



GIRL SCOUTS BACKGROUNDER

Contact: Heather Burlew-Hayden, 800-447-4475, ext. 1605, hburlewhayden@gsnorcal.org

Girl Scouts of Northern California

Girl Scouts of Northern California is one of 111 Girl Scout councils in the United States. Girl Scouts of Northern California is an independent 501c3 organization, chartered by Girl Scouts of the USA.

We serve 40,000 girls in 19 counties in Northern California, from Monterey to the Oregon border. Our work is supported by more than 20,000 volunteers.

Girl Scouts of Northern California provides programming for girls, creates training and resources for volunteers, fundraises for Girl Scouts, and operates nine camp properties, nine program centers, and six retail shops.

Girl Scouts of Northern California holds a very strong financial position, with no debt and continued growth in assets. Our operating budget is nearly \$22 million. You can view our [most recent Girl Scouts of Northern California Annual Report](#) on our website.

Girl Scouts of the USA

Girl Scouts of the USA is the largest girl-serving organization in the nation. We're 2.5 million strong—1.7 million girls and 750,000 adults. In 2017, Girl Scouts was recognized by the World Value Index as the second most valued brand in the world for its significance and dependability to the communities and audiences we serve.

Girl Scouts is Girl-Centered

A girl-led, single-gender space allows girls to safely thrive. Our programs are tailored to maximize impact by teaching girls in the ways they learn best.

The single-gender environment offered by Girl Scouts creates an inclusive safe space where girls are free to explore their potential and take the lead without the distractions or pressures that can be found in a co-ed environment. In single-gender spaces, girls are more apt to take healthy risks, try new things, and take on leadership roles.

Girl Scouts Fuels the Female Leadership Pipeline

The need for more female leadership has never been more immediate or more obvious, making all-girl spaces more important than ever before. Girls need and deserve a place where they can just be girls—where they are free from the pressures and anxieties of co-ed spaces, where they can speak up, take the lead, and thrive. Girl Scouts prepares girls to navigate their world, because we understand that today's girls will become tomorrow's leaders.

- 50% of female business leaders, 80% of female tech leaders, 76% of female U.S. Senators, and 100% of female U.S. Secretaries of State were Girl Scouts!
- Check out [The Girl Scout Difference](#) to find out more about how Girl Scouts helps girls thrive.

Girl Scouts is Inclusive—and Always Has Been

From troop meetings to the Girl Scout Cookie Program, from camping to STEM exploration and beyond, Girl Scouts is always focused on creating girl-inclusive safe spaces where girls are free to be themselves. And when we say our program is inclusive, we mean it. At Girl Scouts, we are proud to boast that we serve girls of all walks of life. Girls of every race, class, ability, sexual orientation, gender expression, or religion have a home in Girl Scouts.

- In 1912, Girl Scouts was founded with an emphasis on inclusiveness. The first Girl Scout troop was made up of 18 culturally and ethnically diverse girls.
- In the 1950s, Girl Scouts was leading the charge to encourage councils to fully integrate all troops. In fact, in 1956, Martin Luther King Jr. deemed the Girl Scout organization “a force for desegregation.”
- Girl Scouts announced in 1991 that girls of all sexual orientations were welcome in Girl Scouts. This announcement was made to *confirm* its long-standing inclusion policies, at a time when Boy Scouts was affirming its institutional discrimination against LGBTQ boys and adults.
- Girl Scouts welcomes and is able to serve transgender youth in a setting that is both emotionally and physically safe. Professional guidance and training, based in youth development best practices, is provided to council staff and volunteers.

Girl Scout Camping and Adventure

From hiking and camping, to swimming and kayaking, from archery and horseback riding, to hatchet-throwing, adventuring in the great outdoors is an absolutely fundamental part of the Girl Scout experience. In fact, these experiences are so fundamental that many of our most advanced, modern, and cutting-edge programs take place outdoors—including STEM and civic engagement activities.

For more than a century, camping has been a cornerstone of the Girl Scout experience. Our organization remains committed to ensuring that girls have opportunities to take part in everything that a safe and fulfilling outdoor experience has to offer.

Girl Scout STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

STEM interest and confidence gaps between girls and boys start at age 6, and can be closed with programs that are designed specifically for girls. Girl Scouts can earn badges in engineering, robotics, environmental science, cybersecurity, and space science.

Our STEM content is timeless, helping girls develop a lifelong curiosity for how things work. Even as those fields develop, Girl Scouts will understand the fundamentals of thinking like an innovator. Girl Scout STEM curriculum and badge work is hands-on, solution-focused, and girl-led learning, not memorization. Hands-on learning techniques are at the core of Girl Scout programming and

have been since 1913, when Girl Scouts created its Electrician and Flyer badges, the very first STEM-related badges.

Girl Scouts' Highest Award

The highest award a Girl Scout can earn is the Girl Scout Gold Award. Girls who earn this award are called Gold Award Girl Scouts. The Gold Award requires completion of a rigorous service project that prepares girls for a lifetime of possibility thinking and doing. Gold Award Girl Scouts identify an issue in their community, develop a project plan, lead teams to develop a sustainable solution to the issue, and practice skills in advanced planning, organization, and team building. Gold Award Girl Scouts earn college scholarships, enter the military at a higher rank, and—most importantly—are committed to creating a better future for their entire community.

Girl Scout Cookie Program

As the world's largest girl-run business, the Girl Scout Cookie Program gives girls an opportunity to develop expertise and confidence in goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, business ethics, digital literacy, and more. During Girl Scouts of Northern California's 2019 Cookie Program, troops earned more than \$2.9 million to fuel their adventures, awards, and service projects.

Girl Scout Girl Safety

At Girl Scouts, there is nothing we take more seriously than the safety of our girls. All of our volunteers and staff are thoroughly background checked by a reputable company, and specific girl-to-volunteer ratios are maintained to keep girls supported, safe, and happy. Girl Scouts knows that, ultimately, keeping girls safe means keeping the focus on *them*. Our focus on girls' safety has never been in question.

Girl Scouts and Personal Faith

Girl Scouts is proud of its more than 100-year history of inclusivity and openness to girls of all faiths. We do not align ourselves with or offer programming through the lens of any particular religious belief or institution. We aren't here to dictate what a girl's faith should be or encourage her to incorporate any particular practice or belief into her life. Girl Scouts seeks to support a girl's personal faith journey if that is relevant to her personal growth, and believes that matters of personal faith are best left to families.

Girl Scouts' Marketplace Competition

Another youth-serving organization, Boy Scouts of America, has decided to allow girls to join their organization and is actively recruiting girls to its co-ed program. For more than 100 years, Girl Scouts has stood with girls as they lead with grit and compassion, overcome challenges, and stand up for themselves and others. We stand firmly in our conviction that girls need their own girl-only opportunities that have been designed by and for them, instead of being "allowed" to participate in organizations that do not have the expertise to support their unique needs.

Girl Scouts is **NOT** merging with Boy Scouts. We are, and always have been, two separate organizations. At no time was Girl Scouts approached about a potential partnership with Boy Scouts. Boy Scouts did not reach out to Girl Scouts of the United States until it had already made a

decision to recruit girls, and when it did reach out, the intent was only to inform our organization of that decision.

Common Editorial Questions/Notes

- Girl Scouts is the name of our organization and is used singularly (there is no “the” in front of it, e.g. “Girl Scouts *is* proud to provide a safe space for all girls”)
- Girl Scouting is used to refer to the experience that Girl Scouts provides its members (do not use “Scouting” or “Scouts” without Girl in front of it)
- Girl Scout Mission: Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.
- The highest award a Girl Scout can earn is called the Girl Scout Gold Award. Girls who earn the award are called Gold Award Girl Scouts.

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