

What are the 2020 Girl Scouts Voices Count Surveys?

Girl Scouts Voices Count is a national survey of girls, parents or caregivers, troop leaders, and service unit volunteers that is conducted each year by the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI), a group of researchers who work at Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA). At Girl Scouts, we care about your experience, good or bad, and we want to hear from you! The survey results help GSUSA and local councils figure out how to improve and grow Girl Scouts so you can have the best Girl Scout experience.

Why is it important for me to take the survey? How will survey results be used?

It's super important for us to hear directly from girls and adults about what is happening (or not!) for them in Girl Scouts. We really want to know the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth about your Girl Scout experience—good and bad. If you had a difficult time this year in Girl Scouts and receive a survey invitation, please let us know so that we can make changes and give you the support and environment you need next year. If you had a fabulous year, we want to hear from you too so we can keep on creating those great experiences.

The *Girl Scouts Voices Count* survey collects all this information and feedback from Girl Scout councils across the country and around the world. This lets GSUSA understand similarities and differences between the needs and interests of all the different groups, regions, councils, etc. to make Girl Scouts better for everyone! It also allows councils like Girl Scouts of Northern California to improve our programs and customer service.

When is the survey being sent out?

The first email invitations to the **girl, parent or caregiver**, and **troop leader** survey will be sent out on Wednesday, May 6, 2020, with reminders on May 13, 20, and 27. The survey will close on June 2, 2020.

The first email invitations to the **service unit volunteer** survey will be sent out on Wednesday, June 3, 2020, with reminders on June 10, 17, and 24. The survey will close on June 30, 2020. For more information on the service unit survey, please see last section of FAQs below.

If you don't want to participate in the survey or receive reminder emails, make sure to click on the "Unsubscribe" or "Opt Out" link within the survey invitation. We hope you'll participate and help us out!

Who will invitations come from? Is it the same for girls and adults?

Should I check my spam folder?

NEW in 2020: Invitations for girls and adults will be sent to the primary email address listed on their membership record. In contrast to previous years when girls and adults received separate emails, this year **each household will receive one email, which will include survey links for all members of the family**. For example, if a household has an adult who is a troop leader and two girl members, they will receive one email that includes three survey links (one for the adult and one for each girl). Each survey will include the name of the family member so they know which survey to take.

The **sender name** will be "Girl Scouts of the USA," from email@email.girlscouts.org. Please make sure to add this to your safe senders list so that the email will not get blocked or sent to your spam folder. The **reply-to email** address will be gsvoicescount@girlscouts.org. The **subject line** will be, "Girl Scouts voices count—and we want to hear from you!" The survey may go to your spam filter, so be sure to check your junk folder if you can't find the email. If you use Gmail, also look in the "Social" or "Promotions" tabs.

Will I receive an invitation to take a survey?

All girls, their parents/caregivers, and troop leaders (including co-leaders) are emailed a survey if they:

1. are registered in Girl Scouts as of February 1, 2020;
2. opted in to receive emails from GSUSA; and
3. included a valid primary email address. If you opted out, or think you may have and still want to receive a survey, contact the GSRI at gsvoicescount@girlscouts.org.

Each household that meets the above criteria will receive one email that includes the survey links for all members of the family. Each family member's name will be listed to help identify who should be taking each survey. Each survey is customized for the individual, so please do not take a survey meant for someone else.

For more information on the service unit survey please see last section of FAQs below.

Someone in my family received a survey, but I didn't—what's up with that?

If you are a **girl** who wants to complete a survey, ask your parents to check their email to see if they received an invitation for you. If not, have them check their spam folder. If that doesn't work, ask your parents to contact the GSRI at gsvoicescount@girlscouts.org.

If you are an **adult** who wants to complete a survey, check your spam folder. If it's not there, email the GSRI at gsvoicescount@girlscouts.org with the subject line "Please send me a GSVC Survey for [Girl OR Parent OR Troop leader]."

How much time does it take to complete a survey?

About 15 minutes, depending on how detailed you are when answering the open-ended questions. Younger girls, especially Daisies and Brownies, will most likely need some adult help. The GSRI recognizes that the survey is a bit longer than people are used to, so we're offering a bonus!

As a thank you, all girls, parents or caregivers, and troop leaders who complete the survey will have a chance to win a \$50 gift card. Each survey will have 20 gift cards available for each group (i.e., 20 for girls, 20 for parents/caregivers, 20 for volunteers, and 20 for service unit volunteers), so make sure to complete your survey on time to qualify! It will be open the entire month of May.

You also don't have to finish the survey in one sitting—we'll automatically save your answers, and you can complete it at another time. Just click on the survey link provided in the email invitation again, and the survey will start where you left off.

What kinds of questions are in the survey?

Each survey group (girls, parents, and troop leaders) will receive slightly different questions. Everyone will be asked about how satisfied they are with their Girl Scout experience and how likely they are to stay in Girl Scouts in the coming year. Other questions include topics like: what's unique and special about Girl Scouts, reasons for staying in or leaving Girl Scouts, the kinds of activities girls do in Girl Scouts, relationships with other girls and with adults in Girl Scouts, the support parents and troop leaders receive from Girl Scouts, the benefits of participating in Girl Scouts.

This year you may also be asked questions related to COVID-19 to learn how it is affecting you, your troop, girls and families (including your own), and your community, and how Girl Scouts can best support you during this challenging time.

Who will be able to see my answers?

Your survey answers are confidential and used for research purposes only. That means your answers are private: a girl's troop leaders will never see her responses, and council staff will not see troop leaders' responses. You or your answers will never be personally identified in any report, written or

spoken. The results of this survey are only for the use of your council and GSUSA. You will not receive any sales or marketing contact as a result of your participation.

Are there any special rewards being offered for taking the survey?

There are rewards (called incentives in social science research) being offered to encourage and thank people for taking the survey. GSRI is offering a chance to win one of twenty \$50 gift cards for each survey group (girls, parents, troop leaders, and service units).

I'm trying to take the survey and having technical problems—what should I do?

What a bummer! If you're having problems, here are some things you can try:

- If you are accessing the survey on a mobile device, try taking the survey on a traditional desktop or laptop.
- Make sure JavaScript is enabled on your internet browser: <https://www.enable-javascript.com/>
- If JavaScript is enabled, please make sure any ad-blockers/pop-up blockers are turned off
- Make sure your internet browser is up to date.
 - Qualtrics surveys work with all of the supported versions of the following web browsers: Apple Safari, Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Microsoft Internet Explorer, and Mozilla Firefox.
 - Older versions of these browsers may not function as intended.

If you have tried the above and are still having problems, please email gsvoicescount@girlscouts.org. Because this is a national survey, Girl Scouts of Northern California is not able to fix technical problems, but hopefully GSRI will be able to help you out with whatever problem you are having, and they should reply within 24–48 hours.

What if I have questions or want more information about the survey?

For more information, email gsvoicescount@girlscouts.org directly. Because this is a national survey, Girl Scouts of Northern California is not able to send out survey invitations or fix technical issues.

It's hard for my younger girl to complete the survey since she is still learning to read and type. Why are younger girls given such hard surveys?

This is a tricky issue! Researchers know that it is difficult for some younger girls to take surveys, but their opinions are just as important as their older sister scouts! This is why we ask girls of **all** ages to complete surveys, with help from adults if needed, so that their voices are represented in the results equally. The council also collects data from younger girls in person, which makes it easier for them to participate, but we can't reach nearly as many girls that way. We really appreciate the time and energy younger girls and their caregivers put into completing surveys.

So this is a national survey, not a council survey. Does the council also send out surveys?

Occasionally! Often a council conducts surveys at in-person events or programs for girls and adults. We also sometimes send out online surveys for specific things, like the cookie program, travel, feedback from service unit volunteers, and more. This varies from year to year.

What if I need help right away? Should I use the survey to share my issue?

This survey is not the best way to get immediate or local assistance. It's a survey about national trends in Girl Scouting, so your issue may not be addressed in time. If you need assistance about a local matter, please contact Girl Scouts of Northern California directly: info@gsnorcal.org.

What is the Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI)?

The GSRI was formed in 2000. It serves as an applied research arm of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA), measuring the impact of Girl Scout programming and leading national conversations about girls and their healthy development via original studies. The GSRI also provides crucial information and recommendations to GSUSA and its 111 Girl Scout councils about the experiences of girls, parents/caregivers, volunteers, alums, and the communities they are a part of. By measuring the success of GSUSA's initiatives, the GSRI helps Girl Scouts remain the preeminent leadership organization for girls.

What other kinds of research projects does Girl Scouts do? Can I read about any of them?

The Girl Scout Research Institute does all kinds of cool research about girls, Girl Scouts, and other topics, including: the benefits of Girl Scouts for girls and alums, Girl Scout outdoor experiences, girls/Girl Scouts and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math), the Gold Awards, the Cookie Program and entrepreneurship, trends in girls' well-being, Girl Scouts and academic success, and more! You can read more about GSRI and read some of their reports at <http://www.girlscouts.org/research>.

FOR SERVICE UNIT OR COMMUNITY LEVEL VOLUNTEERS

Who is considered to be a service unit or Community Level volunteer?

These volunteers typically work at the service unit level or in other roles to support other volunteers. Examples of roles in our council include Service Unit Leader Support Manager, Service Unit Membership Support Manager, Service Unit Program Support Manager, Service Unit Registrar, Service Unit Treasurer, Service Unit Cookie and Fall Product Sales Managers, Service Unit School Rep, Day Camp volunteers, Resident Camp volunteers, and Learning Facilitators. Service unit volunteers are emailed a survey if they:

1. are registered in Girl Scouts as of February 1, 2020
2. opted in to receive emails from GSUSA; and
3. included a valid primary email address. If you opted out, or think you may have and still want to receive a survey, contact the GSRI at gsvoicescount@girlscouts.org.

I am a service unit volunteer and a troop leader/parent, and just completed a troop leader/parent survey. Should I also take this survey?

Yes, please! This survey is very different than GSUSA's troop leader and parent survey. In this survey, we would like to hear about your experience as a service unit volunteer.

When will survey results be shared with service unit volunteers?

GSRI will be sharing results with councils this fall, and GSNorCal will share with volunteers at winter summits.