VTK that they can log into, but they won't see the same level of detail as a troop leader and, they can't edit the troop plan.

Don't be afraid to use the "Take a Guided Tour" button! By clicking on this, you will get walk-throughs of each section and can learn things you might not have known otherwise!

LOGGING IN:

- From girlscoutsiowa.org, click the yellow "My GS" button on the top right side.
- Enter your login and password—if you don't know it, try "Forgot Password" and use the email address you used to sign up for Girl Scouts.
- Once you're signed in, you'll select "My Account > Volunteer Toolkit" (on the left-hand side).

WITHIN THE VTK, YOU'LL HAVE ACCESS TO THESE TABS:

My Troop: Manage troop contacts, track awards and badges, track attendance, and communicate with parents/guardians.

- Click on a girl's name to see detailed information like her address, birthday, and phone number.
- You can track awards, badges, and attendance in each girl's record.

Meeting Plan: Here you can customize activities, delete ones your girls don't want to do, and replace them with new ones!

- In each meeting you will see an activity plan, materials list, email templates, meeting resources, and more.

Year Plan: Find pre-arranged plans that you can select and customize for your troop, including options to focus on Girl Scout badges or Journeys.

- Use the Year Plan Overview and Year Plan Preview tools to check out your options.
- Plans are pre-populated with 15 suggested meetings. You can follow the outline, rearrange meetings, add activities, and mix-and-match between plans!
- Use the Specify Dates and Locations tab to set your meeting dates/times and troop meeting location.

Resources: Check out all the meeting aids and meeting plans, as well as helpful tips for troop leaders!

THINGS TO KNOW

- The Volunteer Toolkit "resets" on June 30 of each year and the prior year plan is archived for viewing, but will no longer be editable. You can begin planning for the next program year after July 1. You must be registered for the next membership year in order to use the Volunteer Toolkit for the next year.
- The Volunteer Toolkit contains most of the badges, Journeys, and awards available for girls.
- You can't change the past! Once a meeting has occurred, it cannot be deleted or moved to another date, but you can make a few updates (like who attended). If a meeting didn't happen as scheduled, but you didn't delete it in time, just add a new, duplicate meeting on a new date.

The VTK is a resource maintained by Girl Scouts of the USA, and it is regularly updated and enhanced based on feedback from leaders like you!

START WITH SAFETY

As a troop leader, your core duties include making sure girls are having fun and ensuring that they are safe. Everything else comes back to those primary responsibilities! Use good judgment and common sense to determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate for girls.

VOLUNTEER-TO-GIRL RATIO CHART	GROUP MEETINGS		EVENTS, TRAVEL, AND CAMPING	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each addition of this number of girls:	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each addition of this number of girls:
DAISIES (K-1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
BROWNIES (2-3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
JUNIORS (4-5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
CADETTES (6-8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
SENIORS (9-10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
AMBASSADORS (11-12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

MEETING SPACES

A meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment. Consider meeting rooms at schools, houses of worship, libraries, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. Keep in mind:

- **SAFETY:** You'll want your location to be safe, secure, clean, properly heated and cooled, and free from hazards with all exits clearly marked.
- **COST:** Free or low-cost to use is best!
- **AVAILABILITY:** Will the location be available at the time and date of your meetings?
- **FACILITIES:** Sanitary and accessible restrooms are a must.
- **ACCESSIBILITY:** Be sure to accommodate girls with disabilities and their caregivers.

Note: Certain locations, such as schools or libraries, may ask to see proof of insurance in the form of a Certificate of Insurance when reserving a space. Email info@gsiowa.org to request a copy.

CONSIDERING A TROOP MEETING IN A PRIVATE HOME? HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW!

A private location or home should be your last choice for meeting space, and all troop parents must be in agreement with meeting in a home.

- During meeting time, volunteers should only be responsible for the troop, not other kids in the house.
- A home meeting location must be safe, secure, clean, and smoke-free.
- All persons over 18 living in the home must complete and pass a background check.
- See full guidelines and apply for approval at girlscoutsiowa.org/meetingrequest.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

FOR INCIDENTS REQUIRING MORE THAN BASIC FIRST-AID CARE:

- Contact the girls' parents, and arrange for her parents to get the child and take her to their physician OR for one of the leaders to take the child to the doctor's office or hospital to meet the parents.
- Report accident to GSGI at 800-342-8389 the next business day.
- The leader/volunteer should complete the Leader Statement portion (lower half) of Girl Scouts of the USA Insurance Claim Form (found at girlscoutsiowa.org/insurance-claim) and give the entire form to the Girl Scout parent.
- The parent completes the Claimant Information portion (top half) of the claim form, attaches copies of the attending physicians treatment form, and submits the entire form to *Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa, Attention: Finance Department*. Treatment must occur within 30 days of the accident date.
- Refer any media (press, radio, TV) inquiries directly to GSGI.

FOR INCIDENTS INVOLVING A MAJOR ACCIDENT OR FATALITY:

Although we hope the worst never happens, volunteers should always be prepared.

- At the scene of an accident, first provide all possible care for the sick or injured person. If any persons need emergency medical care, call 9-1-1, and then follow GSGI emergency procedures.
- Call designated GSGI staff, as listed on the Emergency Procedures Card found on The Bridge (gsgibridge.com/safety). In the event you cannot reach the first person, proceed to the second. This person will contact parents/guardians.
- If the media approaches the situation or contacts you, please say "I am not the council spokesperson" and tell them to contact GSGI directly. For your protection, do not discuss details about the accident with the media.
- A responsible adult must remain at the scene at all times. Follow the instructions of police or emergency responders. Do not share information about the accident with anyone but the emergency responders, your authorized GSGI staff member, and, if applicable, insurance representatives or legal counsel.

SAFETY CHECKLIST

1. **Always have two unrelated, registered adult volunteers present at all times**, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary.
2. **Collect the Troop Activities Year-Round Permission Form for each girl in your troop.** Keep that information with you during all activities—and be sure to keep it securely stored, to protect the safety and confidentiality of each family. (You can find a copy of this form at gsgibridge.org/safety.)
3. **Keep your troop information updated and correct with the council.** If a new girl is participating with your troop, be sure her membership registration is complete. Submit your regular meeting day, time, and place on the Troop Catalog Update Form (found in the Forms section of our website) or send an email to info@gsiowa.org.
4. **Communicate and plan ahead.** Always communicate expectations to parents/ guardians, make arrangements for all transportation, and confirm plans before departure.
5. **Always review the Safety Activity Checkpoints** (found at gsgibridge.org/safety) for each activity planned to determine whether an activity is safe and appropriate for girls. This document details national Girl Scout guidelines for specific activities, including things to plan for, supplies and gear, and what to do the day of the activity.
6. **Submit information to GSGI as required** for travel, horseback riding, or water activities (at locations not staffed by lifeguards). Reach out to info@gsiowa.org with questions.
7. **Troops should have a Troop First Aider**, a registered adult volunteer trained in First Aid and CPR. This volunteer would sign up with the troop in the Troop First Aid/CPR Support role.
8. **Be prepared for emergencies!** Always keep a well-stocked first aid kit and contact information for girls' families with you, and don't forget to check the weather! Keep a copy of the GSGI Emergency Procedures Card (found at gsgibridge.org/safety) with you and each adult—this lists your council contacts in case of a serious accident or life-threatening emergency.
9. **Travel safely.** Adults who are driving girls in the troop for field trips or activities should be registered volunteers with your troop and have completed a background check.
 - ☛ How parents/guardians decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility.
10. **Overnights and safe sleeping arrangements:** If adult women are in the same sleeping area as girls (tent, cabin, or designated area), there must be two unrelated adult females present.
 - ☛ If fathers or other male volunteers are part of the campout or trip, they must have separate sleeping and bathroom facilities. During family or parent-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters.

FOR TROOP FIELD TRIPS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE THE NORMAL MEETING TIME AND PLACE:

- ☛ If the entire group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female.
- ☛ If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female. Care should be taken so that a single car is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

TROOP FINANCES

Every troop should open a bank account just for Girl Scout funds. There should be two registered, unrelated adult volunteers in charge of the bank account. For more information about opening the troop bank account, check out the “Bank Accounts” section on the Bridge (gsgibridge.com/bank-accounts).

At the end of the Girl Scout year, you’ll need to submit your Troop Finance Report, which includes info about your troop’s income and expenses, as well as bank statements. This helps to protect the interest of your troop and you as a volunteer, as well as GSGI as a non-profit organization.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MANAGING TROOP MONEY:

- All deposits and withdrawals to the troop checking account should be related to Girl Scout activities, noted in the troop financial records, and monitored by the two signers.
- Account balances should be kept at a reasonable level and may be carried over from one year to the next.
- See Volunteer Essentials Chapter 5: Managing Group Finances for full details on troop and group finances. (You can find the full Volunteer Essentials document at girlscoutsiowa.org/volunteeresentials.)

HOW IS MONEY EARNED?

Product Programs: Girl Scout troops should be self-sustaining through participation in the Fall Product and Girl Scout Cookie Programs, which also provide opportunities for girls to gain business and financial literacy skills that are appropriate to their grade-level.

Troop Dues: Many troops decide to collect troop dues as a way to help fund troop activities and supplies. These could range from \$1-\$2 per meeting or around \$25 for the entire school year. It’s completely up to each troop to decide what works best.

Money-Earning Activities: Troops and service units may hold additional money earning activities to support their projects, though each activity must be approved according to Girl Scout guidelines. You can find the Money-Earning Project Application and additional guidelines in the Forms & Documents section of our website.

PRINCIPLES OF TROOP FINANCES:

- Girl Scouts is a nonprofit organization.
- Girl Scouting should be affordable.
- Money earned by a troop becomes that troop’s property and does not belong to individual girls, volunteers, or parents/guardians. Funds used should equally benefit all members of the troop and not individuals.
- Girls should be included in making decisions about how their troop’s money is spent.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Need-based financial assistance is available through GSGI so that Girl Scouting can be accessible to all girls. Financial assistance is made possible through the generosity of our donors. Financial assistance is available towards Girl Scout membership, uniforms or books, camp, and travel. Families must apply for assistance. See girlscoutsiowa.org for more information.

TROOP MEETING TIME!

It's time to hold your first troop meeting!

While chances are you know at least one of your Girl Scouts, you may not know everyone. It helps to make introductions and “break the ice” to make everyone comfortable. You can include your Girl Scout families if you'd like, or you can hold your parent/guardian meeting separately and make this one just about the girls. We've include some tips below to help you get started.

FYI: Sometimes it makes sense to hold a meeting for both families and girls! A family meeting, or parent meeting, provides an opportunity for troop

leaders to connect directly with families—to ask for additional help with troop activities, to provide information about what the troop is planning, and to help parents/guardians understand what Girl Scouting is all about!

Many troops hold family meetings three times a year: before the troop itself meets for the first time, mid-year before the start of the cookie program, and as a celebration at the end of the program year. For help planning your first family meeting, checkout the Family Meeting packet on The Bridge!

TROOP MEETING TIPS

HAVE A WELCOME ACTIVITY READY

While it would be great to have everyone arrive at the same time, you will most likely have girls coming in over the course of a few minutes at the start of your meeting. Coloring sheets are a great way to keep everyone occupied until all your Girl Scouts arrive. You can also provide a snack if it makes sense for your meeting time or location.

Girls can hang on to them during the meeting and color during other periods of down-time, or you can collect them at the end of the meeting for them to finish next time!

OPEN WITH A TRADITION

Girl Scouts has some long-standing traditions, but going over all of them at once can be overwhelming for new Girl Scouts, especially Daisies and Brownies. You can start by reading the Girl Scout Promise and Law at the beginning of your meeting to officially get things started.

Daisy Girl Scouts can earn their “Promise Center” by saying the Girl Scout Promise and talking about what it means to them. This is part of the Daisy Petals, a special badge set that only Daisy Girl Scouts can earn!

BREAK THE ICE

Get to know your Girl Scouts! Making new friends and creating a girl-led experience are two of the foundations of Girl Scouts, after all. While that doesn't mean girls get to do anything and everything they want, it does help to know what your Girl Scouts are

interested in, what they have and haven't tried, and what makes them most excited about being a Girl Scout. Choose a couple of ice breaker activities to get to know your troop. It's okay if this takes the entire first meeting or even carries to the next; building trusting relationships with your girls and their families is very important! Ice breakers are a great way to continue building relationships in your troop and welcome new girls.

START OR COMPLETE AN ACTIVITY

The nice thing about being Girl Scouts is there are few hard and fast rules for your meetings. You can plan a meeting around a badge activity, a field trip, or just something fun you and your girls want to do! As you get to know your troop, remember to get their input on plans and activities as well! Don't rush; it's okay if an activity takes more than one meeting to complete. The experience and what girls learn is more important than checking things off a to-do list!

CLOSE YOUR MEETING

Girl Scouts always leave a place better than they found it. It's important to take the time to clean up and put things back at the end of your meeting. Remember to schedule time for this, and be sure to include the girls as well—it's a great learning experience for them. Once this is done, a fun way to close every troop meeting is with a friendship circle and a Girl Scout song.

SETTING EXPECTATIONS

Everyone (volunteers, parents, and girls) is likely to have a better experience if responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined. Use a Troop Agreement to outline behavior. You can download a customizable agreement form on the GSGI website (girlscoutsioowa.org) that parents and girls in your troop can sign.

Here are the basic responsibilities to ensure a positive and encouraging environment in your troop:

THE TROOP LEADER(S) WILL:

- Accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law and set a good example for girls.
- Follow Girl Scout safety guidelines to protect girls, families, and information.
- Communicate regularly with girls' parents/guardians regarding troop activities - including email, phone calls/texts, newsletters, social media, or other methods.
- Organize fun, interactive, girl-led activities that match girls' interests and needs.
- Partner with girls so that their activities are girl-led, allow them to learn by doing, and allow for cooperative (group) learning.
- Be accepting and inclusive, and ensure that no girl is treated differently. GSGI embraces girls of all abilities, backgrounds, and heritage, with a specific and positive philosophy of inclusion that benefits everyone. Each girl—without regard to socioeconomic status, race, physical or cognitive ability, ethnicity, primary language, or religion—is an equal and valued member of the group, and groups reflect the diversity of the community.
- Create an emotionally-safe space for all girls that is free from bullying and cyber-bullying. Coach girls to follow the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and to honor the troop agreement. Seek assistance from parents, teachers, or GSGI staff if you notice girl behavior issues are impacting the troop environment.
- Manage membership registrations and other paperwork, such as permission slips.
- Oversee the funds that girls raise with honesty, integrity, and careful record-keeping.
- Be kind and respectful to all parents, volunteers, and council staff.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS WILL:

- Accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law and set a good example for their daughter.
- Arrive to drop off and pick up on time and communicate regularly with the troop leader about activities and attendance for their daughter.
- Provide current emergency contact information, and inform the troop leader about individuals who have permission to pick up their daughter, and any other circumstances that may affect their daughter's welfare and Girl Scout experience.
- Be cooperative, honest, and respectful and find a solution for disagreements in a private and appropriate manner.

GIRLS WILL:

- Accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law and follow troop guidelines.
- Help others and show patience and stand up for what is right.
- Demonstrate integrity and honor commitments.
- Find solutions for disagreements.

If a girl's behavior is disruptive to the other troop members, or is not in alignment with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, the troop leader may:

- Ask the girl to behave.
- Remove the girl from the activity to review the Promise and Law.
- Request the parent/guardian's assistance in resolving the issue.
- Request the parent/guardian's attendance at future meetings and trips.
- Seek assistance from GSGI staff, who may suggest alternative ways for the girl to participate in Girl Scouts.

ADDITIONAL TROOP MEETING TOOLS

While there are many tools out there to help you structure your troop meetings and relay expectations, these are the most commonly used by seasoned troop leaders! These tools help direct your meetings and give girls ownership of and responsibility for their Girl Scout experience.

KAPER CHART

A kaper chart is a tool you may find useful as a troop leader. It helps teach responsibility and leadership skills by dividing the different duties and tasks of a troop meeting between girls. You can set one up by leading the girls in your troop in a discussion about what needs to be done each meeting, and get input on how they think the kaper chart should look:

- What needs to be done each troop meeting?
- How will we share the jobs that need to be completed? What should the rotation look like?
- What kind of kaper chart do we want?

We've included an example kaper chart to give you an idea of how to get started. Feel free to design it however you and your troop decide!

WAYS TO ELEVATE AN ACTIVITY

Throughout your first year as a new troop leader, we don't want you to feel like you have to elevate everything, or go above and beyond. It is more than enough to just do the basics as you are becoming comfortable with leading your new troop. However, we know that many of you want to take things to the next level, so we wanted to share some ideas on how to do that with these badge activities!

Don't forget about field trips and guest speakers. If you know someone, or have a connection through one of the families in your troop, use it. You can get creative with hands-on experiences for your Girl Scouts to make what they learn more memorable and encourage them to find passions in ways they wouldn't without Girl Scouts!

This is also a great opportunity to include your Girl Scout families! You can involve them with more advanced badges or badges and activities that may require more than one meeting. Girls love celebrating their accomplishments with their families and having the extra support will help you as well.

TROOP AGREEMENT

A troop agreement is another useful tool for your troop. Troop agreements allow the girls to decide on the rules that need to be followed during each troop event. We do recommend you give a copy to all parents/guardians as well once it's complete.

You can start creating a troop agreement with your Girl Scouts by making it a girl-led, group activity. You can ask the girls what basic rules and guidelines they feel they should all follow when you are together. This could include such things as listening, being respectful, and even guidelines on cell phone usage. By setting up a troop agreement, you also have an additional tool to use if girls need their actions to be redirected during a troop meeting. Take a look at page 27 for a basic template to get you started.

We hope you found these tools helpful! Don't feel like you have to "do it all" in one meeting though—the nice thing about being Girl Scouts is there are few hard and fast rules for your meetings. You can plan a meeting around a badge activity, a field trip, or just something fun you and your girls want to do! As you get to know your troop, remember to get their input on plans and activities as well!



Here's an example of a kaper chart. You can make it your own to fit the needs of your troop!

SAMPLE TROOP AGREEMENT

Troop Agreement for Troop _____

This contract will be in force for all troop meetings, events, field trips, camping, and other activities. I understand and adhere to the Girl Scout Promise and Law as follows:

The Girl Scout Promise: On my honor, I will try: To serve God* and my country, To help people at all times, And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

The Girl Scout Law: I will do my best to be honest and fair, friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, courageous and strong, and responsible for what I say and do, and to respect myself and others, respect authority, use resources wisely, make the world a better place, and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

I will also follow the event/activity rules, which will always include the following:

Example - A Girl Scout leaves a place better than she found it, therefore, we will clean up after ourselves and our troop—we're a team.

Example - I will always be respectful of others.

Signed: _____

(Have everyone in the troop sign their name)

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

WHAT'S NEXT AS A TROOP LEADER

KEEP LEARNING!

Continue your education as a troop leader by increasing your Girl Scout knowledge. Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa (GSGI) offers training for adult volunteers on the gsLearn website. You can access this through your myGS account (mygs.girlscouts.org). There are training modules created by both GSGI and Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) available on gsLearn. You can also complete the Trained to Lead patch program (gsgibridge.com/training) that is available to all adult volunteers!

FAMILIARIZE YOURSELF WITH THE PRODUCT PROGRAMS.

While you may recognize the Girl Scout Cookie Program, there is also the Fall Product Program! Both of these programs provide lots of opportunities for girls to learn about being entrepreneurs and allow your troop to earn proceeds. Here are a few things to note:

- The Fall Product Program is in October and the Girl Scout Cookie Program is February-March.
- Participation is not required, but we highly recommend giving the programs a try. It provides a lot of fun for troops and girls, while also earning troop proceeds to fund your adventures and rewards for girls!
- What are troop proceeds? Troop proceeds are the cash funds that troops earn for selling candy, nuts, and magazines during the Fall Product Program or cookies during the Girl Scout Cookie Program. They are deposited directly into your troop bank account, and can help you fund your troop activities!
- Your troop will need a Troop Product Manager (TPM) to run the program for your troop. You don't have to be the person to fill this role (it can be a parent/guardian or a troop support volunteer). However, the TPM does need to be a registered member. They will also need to fill out the TPM Agreement for Product Programs on The Bridge to get started.
- There are three main resources available to help your troop have a successful Product Program:
 - ↪ **The Bridge (gsgibridge.com):** This volunteer resource site has a whole section for Product Programs, with tons of tips, guides, and helpful links.
 - ↪ **GSGI Training:** We'll send out information about online training opportunities to help you prepare for the Product Programs. If you can't attend the live webinar, don't worry—we post the recordings to The Bridge afterward!
 - ↪ **Shout Outs!:** TPMs will also automatically be signed-up for the weekly Shout Out! email newsletters (sent every Thursday during the Product Programs). Keep an eye out for them, as they'll have up-to-date reminders and news about the program.

CHECK OUT GIRL SCOUT EVENTS

Your troop (or individual girls) can view all events available and attend what you're most interested in. You can find all program events at girlscoutsiowa.org/events. Also, sign-up for the Program Express email newsletter by visiting girlscoutsiowa.org/programexpress for additional information.

ADDING NEW GIRL SCOUT MEMBERS

Many girls sign-up for Girl Scouts during the back-to-school season, but did you know girls can register at any time?

WHAT IS THE TROOP CATALOG?

The Troop Catalog is GSGI's list of troops across the council. If troops have spots open for additional girls, those listings are visible for parents as they're signing up new girls, based on their zip code. Troop listings include troop number, grade levels, approximate location, meeting day and time, and the number of openings remaining for girls and volunteers.

Additionally, your Troop Catalog listing may help you find additional troop volunteers! Parents can view how many volunteers are currently supporting a troop, and what opportunities are available for them to get involved.

Troops should notify GSGI of their regular meeting time and place at the start of each year using the Troop Catalog Update Form. The council maintains records of troop details, in case of emergencies. Only troops with spots available will be displayed on the catalog for new girls to join.

IS MY TROOP REQUIRED TO TAKE MORE GIRLS?

We have girls across the council interested in joining troops, so we are always hoping girls (and leaders) can open their hearts to a few more members! However, we understand the need to set a maximum number of available spots due to meeting space and leader capacity! We'll work with you to set your troop maximum, and once your troop is full it will not display for additional girls on the Troop Catalog.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN A NEW GIRL JOINS A TROOP?

Parent communication: As a leader, you will receive an instant email notification when a new member joins your troop—including the family's contact information. When you get a new member, be sure to reach out to the new family as soon as possible! Let them know when the next meeting is, and what they should bring with them. They'll want to know about things like uniforms, books, and troop dues—all those things you went through at your first family meeting!

Welcoming the girl: Of course, it can be challenging to introduce a new member to the group, but it doesn't have to be! Adding new girls to your troop—even midyear—can help energize your group and showcase the Girl Scout spirit of sisterhood and inclusion! Here's a few ideas for welcoming a new troop member:

- Have the girls introduce themselves! They might make welcome cards for the new member, or tell stories at the first meeting. Maybe each girl can pick three things about herself she'd like her new Girl Scout sisters to know—such as about their families, pets, or interests.
- Host an Investiture Ceremony, to welcome the new girl in the world of Girl Scouting. (See page 32 for more on ceremonies!)

PRODUCT PROGRAMS

GIRL SCOUT COOKIE SEASON

For many Girl Scouts, their favorite time of year falls in the late-winter months—that’s right: Girl Scout Cookie season! As a troop leader, you’ll start receiving information, training, and troop resources through the late fall and early winter, before the program officially begins. Here’s a few things to know about the power of Girl Scout Cookies:

- **What is it?** The Girl Scout Cookie Program is the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world! And, all the net revenue raised in our council stays right here, supporting troops, volunteers, and programming for Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa!
- **What does the troop leader do?** Each troop assigns a Troop Product Manager (TPM) to manage participation in the program. Sometimes the leader takes on this role, but it’s a great opportunity to get another parent, friend, or family member involved (as long as they’re willing to register as a volunteer)!
- **What do girls and troops earn?**
 - ☞ Girls earn rewards and patches, including “Cookie Dough” (credits they can use to pay for things like camp, uniforms, and Girl Scout membership).
 - ☞ Troops earn proceeds to fund troop activities—starting at \$0.45 per box, with options to earn more! Troops can also earn “experiences,” like free admission to the annual Gimme S’more Mud Run!
 - ☞ All girls who participate are eligible to earn the annual Cookie Activity pin. Plus, at every level, girls can earn badges representing proficiency in skills ranging from financial management, to business planning and more.
- **How do girls sell cookies?** Girls can participate in different ways, including taking orders and delivering later (order taking), having cookies on hand (direct sales), through our online application, or as part of a troop cookie booth. You’ll learn all about the different ways and how to support them during training.
- **How does our troop get cookies to sell?** Your troop will have multiple options to order and re-order cookies, based on how many girls in the troop are planning to sell. (Don’t worry, we will help you project an estimate!) Based on troop orders, GSGI orders tons (literally!) of cookies from our partner baker, and distributes them to our Cookie Cupboard locations around the council. Your troop picks up cookies and distributes to families and girls, who will get them into the hands of happy customers!

Product programs help girls learn skills that last a lifetime: goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics.

Go-getter patch: Girls who participate in the Fall Product Program AND the Girl Scout Cookie Program can earn a special patch!

FALL PRODUCT PROGRAM

Troops also have the opportunity to kick-off the year with the Fall Product Program to earn proceeds for their Girl Scout events and activities.

- **How do girls participate?** Participation is simple for girls and troops, with in-person or online options! Each troop assigns a Troop Product Manager (TPM) to manage participation in the program.
- Girls have the opportunity to sell nuts, candy, and magazines—plus a variety of other great options designed specifically for the Girl Scouts and their customers!
- Troops place an order at the end of the program, and items are delivered to the service unit where troops will pick them up before Thanksgiving OR items can be shipped directly to the customer (if they so choose)!
- **What do girls earn?** Girls earn rewards and patches for participation, and troops earn 15% of all nut/chocolate sales + 20% of all magazines/novelty item sales.

ALL ABOUT CAMP!

Outdoor learning is a special part of the Girl Scout experience, and we have four amazing camp facilities and many outdoor programs right here in Greater Iowa to give girls the opportunity to explore! Whether girls are looking to spend some time in the water, or are interested in taking a trail ride on horseback, we've got them covered. Summer camp is a BIG deal for Girl Scouts, but we also offer outdoor options throughout the year. Your troop can also plan a campout at one of our camp properties (there are rental opportunities year-round!) or anywhere on your own. Go to girlscoutsiaowa.org/camp to get started!

Don't forget to Leave No Trace, Girl Scouts!

An important part of preparing girls to head outdoors is to help them understand and embrace the seven basic principles of Leave No Trace. Leave No Trace principles help girls understand how to enjoy the natural world in a way that avoids human-created impacts. These principles can be applied anywhere girls go outside, whether it's a backyard, a schoolyard, a state park or the backcountry.



Know before you go—make sure you have a plan for your trip.

Choose the right path—use trails and durable surfaces to not disturb plants and animals.



Trash your trash—make sure all trash goes in an appropriate trash bin or is hauled back with you.

Leave what you find—enjoy the rocks, plants, and other artifacts you see but leave them there for others to see too.



Be careful with fire—use existing fire pits or small camp stoves to ensure fire doesn't spread.

Respect wildlife—quietly observe animals from a safe distance.



Be kind to other visitors—help everyone have a great experience in the outdoors.

WRAPPING UP YOUR GIRL SCOUT YEAR

As we wind down the typical Girl Scout year, we want to make sure that you have all the tools you need to finish your first year as a troop leader strong and provide some help and guidance as you plan your spring with Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa (GSGI). Here are a couple of things to consider as you wrap up this spring with your troop.

HOLD A GIRL SCOUT CEREMONY

Ceremonies are a great way to celebrate various aspects of the Girl Scout year, from first joining the Girl Scout family to honoring themes that are important to girls to bridging into a new program grade level and everything in between. Come on, who doesn't love to celebrate? You have the freedom to participate in the ceremonies that best fit with your troop and many troops choose to celebrate at the end of their first year!

GIRL SCOUTS' OWN CEREMONY

A Girl Scouts' Own ceremony is completely girl-led and planned. The ceremony centers on a theme, such as nature, service, or sisterhood. These ceremonies can include, but are not limited to spoken word, songs, poetry, or dance. It is important that it encompasses the girls' expression of their feelings on the topic picked out by the troop.

COURT OF AWARDS

Another common ceremony is the Court of Awards. This ceremony recognizes girls' accomplishments throughout the year by presenting badges and earned recognitions to the girls in your troop. Typically, Court of Awards is held at the end of the school year and can be included as part of a Bridging Ceremony. The Court of Awards includes both girls and volunteers. Be sure to invite families to be a part of the celebration!

Troops can do Court of Awards ceremonies any time of the year, and more than once if you like; it's a fun way to recognize your Girl Scouts for their hard work! Check out some great tips we adapted from Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa Western Illinois at girlscoutsiowa.org/courtofawardsceremonies.

BRIDGING CEREMONIES

Bridging ceremonies signify a girl's move from one level of Girl Scouts to another (for example, Girl Scout Daisies to Girl Scout Brownies). It is a ceremony that provides girls an opportunity to reflect on their achievements and look forward to new adventures and responsibilities to come. Traditionally, girls cross over a bridge (can be a real bridge or something your girls make) sharing what they have learned at their level. You can check out a guide for planning your first Bridging Ceremony at girlscoutsiowa.org/bridgingceremony.

A special bridging ceremony for Girl Scout Brownies is called a "Fly Up;" where girls receive their Girl Scout pin along with their Brownie Wings. Put this one on the backburner until girls are ready to bridge from Brownies to Juniors!

DID YOU KNOW?

Troops can check out a ceremony bridge from any GSGI Leadership Center at girlscoutsiowa.org/equipment.

RENEW MEMBERSHIPS FOR YOU AND YOUR TROOP

Spring is a great time to renew your and your troop's Girl Scout membership for the next year! By renewing your troop girls' memberships before you wrap up your Girl Scout year, you're ensuring that they can hit the ground running with Girl Scout activities next year—from virtual or in-person programming, to attending camp, to showcasing her entrepreneurial skills by participating in our Product Programs.

Starting in April, you can begin the renewal process for yourself and the girls in your troop. From April 1-May 31 of every year, Girl Scouts offers an Early Bird campaign for members who want to renew their membership for the next Girl Scout year (which officially starts October 1). There are always perks to doing this early; they range from a special patch, to an exclusive Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) event! You can always check out more details on The Bridge (gsgibridge.com/early-bird).

ADDITIONAL WAYS TO SPEND YOUR TROOP PROCEEDS

There are many ways that your troop can spend your hard-earned troop proceeds. While troop proceeds help fund your troop meetings and necessities, they can also fund a wide range of activities and troop materials.

Attend an Event

Check out the events section of our Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa website (girlscoutsiowa.org/events) to view exclusive events and activities for Girl Scout members. You'll find a full listing of community events, partner programs, and community service opportunities hosted by our trusted program partners.

Go on a Field Trip

Field trips can be anything your Girl Scouts are interested in and that works for your troop's schedule! Just make sure to check out any requirements on The Bridge as you're planning (gsgibridge.com/events-and-activities). Check out a list of field trip ideas in the events section of the website (girlscoutsiowa.org/events), under "The Hub."

Complete a Service Project

Service projects are a great way to give back to your community! Girl Scouts always step up to do what they can to improve their communities and the world. You can check out national opportunities on the GSUSA website (girlscoutsiowa.org/serviceprojects) or you can plan your own project with your troop! Interested in a service project? Check out some tips from GSUSA on page 35!

Go to Camp or Plan a Troop Overnight Experience

Shorter activities are a great way to start your Girl Scout experience, but you can also spend extended time together as well! Troops can plan overnights (like this cool one at the Omaha Zoo - girlscoutsiowa.org/omahazoo) or go camping as a troop either at a GSGI camp or other camping sites, such as state parks!

Stock up on Girl Scout Gear

Our Girl Scout retail shops are your resource for Girl Scout uniforms, pins, badges, and books, as well as all the latest in apparel, gifts, jewelry, bags, accessories, and more. You'll find something for girls of every age, plus our volunteers and alum! See our hours and locations at girlscoutsiowa.org/visitus or visit us to shop online at girlscoutsiowa.org/gsshop.

COMPLETING YOUR TROOP FINANCE REPORT

The Troop Finance Report makes it easy for troops to report on their finances (we're required by the IRS to make sure we keep proper records of funds on file). You can complete your Troop Finance Report on the Girl Scouts of Greater Iowa website at girlscoutsiowa.org/troopfinance. Reports must be completed by June 30 of each year.

CONSIDER A TAKE ACTION PROJECT

Take Action Projects are more than community service! Community service makes the world better by addressing a problem right now. For example, collecting cans of food for a food pantry feeds people immediately. A Take Action Project encourages girls to develop a project that is sustainable. That means that the problem continues to be addressed, even after the project is over. Sustainability simply means coming up with a solution that lasts.

For example, girls might want to do something about trash in a local park. If they go to the park and pick up trash, they've solved the problem for today—but there will be more trash to pick up tomorrow.

Instead, girls could explore why there's so much trash to find ideas for a Take Action Project. Here's what they might discover:

1. There aren't enough trash cans in the park.
2. The trash cans are hard to find.
3. People have to walk out of their way to throw away trash because of where the cans are placed.
4. People don't realize the importance of putting trash in the trash cans.

HERE'S HOW GIRLS MIGHT ADDRESS THESE ISSUES:

Issues 1–3: Make a presentation to the city council to report on their findings and make suggestions for improvement, such as adding more trash cans or moving them to more visible or convenient positions.

Issue 4: Create a public awareness campaign that encourages people to use the trash cans instead of littering.

WHAT ARE THE STEPS OF A TAKE ACTION PROJECT?

Girls team up to:

1. Identify a problem.
2. Come up with a sustainable solution.
3. Develop a team plan.
4. Put the plan into action.
5. Reflect on what they learned.

HOW DO GIRLS MAKE THEIR PROJECT SUSTAINABLE?

1. Make your solution permanent.
2. Educate and inspire others to be part of the change.
3. Change a rule, regulation, or law.
4. For more information on Take Action Projects visit girlscoutsiowa.org/takeaction.

KEEP IT GIRL-LED:

Girls should actively participate in each step in order for this to be girl-led. Younger girls will need more guidance, but they can and should decide as a team what problem they want to address.

TIPS FOR SUCCESSFUL SERVICE PROJECTS FROM GSUSA

When you mention to your neighbor that you're a Girl Scout troop leader, there are likely two thoughts that go through their head: "Awesome! I have a cookie connection," and "Girl Scouts do a lot for our community."

And while they are right on both counts, it's that second one—Girl Scouts do a lot for their communities. There is no shortage of good to be done in the world, so as your troop plans their service projects, here are five tips to make them a success:

MAKE SURE IT'S GIRL-LED

First and foremost, make sure your service project is girl-led. If you're working with younger girls, this means asking for their ideas of how they can give back to their community, seeing what ideas they are most passionate about, and helping them choose which one they will take on. For older girls, it means facilitating a discussion. Then, get a conversation going and only jump in to provide guidance to them if needed.

If the girls are choosing the service project, they are invested, and will not only be more excited to participate, but prouder of their accomplishments at the end.

DEFINE YOUR GOAL(S)

Once your troop has chosen a service project idea, make sure to help the girls set a goal or two. Creating "SMART" goals—ones that are Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, and Time-bound—are a great way to do this with any age. This helps set expectations from the start and gives the girls something tangible that they are working toward. When they've defined their SMART goal(s), it is that much easier for them to see what they've accomplished.

DELEGATE ROLES

Service projects can have a lot of moving parts, and it can be difficult for a team of girls to participate in every facet of a project. Instead, consider giving each troop member a role that they can oversee. For example, if your troop decides to collect donations for a local food pantry, give one group of girls the task of advertising or delivering empty grocery bags for donations. Give a second group the task of picking up those donations and a third group the task of delivering the donations to the pantry.

If your troop is younger, break down roles into smaller pieces of responsibility. For older girls, hand over the reins and let them manage the project. (It'll be great practice for earning a highest award!)

SETBACKS ARE TEACHABLE MOMENTS

There are always a few bumps in the road when coordinating projects, whether it's a scheduling mishap, a small miscommunication, or not hitting a numerical goal. Rather than letting your troop dwell on what didn't go right and getting frustrated, reframe the conversation about how they can adjust and move forward. You'll be teaching them great project-management skills they can use in school, college, and beyond.

CELEBRATE THEIR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Taking a moment to celebrate a job well done is always a great way to close out a service project. It doesn't have to be over the top. A simple high-five or sharing photos from the service project with their families is a great way to honor the girls' accomplishments.

There are other ways to give back and be recognized as well! You can submit a form for each of these achievements on the GSGI website under Forms.

- The Community Service Bar encourages Girl Scouts to make a difference in their community by



practicing the values of the Girl Scout Law. Girls are asked to choose an organization in their community they are passionate about, and complete at least 20 hours of service with that organization.

- The Service to Girl Scouting Bar is similar, but instead encourages Girl Scouts to volunteer



with the Girl Scout organization—that could be with their local council office, their local service unit, or other local troops. Girls are also required to fulfill 20 hours of service to earn this bar.

NOW YOU'RE A PRO!

We hope once you've made it through your first year as a troop that you will feel more prepared for your next year as a troop leader! We will still be here to help you, so don't hesitate to reach out and continue to use the resources in this guidebook.

Many troops wait until the fall to "start things up again" as the official Girl Scout year starts October 1, but you should decide what works best for you, your Girl Scouts, and their families. We've included some additional resources on the last pages of this New Leader Guidebook to continue help elevate you as a troop leader!

Thank you for all you do, you make a difference!

As you wrap up your Girl Scout year, take some time to reflect on what worked, what didn't and sketch out some plans for next year. We're so excited to see what you and your troop will do next!

My favorite part of this year was:

Things I needed more help with this year:

As you're planning for next year, don't forget to celebrate Girl Scout Days! These are special days that Girl Scouts celebrate each year. Note that our calendar starts in October, which is the official start of the membership year!

GIRL SCOUT DAYS

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. Fun fact! Every year on her birthday, Juliette would do a handstand, just to prove she still could!

World Thinking Day (February 22) celebrates the birthdays of Girl Guide/Girl Scout founder Lord Baden-Powell (1857–1941) and World Chief Guide Lady Baden-Powell (1889–1977). Each year, Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from 146 countries celebrate World Thinking Day, as a way to celebrate with girls all over the world by doing the same activities (check them out at girlscoutsiowa.org/worldthinkingday).

Girl Scouts' Birthday (March 12) commemorates the day in 1912 when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the organization's first 18 members in Savannah, Georgia.

Girl Scout Week (one week every March—always including Girl Scouts' Birthday March 12) starting with Girl Scout Sunday and ending with Girl Scout Sabbath on a Saturday.

Girl Scouts Celebrate Faith Events give Girl Scouts an opportunity to be recognized at their places of worship during Girl Scout Week, share their legacy of service to others, and deepen their connection to their faith and Girl Scouting. Celebration days include Girl Scout Sunday, Girl Scout Jumamah, and Girl Scout Sabbath/Shabbat.

Girl Scout Leader's Day (April 22) honors all the volunteers who work as leaders and mentors in partnership with girls. On this day, Girl Scouts, their families, and their communities find special ways to thank their Girl Scout volunteers.

GIRL SCOUT YEAR PLANNER

Fill in your Girl Scout plans/goals for each month of the upcoming Girl Scout year!

<p>OCTOBER</p> <p>- Juliette Gordon Low's birthday is October 31. Let's plan a party!</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>NOVEMBER</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>DECEMBER</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>JANUARY</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>
<p>FEBRUARY</p> <p>- Girl Scout Cookie Program begins!</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>MARCH</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>APRIL</p> <p>- Renew troop memberships during Early Bird!</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>MAY</p> <p>- Plan our Court of Awards or Bridging Ceremony.</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>
<p>JUNE</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>JULY</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>AUGUST</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>	<p>SEPTEMBER</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p> <p>-</p>

FREQUENTLY ACCESSED FORMS AND DOCUMENTS

Here's a handy list of forms and documents you'll find yourself referencing during your time as a troop leader. You can access them all at girlscoutsiowa.org/forms!

ACTIVITY PLANNING AND APPROVAL FORMS

Getting ready to plan a day, overnight, or extended trip? Check out the activity planning and approval forms and the Activities section on the Bridge.

- **Event/Activity/Trip Checklist:** guides you through all the steps to plan activities with your troop.
- **Trip Application:** let us know your multi-night travel plans with this application.
- **Special Permission forms for Horseback or Water Activities:** There are a few additional steps if your troop will be horseback riding, doing water activities, or swimming at a location without a staff lifeguard (a certified lifeguard is required).

EQUIPMENT CHECK-OUT

GSGI has items available for check-out such as flags, bridges, and cookie costumes. Use the online Equipment Check-Out Form to submit a request.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FORMS

Girl Scouts is open to all girls and adults regardless of their financial situations. To encourage participation, GSGI makes funds available to help girls and adults who need financial aid. The application to request financial assistance for membership, camp, uniforms, or books can be found on our website.

MONEY-EARNING PROJECT APPLICATION

Troops may participate in money-earning projects as long as they have participated (or will participate) in the annual Girl Scout Cookie Program. Complete the Money-Earning Project Application at least 4 weeks before you start your project!

SAFETY ACTIVITY CHECKPOINTS

Make sure everyone stays safe on your next troop outing or activity! Be sure to review these Safety Activity Checkpoints for activities including water and land sports, camping, and more.

TROOP ACTIVITIES YEAR ROUND PERMISSION FORM

Part of keeping girls safe at all troop meetings and outings means having the right information on hand. Collect the Year-Round Permission Form from parents/guardians at the beginning of the year.

TROOP CATALOG UPDATE FORM

Use this form to notify GSGI of your troop's regular meeting day, time, and place, safety and security. This is also where you can let us know how many additional members your troop can add!

TROOP FINANCES

The "Bank Accounts" section on the Bridge (gsgibridge.com/bank-accounts) covers how to open a bank account. Search our website for details on troop finance best practices, money earning activities, troop finance reports, and more.

GLOSSARY

AMBASSADOR: A Girl Scout in grades 11 or 12.

BADGES: Earning badges is a great way for a girl to explore her interests and learn new skills—and to remember every adventure and show the world what she’s accomplished. Badges are worn on the front of the sash or vest.

BRIDGING: Girls graduate from one grade level to another (Daisy to Brownie, Brownie to Junior, etc.) in a bridging ceremony. When girls complete the steps outlined in *The Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting*, they earn a rainbow bridging award.

BROWNIE: A Girl Scout in grades 2 or 3.

BUDDY SYSTEM: Girl Scouts always use this safety practice of pairing by two’s (a “truddy” is pairing by threes). This system is often useful on field trips and outings.

CADETTE: A Girl Scout in grades 6 through 8.

COURT OF AWARDS: A ceremony to present badges and earned recognitions typically held at the end of the school year.

DAISY: A Girl Scout in grades K or 1. Also the nickname of Juliette Gordon Low.

FRIENDSHIP CIRCLE: Girl Scouts, both girls and adults, stand in a circle holding hands, right arm over left arm, which stands for the unbroken chain of friendship with Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world.

FRIENDSHIP SQUEEZE: Within a friendship circle, one person gently squeezes the hand of the next person and the squeeze is silently passed around the circle.

FLY UP: When Brownies bridge to Juniors, this is how they earn their Brownie wings. Girls who fly up from Brownies can wear their wings on their vest/sash at every future program grade level.

FOUNDER’S DAY: Celebrated each year on October 31, in honor of Juliette Gordon Low’s birthday

GIRL-LED: An idea that girls of every grade-level take an active role in determining what, where, when, why, and how they’ll structure activities. Adults provide guidance, ensuring that planning, organization, and set-up are age-appropriate.

Evaluation of all activities is done jointly with girls and is integral to a high-quality Girl Scout experience.

GIRL SCOUT HANDSHAKE: Formal way of greeting other Girl Scouts by shaking with the left hand, while giving the Girl Scout sign with the right hand.

GIRL SCOUT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE (GSLE): The Girl Scout program. The GSLE includes three Keys to leadership: girls discover themselves and others; connect with others; and take action to make the world a better place. Activities are girl-led, which gives girls the opportunity to learn by doing in a cooperative learning environment.

GIRL SCOUT SIGN: Official Girl Scout greeting. The right hand is raised shoulder high with the three middle fingers extended and the thumb crossing over the palm to hold down the little finger.

GIRL SCOUT SUNDAY: The beginning of Girl Scout Week each year (the week of March 12). Some troops and service units bring in Girl Scout inserts for their church bulletins.

GIRL SCOUT WEEK: Annual celebration during the week of March 12 (the Girl Scout Birthday) to celebrate the beginning of Girl Scouts.

GIRL SCOUTS OF THE USA (GSUSA): National organization of Girl Scouts headquartered in New York, NY. Membership dues are paid to GSUSA. Their website is girlscouts.org.

GIRL SCOUT’S OWN CEREMONY: A completely girl-led ceremony, often centered on a theme such as nature, service, or sisterhood.

THE GIRL’S GUIDE TO GIRL SCOUTING: A guidebook for each program level full of information about being a Girl Scout and how to earn legacy badges.

HIGHEST AWARDS (BRONZE, SILVER, GOLD): The highest awards that a Junior (Bronze), Cadette (Silver), and Senior/Ambassador (Gold) can earn.

INSIGNIA: Girl Scout official emblem, buttons, badges, pins, and other official forms of recognition which may be worn on the uniform by registered members.

INVESTITURE: A special ceremony in which a new member accepts the Girl Scout Promise and Law and receives the membership pin.

JOURNEYS: Program options for each Girl Scout level, made up of 6-12 sessions in which girls progressively learn about a specific topic, as well as learning about themselves and making a difference in their community. Journey completion is a prerequisite for girls earning their highest awards (Bronze, Silver, and Gold).

JUNIOR: A Girl Scout in grades 4 or 5.

KAPER CHART: A chart that divides the jobs within the troop/group. The chart typically rotates or can easily be changed so that everyone experiences each job and has the opportunity for leadership.

MEMBERSHIP DUES: An annual fee to Girl Scouts of the USA for registration which goes directly to national organization.

MOTTO: The Girl Scout motto is “Be prepared.”

MY GS: A membership and volunteer resource tool built into one login, which allows you to access your member profile (for registration) and the Volunteer Toolkit.

PATCHES/FUN PATCH: Unofficial recognitions for participation in a troop/group or council-wide event that are worn on the back of the sash or vest.

PROGRAM AIDE TRAINING: This training is available for older girls (Cadettes, Seniors, Ambassadors) and focuses on deepening leadership skills and building up older girls to be mentors of younger girls.

QUIET SIGN: Girl Scout signal for silence in a group situation. The person in charge raises their right hand and Girl Scouts fall silent as they raise their right hand also.

REDEDICATION CEREMONY: A time for current members to reconnect with the Girl Scout mission and their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

SAFETY ACTIVITY CHECKPOINTS: Safety documents that complement Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise, which outline policies and guidelines for specific Girl Scouting activities. Examples include swimming, hiking, horseback riding, hayrides, and theme parks.

SENIOR: A Girl Scout in grades 9 or 10.

SERVICE PROJECT: A project that is done for the community and addresses an immediate, short-term need in the community.

SERVICE UNIT: Geographic unit of troops/groups within a region led by experienced volunteers who support leaders and troops.

SERVICE UNIT MANAGER (SUM): An experienced volunteer who manages the local service unit and works with local troop leaders.

SLOGAN: The Girl Scout slogan is “Do a good turn daily.”

TAKE ACTION PROJECT: A project that is done WITH the community, addresses the root cause of a community issue, and has long-term impact.

TREFOIL: International symbol of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting. The trefoil represents the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise.

TROOP CATALOG: Online list of troops across the council, which displays information about troop openings so more girls can find a troop to join.

TROOP DUES: A small amount of money girls bring to each meeting or to kick off the year to help cover the cost of basic troop supplies. Each troop decides whether or not to charge dues and sets the amount.

VOLUNTEER ESSENTIALS: A comprehensive resource for volunteers that covers topics on safety, responsibilities, traditions, the Girl Scout program, troop finances, and more.

VOLUNTEER TOOLKIT (VTK): A digital resource that lets you update your troop’s information, plan your entire year, and communicate with families.

WORLD ASSOCIATION OF GIRL GUIDES AND GIRL SCOUTS (W.A.G.G.S.): Worldwide organization of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts with over 146 member countries to which GSUSA belongs. WAGGGS headquarters are in London, England.

WORLD THINKING DAY (FEBRUARY 22): Celebrated since 1926, World Thinking Day is a day of international friendship, speaking out on issues that affect girls and young women, and fundraising for 10 million Girl Guides and Girl Scouts around the world. Girls traditionally learn about the cultures and traditions of WAGGGS member countries.



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