

Reporting Responsibilities

One critical task for each troop, no matter what grade level, is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As the troop leader or treasurer, you're in charge of making sure money is spent wisely and that excellent records are kept (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and tracking all income, too. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as they learn to keep impeccable records. Reconciled troop bank statements and records should be available to parents and girls upon their request to review at each troop meeting. It is good practice to share troop finances with parents and girls quarterly to facilitate full disclosure on how much has been earned and where it has been spent by the recipients.

Troop Finance Report

By May 15th, troops are required to submit a year-end financial report accompanied by a bank statement ending April 30th of that year with their Service Unit Treasurer. Troops carrying over \$500 at the end of the year must document program plans for expending the funds on the [Troop Finance Report](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/finance/troop-finance-report-form.pdf) (https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/finance/troop-finance-report-form.pdf). These reports are randomly audited by service unit treasurers, council staff, and/or GSNorCal's finance team. The account may be subject to closure by September 30th if the report has not been received.

A copy of the Troop Finance Report must be furnished to girls and families. Many problems can be avoided if the person responsible for maintaining the bank account reports more often (monthly or at least quarterly, as appropriate for your troop). It also is suggested that the treasurer report to the girls and families after each product program with financial details. Keep receipts for every expenditure for a minimum of three years.

It can make the task of completing the Troop Finance Report easier if records are kept using the same income and expense categories as those on the form.

Members who handle credit card information must complete the PCI/DSS online module at training.gsnorcal.org. The Troop Finance Report module can be accessed from the Troop Leader, Troop Treasurer, or SU Treasurer Role pages at training.gsnorcal.org. These courses walk you through the process of completing the Troop Finance Report, if you need some coaching. It's not difficult, especially if you've kept good records.

Service Unit Reporting Responsibilities

Reconciled service unit bank statements and records should be available to service unit members to review at each service unit meeting.

Service Units should report regularly to the Service Unit Team and members on the service unit's financial situation. The Service Unit Finance Report must be submitted to GSNorCal each year by September 30. It's a good idea to become familiar with the form so that you can organize your records as you go.

Service Unit Financial Aid

Service Units are encouraged to provide financial aid for girls in the service unit for membership registration or to participate in troop, service unit, council, national, or international Girl Scouting opportunities if they are able to do so. It is important that a consistent process for awarding financial aid is established.

For assistance, contact Info@gsnorcal.org. These expenses should be included in the “donations” line on the Service Unit Finance Report (or “GSUSA Destinations” line if used for girls to attend national or international GSUSA Destinations events).

Service Unit College Scholarships are Not Allowed

While some service units have scholarship funds to help troops and girls who cannot afford the fees to attend SU events, service units should not award educational scholarships for girls. All Girl Scout money is to be used to fund activities for girls in Girl Scouting.

GSNorCal manages some funds that have come through endowments to support educational scholarships in specific areas. These funds are dispersed directly to the educational institutions on behalf of the girl. If a service unit has funds specifically donated for this purpose, they must work with GSNorCal staff to comply with all federal, state, and local laws. info@gsnorcal.org

NOTE: Many colleges, universities, and community funders have established scholarships that recognize girls’ leadership experience in Girl Scouting. Scholarship information is available at: <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/our-program/scholarships.html>

Financial Best Practices

Keeping complete and accurate records protects you from claims of financial impropriety. Your troop account must be audited at the request of a parent or the council. Keep receipts for every expenditure for a minimum of three years.

How would you feel if the parents in your troop thought these thoughts (real-life examples)?

- My daughter sold 862 boxes of cookies, but I really don’t know how that money was spent.
- I know our troop earned \$640 in cookie money this year, but I sure don’t think it was spent on the troop– they didn’t do that much.
- The leader’s daughter always seems to have all the uniform components. Why doesn’t she buy them for the other girls?
- I can’t believe that the leader spent all that money buying those flower arrangements for the Investiture ceremony.

Avoid the possibility of having your financial practices being called into question by following these best practices:

- Keep good financial records, including receipts (for a minimum of three years) for every expenditure, no matter how small.
- Involve girls (and sometimes parents) in financial decision-making. The more they know, the better!

- Remember that charging girls and their families for opting out of participating in product program, other troop activities and/or volunteering for the troop is not allowed.
- Review your troop bank statements monthly, and report on troop finances regularly to girls and families. The girls should have a say on how the money is spent, and be aware of how much is in their account.
- Financial guidelines in this document are intended to protect troops by keeping them in compliance with various laws and IRS regulations.

Be sure to use the [GSNorCal Troop Bank Change of Signers Request Form](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/finance/troop-bank-account-change-signers-form.pdf) immediately to change signers if a signer leaves the troop to protect yourself and the girls' funds. (https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/finance/troop-bank-account-change-signers-form.pdf).

Collect troop debit cards from those who are no longer signers on the troop account.