

Road to the Podium: One Council, One Mission

MY27 Service Unit Incentive Guide

Everything we do in Girl Scouts is connected—recruitment, renewals, entrepreneurship, troop support, volunteer engagement, programming, and community-building. The Road to the Podium challenge recognizes the critical role service units play in making strong experiences possible for girls and volunteers throughout Northern California.

This year's service unit incentive is built around our council-wide theme: **One Council. One Mission.** The "Road to the Podium" challenge celebrates the important role service units play in that mission every single day.

Why We Created One Combined Incentive

For MY27, Membership and Entrepreneurship are partnering together to create: one shared campaign, one incentive structure, one tracking process, one pathway to recognition and bonus funding.

We are intentionally combining resources to simplify participation, reduce duplicate efforts, create larger incentive opportunities, strengthen partnerships between volunteers and staff, and recognize the full impact service units make.

How the Incentive Works

(1) Receive your official bingo card during spring Plan for Success meetings. (2) Complete activities across Membership, Entrepreneurship, Troop Support, Program, and Leadership Development. (3) Track progress with help from local Membership or Volunteer Support staff. Use the attached planner or your Plan For Success Google doc to track activities throughout the year. (4) Submit your completed card by **June 30, 2027** to redeem awards. (5) Celebrate recognition at the Fall Kickoff Summit in August 2027.

Bonus Challenge Events

Service Units are encouraged to bring all troops together for a large community-building event by hosting an **Opening Ceremony (Fall)** and/or **Closing Ceremony (Spring/Summer)**. These events can help build connections between troops, strengthen community, celebrate girls and volunteers, share updates, and create memorable shared experiences. Council will provide optional planning toolkits with sample agendas, icebreakers, and planning checklists.

Your Partnership with Staff

This campaign is designed as a partnership between service units and council staff. Your staff partners are here to help support your success throughout the year.

- **Membership staff** can support recruitment planning, membership progress, renewals, troop formation, and placement.
- **Entrepreneurship staff** can support Cookie Program and Fall Product planning, rally resources, and participation strategies.
- **Volunteer Support staff** can help with volunteer coaching, team development, recognition ideas, troop support strategies, leadership development, and renewal event or social media ideas.
- **Program Staff** can help with answering event paperwork questions, advertising events on the Council website, and sharing event ideas and inspiration.

Road to the Podium Goal

The goal is not simply to complete activities. It is to strengthen service units, support volunteers, grow girl participation, build stronger troop communities, create meaningful experiences for girls and families, and celebrate the incredible impact volunteers make every day.

Every recruitment event, renewal conversation, cookie rally, troop meeting, and girl program contributes to our shared mission: ***Building girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.***



MY27 Service Unit Incentive: Road to the Podium

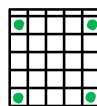
Autumn Qualifiers: Host a fall recruitment event	Team Synergy Grow the SU team for a strong finish. Add one new team member	Podium Finish Nominate 2 volunteers for a national or council award <i>Submissions due June 30, 2027</i>	Full Squad Sprint: 75%+ of Girl Scouts registered and uploaded in Smart Cookies participate in the Cookie Program	The Relay Race: Relay info to new troops. Create and implement a new troop welcome plan
Leadership Link Up: Host a fun activity or social event for troop leaders & admins	Strengthening the Relay: SU cookie team rostered and renewed for MY27 by <i>August 1, 2026</i>	Archery: Hit 90% of new youth goal _____	Summit of Champions: Attend 2 Summits ☐ Fall Kick-off ☐ SUpEr Cookie ☐ Membership	Gold Medal Innovation: Host a SU STEAM event
Youth Games Committee: Have one youth-led or planned event	Selecting the Torchbearer: Elect a delegate who attends Annual Meeting	Free Space	Synchronized Planning: Complete Plan for Success meeting with local staff	March to the Podium: Host a spring recruitment event
Business Sprint: Host a SU entrepreneurship event	Biathlon: Host 2 Girl Scout tables at community or school events Table 1 ☐ Table 2 ☐	International Relations: Collaborate with another service unit to host a joint event	World Record: 65% of youth registered and uploaded in M2 send 20+ emails during Fall Sales	Javelin Throw: Hit renewed youth goal of _____
Volunteer Victory Social Celebrate & appreciate volunteers	Steeplechase: Navigate hosting a SU outdoor event	Igniting the Flame: Host a Welcome Troop for new members	Expert Coaching: Use a Short and Snappy during a SU meeting	Photo Finish: Submit SU Finance Report by <i>September 30, 2026, 11:59 PM</i>

The Official Rule Book

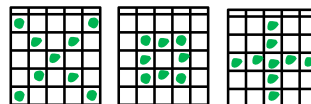
Compete in events from July 1, 2026–June 30, 2027 for a chance at a podium finish at the 2027 Fall Kickoff Summit. Once you've competed (completed) an event, mark it off on your bingo card. Varying types of "bingo" patterns will earn different rewards.

Ways to Play:

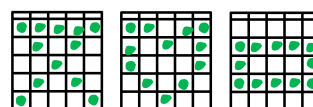
-  **Spirit of the Games Award** = 4 corners - \$100



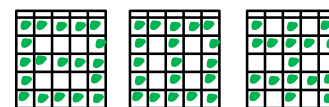
-  **Bronze Medal** = Mini frame or X or "+" - \$250



-  **Silver Medal** = Heart or "picnic table" or Rectangle- \$500

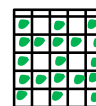


-  **Gold Medal** = 5+ Bingos anywhere on the card (not black out)- \$750



-  **Champion** = Blackout Bingo - \$1500 + **visit from the CEO**

- BONUS: SUs get to choose their podium "anthem" while they accept their medal at Fall Kickoff Summit



Submit completed bingo card, either in-person or digitally to your local staff support member by **June 30, 2027**. Recognition and rewards will be distributed at the Fall Kickoff Summit in August 2027.



Torchbearer Bonus

Host an ALL troops kick off and/or closing event for extra rewards. Invite all troops in your service unit to come together for fun, connection, sisterhood, and community. To make things easier, see the activity packets at the back of the Podium Planning Packet to help with hosting these events. To qualify, **at least 50% of the troops** need to have representation at the event.

- **Opening Ceremony** must be held between August - October
- **Closing Ceremony** must be held between April - June

Choose one reward per ceremony completed with 50% troops represented:

- Refreshments for a SU meeting
- SU team shirts
- Set of GS clipboards for the SU
- SU banner

Questions?

Connect with
your local staff
member or email
info@gsnorcal.org

Road to the Podium Planner

Membership

Autumn Qualifiers: Host a fall recruitment event

Date: _____ Theme: _____

Location: _____

Igniting the Flame: host a Welcome Troop for new members

Dates: _____

Point of contact: _____

Archery: 90% of your new youth goal

New youth goal: _____

March to the Podium: host a spring recruitment event

Date: _____ Theme: _____

Location: _____

Biathlon: host 2 Girl Scout tables at community or school events

Date	Event	Location

Entrepreneurship

Full Squad Sprint: 75%+ of total registered and uploaded youth in Smart Cookies participate in the Cookie Program by March 21, 2027.

☐ 75%+ Achieved ☐ Under 75%

World Record: 65% of total registered and uploaded youth in M2 send 20+ emails during Fall Sales by November 1, 2026.

☐ 65%+ Achieved ☐ Under 65%

Strengthening the Relay: SU Cookie team rostered by August 1. This includes being renewed/registered for MY27 and actively listed in the role in MyGS (Salesforce).

☐ Completed by 8/1/2026 ☐ Not completed

Troop Support

Troop Support:

The Relay Race: create and implement a new troop welcome plan to relay info to new troops

Leadership Link Up: host a fun activity or social event for troop leaders & admins

Date: _____ Theme: _____

Location: _____

Expert Coaching: use a Short and Snappy during a SU meeting

Date: _____ Short and Snappy: _____

Javelin Throw: hit renewed youth goal of _____

Volunteer Victory Social: celebrate & appreciate volunteers

Date: _____ Theme: _____

Location: _____

SU Leadership & Development

Team Synergy: Grow the SU team for a strong finish. Add one new team member.

New Team Member: _____ Role: _____

Podium Finish: Nominate at least 2 volunteers for a national or council award. Submissions due June 30, 2027

Volunteer: _____ Award: _____

Volunteer: _____ Award: _____

Volunteer: _____ Award: _____

Summit of Champions: Attend 2 annual summits

☐ Fall Kick-off (8/29/20) ☐ Super Cookie Summit (Nov. 7, 9, or 10, 2026) ☐ Spring Membership (March 2027)

Selecting the Torchbearer: Elect a service unit delegate(s) who attends Annual Meeting. Nominations will typically open in November with voting in December or January. Annual Meeting is April 17, 2027 at Camp Bothin.

Our delegate(s):

Synchronized Planning: Complete Plan for Success meeting with local staff

Plan For Success meeting date: _____

Photo Finish: Submit SU Finance Report by September 30, 2026 at 11:59 PM

☐ Completed by 9/30/2026 ☐ Not completed

Program

Gold Medal Innovation: Host a service unit STEAM event

Date: _____ Event Planner: _____

Details: _____

Youth Games Committee: Have one youth-led or planned event

Date: _____

Youth Planning Committee or Troop: _____

Business Sprint: Host a SU entrepreneurship event

Date: _____ Event Planner: _____

Details: _____

International Relations: Collaborate with another service unit to host a joint event

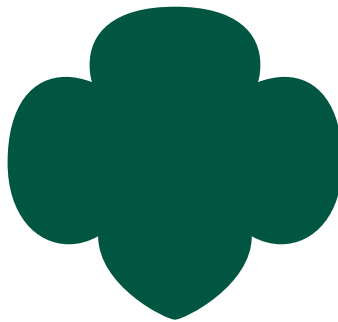
Date: _____ Event Planner: _____

Details: _____

Steeplechase: Navigate hosting a SU outdoor event

Date: _____ Event Planner: _____

Details: _____



“Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”



Juliette Gordon Low



Torchbearer Bonus:

Opening Ceremony Activity Packet

“Welcome Back to Girl Scouts” Event

Introduction

The goal of this ceremony is to kick off the Girl Scout year strong with other troops in your service unit. Girl Scouts will participate in Olympic-themed activities and begin brainstorming about what they want for their upcoming Girl Scout year. Caregivers and volunteers will support the ceremony as needed and have the opportunity to connect and network with one another.

Before the Event

Email troops in your service unit about the upcoming “Opening Ceremony” for the Service Unit. Choose a date between August and October. Ask troops to RSVP with rough attendance estimates so you can be sure to have enough supplies for everyone. Suggest that troops create a flag or banner to represent their troop for the opening ceremonies and/or to coordinate a simple costume theme with their troop.

While Attendees Check In

Have a roster of all attending troops and check them off as they check-in. This will be your list to read off for the “march of the troops” described below.

If troops do not have a banner prepared and would like to make them, provide chart paper and markers for them to make a simple banner while troops are still checking in. Let troops know that the banner will be used in the “march of the troops” activity in the next 30 minutes, so the banner does NOT need to be elaborate.

Materials for troop banner:

- Markers
- Chart paper

March of the Troops

Have Girl Scouts gather with their troops. Designate to troops where Girl Scouts will march with their troop, depending on where you’re holding the event (e.g. a small loop around the park, yard, pool, etc.) When everyone is gathered, read off the check-in list and pause between each troop announced. Example: “Everyone please welcome Troop 12345!” Encourage waiting Girl Scouts and caregivers to cheer for each troop number as it’s announced.

- Play upbeat music as each troop completes the march one by one. Suggested track to loop: [John Williams: "Olympic Fanfare and Theme"](#)
- After each attending troop has marched, you can recite the Girl Scout Promise and Law as a group and then introduce the craft activities and games. Suggested activities provided below.



Crafts and Games

1. **Torch of Friendship Craft** | Have each GS make their own Torch of Friendship to carry through the year of GS
 - Materials:
 - Paper Towel rolls
 - Tissue paper (red, orange, yellow)
 - Tape or glue
 - Optional: led lights
2. **Wish Stars Craft** | Each GS writes out their goal or wish for the Girl Scout year ahead on a star
 - Materials:
 - Star Shaped papers (star-shaped cookie cutters can be used to trace shapes)
 - Markers
 - Tape for sticking stars to display
 - Description:
 - Completed stars could either be displayed on a SU Olympic board to revisit at the closing ceremony OR Girl Scouts could take them home to keep in a spot they see every day
3. **Balance Challenge** (Spoon Relay)
 - Materials:
 - 2 spoons
 - 2 ping pong balls
 - 2 cones
 - Description:
 - Teams race in relay fashion to see who can go down, around the cone, and back to the line. A drop of the ball means the girl scout has to start over. First team to have all members successfully complete the challenge wins!
4. **Road to Gold Obstacle Course** | Train like an Olympic Athlete
 - Materials:
 - Pool Noodles
 - Tape
 - Table
 - 2x4 board or any object that can be used to create a “kid-friendly” obstacle
 - Description:
 - Girl Scouts can crawl under a table, jump over pool noodles, spin three time, balance walk on a tape line or 2x4. An adult can time the obstacle course and the Girl Scout who finishes with the fastest time (while finishing all the obstacles) wins!



Crafts and Games (cont.)

5. Olympic Aim (Toss)

- Materials:
 - Small bean bags
 - Tape or cones to mark where Girl Scouts should stand to make their toss
 - hoops or buckets
- Description:
 - Set the hoops or buckets at different distances and then youth play to see how many they can make it into. Can assign point values to hoops if youth want to make it game (e.g. closest hoop is 10 points, Farthest hoop is 20 points).

Wrap Up Medal Ceremony

- Materials: Gold medals (could be purchased at dollar store or could be created as a craft activity)
- Description:
 - At the close of the event, gather the group and award each GS a medal for participating in the opening ceremony
 - Sing make new friends or do a friendship circle to wrap up the event



Paperwork Pro - Submit your SU [event notification form](#) at least 3-4 weeks before your event



Confidence Boost - Smile when you give instructions. People follow smiles.

Power Up Moment - Play a 10-second music clip to reset the room's vibe (or get everyone's attention).

Opening Sweep - Do a 30-second walk-through of the area before attendees arrive.

Icebreaker Idea - Ask everyone their favorite thing they ate over summer break. Instant smiles.



Torchbearer Bonus:

Closing Ceremony Activity Packet

“Wrap up the Girl Scout Year” Event

Introduction

The goal of this ceremony is to celebrate and remember the highlights of the conclusion of another amazing Girl Scout year. This event brings troops together to reflect on their accomplishments, share favorite memories, and recognize the journey they’ve taken throughout the year. Whether or not your service unit hosted an Olympic-themed opening event, this ceremony can stand on its own as a festive opportunity to honor all that Girl Scouts have achieved and to close out the year on a high note.

Before the Event

Email troops in your service unit about the upcoming “Closing Ceremony” for their Service Unit. Choose a date between April and June. Ask troops to RSVP with rough attendance estimates so you can be sure to have enough supplies for everyone. Include in your email requests for any pictures from the troop’s Girl Scout year and any highlights they would like acknowledged at the ceremony. The pictures can be used to create a slideshow that can be played at the end of the event. Canva or google slides are good options for photo slide shows.

Set a due date for photos and stories. Use the stories to share a few exciting activities each troop completed at the beginning of the ceremony.

While Attendees Check In

As troops check-in, prompt troop leaders or Girl Scouts to plan to share one event they enjoyed doing this year with Girl Scouts. As with the opening ceremony, keep a list of the troops attending so you can include them in your opening address.

Troop Welcome and Recap of the Year

Welcome the troops by calling out their troop number, having troops stand for moment, and having other attendees clap to celebrate them closing out their year. After all the troops have been acknowledged, share a few of the highlights you collected from troops earlier via email. Ask a few Girl Scouts to share some of their favorite memories from this year, even if they have already been mentioned. You can close out the recap by reciting the Girl Scout Promise and Law, or weave that into the optional bridging ceremony.

Optional Bridging Ceremony

A “closing” ceremony can be a fun opportunity to hold a bridging ceremony for Girl Scouts that are moving to their next level. You will need to communicate with troop leaders ahead of the ceremony to determine who is bridging and to what level. Troop leaders can also call up their “bridging” Girl Scouts one by one.

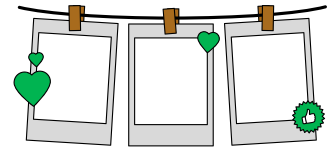
Materials:

- Medals or certificates acknowledging Girl Scouts movement to the next level of Girl Scouts
- A stage or assigned area for the “bridge” for Girl Scouts to walk across to receive their medal or certificate.

Crafts and Games

1. Victors’ Photobooth

- Materials:
 - Polaroid or phone camera
 - Scenic backdrop or Olympic-themed photo backdrop
 - Props for photos
- Description:
 - Girl Scouts can take individual or group photos showing their best “victory” pose.
 - Polaroid photos can be a nice take-home gift that does not require digitally sending files following the event



2. Friendship Ribbon Bracelets

- Materials:
 - Red, white, and blue ribbons cut into 3 foot lengths
 - Scissors
- Video Tutorial: [DIY Ribbon Bracelet "Loopy" - How To Make a Ribbon Bracelet](#)
- If short on time to learn skill, regular friendship bracelets are also a fun and accessible craft



3. Olympic Charm Key Chain

- Materials:
 - Pony beads of various colors
 - Special gold or silver accent beads (limit two per key chain)
 - Cord
 - Scissors
 - Key ring
- Description:
 - Cut the desired length of key chain cord. Fold cord in half and attach to key ring. String pony beads and accent beads through both dangling strings. Once complete, tie a secure knot to keep the beads from falling.
 - Completed key chains can be exchanged as SWAPS.



5. Human Knot Game

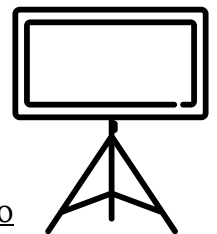
- Description: The Human Knot is a classic team-building and icebreaker game where groups of 6 to 12 people form a tight circle, tangle their arms by holding hands randomly, and then work together to untangle themselves into a complete circle without letting go. It doesn't require any materials, just participants.
- Set Up
 - **Circle Up**: Gather a team (ideally 6–12 players for the best level of challenge) and have everyone stand shoulder-to-shoulder in a tight circle, facing the center.
 - **Grab Right Hands**: Have everyone raise their right hand and reach across the circle to grab the hand of someone standing on the opposite side. You cannot hold hands with the person directly next to you.
 - **Grab Left Hands**: Have everyone raise their left hand and reach across the circle to hold the hand of a different person. Again, avoid holding hands with the people directly to your left or right.
 - **Untangle**: The group must work together to untangle the "human knot". Players can step over, under, or through the linked arms.
- Game Rules
 - **No Letting Go**: The most important rule is that no one may release the hands they are holding. If a connection is broken, the group must restart.
 - **Shift Grips**: While hands cannot be let go, palms may pivot, slide, and hand grips may be safely adjusted for comfort.
 - **The Goal**: The game successfully concludes when the entire group is completely untangled and standing in a normal, open circle

Closing Slideshow

After Girl Scouts have completed the activity stations, gather the group one last time. Thank them for their participation. If there are snacks provided at this event, this is a good time to have them set out. Say we will be closing this year out with a slide show. Girl Scouts and caregivers are welcome to watch, or socialize but the event will conclude when the slideshow is done.

Materials:

- Screen or laptop for displaying slide show
- Compiled slide show from pictures troops submitted
- Optional suggested closing music: [Royalty-Free Olympics Audio Tracks - Envato](#)



When the slideshow ends, offer a Friendship circle to close out the ceremony and the Girl Scout year. Congratulations! You made it to the finish line.