

This webinar companion is meant to supplement your New Troop Leader live webinar. It contains everything shared in the webinar, along with additional information, tips, and resource links. Click on the table of content topic to skip around the document.

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## Welcome to Girl Scouts

**What is Girl Scouts? (Video)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X30Vgja511E>

What does the acronym GSLE stand for?

It's What Girls do, how they do it, how they will benefit. It's a one of a kind Leadership Program for Girls.

**What is the Girl Scout Mission?** To Build Girls of \_\_\_\_\_\\_\_\_\_\_ \\_\_\_\_\_ who make the world a better place.

- A. charisma, smarts, and integrity
- B. courage, confidence, and character
- C. grit, moxi, and wits

**What is the Girl Scout Promise?**

- A. The way Girl Scouts agree to act everyday
- B. A ring they wear
- C. A charm bracelet with a trefoil

What symbol would Girl Scouts members display when saying the Girl Scout Promise or Law?

- A. Girl Scout Symbol
- B. Peace Sign
- C. Thumbs up

**Our Founder: Juliette Gordon Low (Video)** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFB0Jc\\_25mo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mFB0Jc_25mo)

### Additional Facts

- Born October 31, 1860, in Savannah, Georgia.
- Known as "Daisy" by her family and close friends. This is the same name all Kindergarten and First grade Girl Scouts are called.
- "Daisy's" vision was to not only provide girls with exposure to and respect for the natural world, but also self-reliance, discipline, and resourceful thinking.
- Daisy insisted that any young women be admitted, regardless of physical disability, socio-economic, racial, religious, regional, or ethnic background.

## Organizational Structure:

**Heart** – Girl Scouts are the heart of everything we do! There are over 25,000 girl members within our GSNorCal council.

**Troop** - Many girls in Girl Scouts belong to a troop in their school or community run by volunteers. Troops are where youth get most of their Girl Scout program and experiences from. Girl Scouts is able to deliver an amazing experience to girls thanks to our over 16,000 amazing volunteers!

**Service Unit** - Every troop is part of a geographic area called a service unit. Service units are great troop resources for fun activities and community service opportunities. Service units are led by a group of volunteers and staff from the GSNorCal council. There are about 80 service units within our council. You can download [a list of all the service units](#) in our council from the resources. If you are struggling to connect with your Service Unit, please reach out to your council staff member for help.



## GSNorCal Council

Girl Scouts of Northern California is led by our Chief Executive Officer, Board of Directors, and GSNorCal staff. It is comprised of 19 counties in Northern California. To better serve our volunteers GSNorCal staff serve volunteers in 5 geographic regions. You will work with a few key GSNorCal staff members who will help you get your new troop started.

## GSUSA

The councils across the United States, and many overseas military bases, make up the Girl Scouts of the USA Movement! Through partnerships with 111 Girl Scout Councils, Girl Scout programming is delivered to 1.7 million girls. We have over 800 thousand adult members and more than 59 million Girl Scout alums.

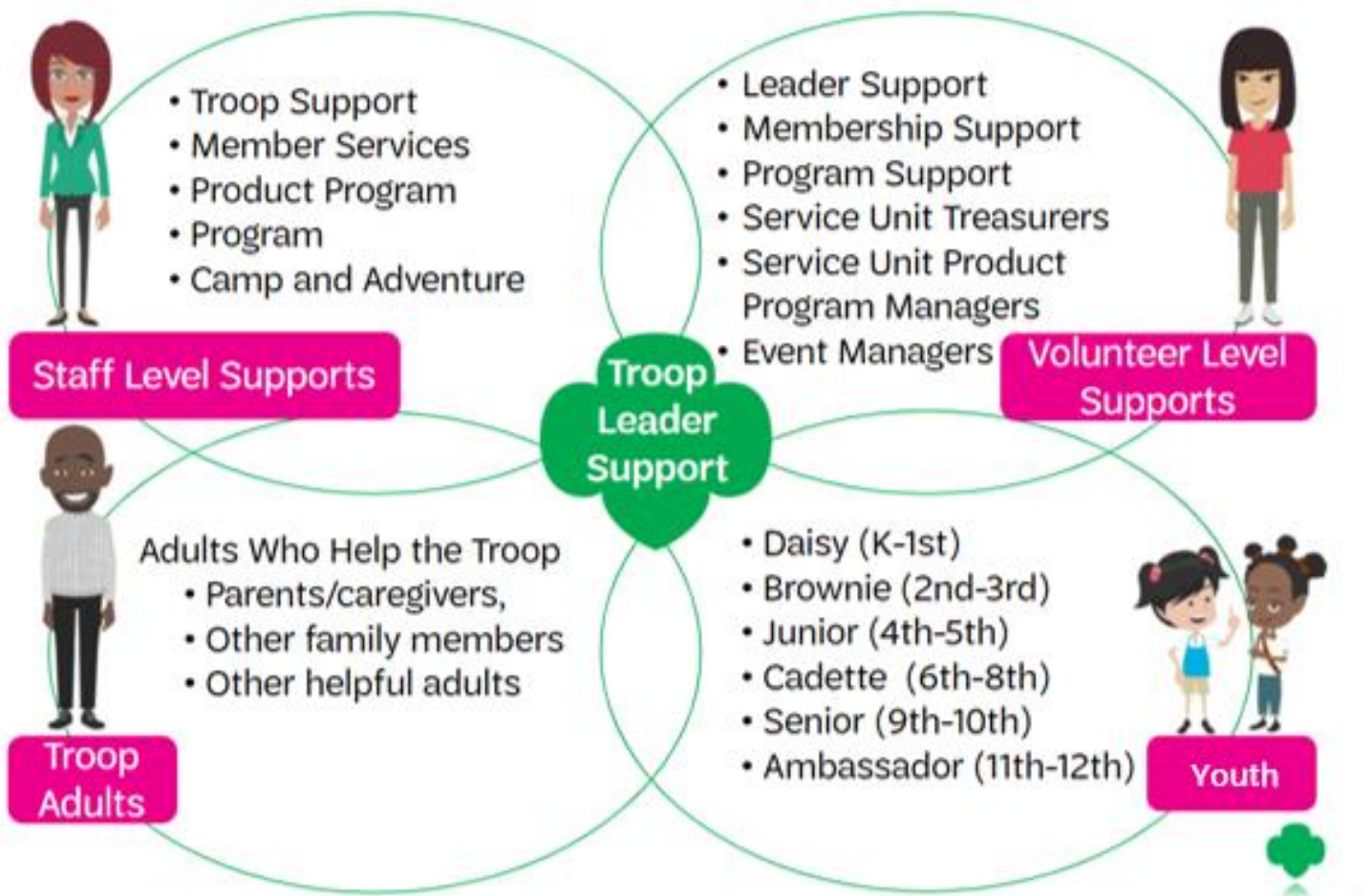
## WAGGGS

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts is a global association supporting the female-oriented and female-only Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting organizations in 150 countries. It was established in 1928 in Parad, Hungary, and has its headquarters in London, England. The organization is a sisterhood of close to 10 million youth and adults. GSUSA is the largest member organization.

## Your Leader Support Network and Their Roles:

**Staff Level Support.** Our GSNorCal staff are extremely dedicated and committed to making Girl Scouting available to all girls in our nineteen counties. GSNorCal has various staff members eager and ready to support troop leaders. The main staff you will communicate with are the Troop Support and Member Services staff. Additional staff you may come in contact with provide services to members and perform council support roles.

**Volunteer Level Support.** Much closer to you, possibly in your neighborhood, are Girl Scout volunteers ready, willing, and able to be your first line of support. These volunteers have "been there/done that" and may already have answers to your questions, or know the best way for you to tackle a challenging situation.



**Troop Adults.** Parents and caregivers are an important and invaluable resource. As more adults become involved the girls receive a network of supporting adults in their own lives. This has been shown to promote healthy, emotional, and social development in children of all ages. It also provides you with a team of adults all working together.

**Youth.** One of the greatest and most unique aspects of Girl Scouts is the Girl-Led focus in everything we do. This doesn't mean just doing whatever the girls and/or parents tell us they want us to do. It means involving the girls in the process of creating their Girl Scout experiences. From Daisy to Ambassador troops, there are age-appropriate ways the girls can

be involved in everything from choosing and planning troop meetings and experiences to troop management tasks.

## Troop Leader Resources

- ◆ **gsnorcal.org: Forms and Documents:** <https://www.gsnorcal.org/en/our-council/documents-and-publications.html>
- ◆ **Volunteer Learning Portal:** <https://training.gsnorcal.org/>
- ◆ **New Troop Leader Resources:** <https://training.gsnorcal.org/course/iew.php?id=202>
- ◆ **Member Services:** [info@gsnorcal.org](mailto:info@gsnorcal.org) | 800.447.4475, ext.0
- ◆ **Service Unit Contact List:** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/su-list.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/su-list.pdf)

## What it Means To Be A Troop Leader

**Troop Leader & Co-op Administration Requirements:** Check off what which requirements you have already satisfied.

- Current Registered Adult Girl Scout Member
- Approved Background Check on file
- Complete Mandated Reporter Training
- Complete New Troop Leader Training
- Review [Girl Scouts Safety Guidelines](#)
- Review [Volunteer Policy](#)
- Review [Volunteer Essentials](#)

### Troop Rosters:

- ◆ **Using MyGS and the VTK to check Troop Rosters:** <https://youtu.be/eOrNsB1fiu0>

As Girl Scouts begin populating your troop, you will be able to see your troop roster in your Member Account and the Volunteer Toolkit

Tip:

- My Account in MyGS, is the go-to portal for troop leaders to manage member information, such as roles, addresses and phone numbers, and purchase or renew memberships.
- The Volunteer Toolkit is the best source for communicating with families and printing rosters, and finding meeting plans for all badge-earning meetings!

**What is Your Role as a Leader?** Fill in the blank

- Get to know each member of your \_\_\_\_\_ to better understand their \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.
- Oversee the \_\_\_\_\_, commit to good \_\_\_\_\_, and troop \_\_\_\_\_.

### Word Bank

financial practice | interests | troop | needs | troop finances | money management

**Leadership Skills (Video)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CE070nvWsJs>

## 5 Best Practices as a Troop Leader

1. **Meet regularly** - twice a month is ideal, or at least monthly. Every troop is different. Find what works best for your program level and troop. You can always adjust your meetings to fit the needs of your troop.
2. **Imperfect is perfect** - keep it simple so you, the girls, and parents have a good time. Remember, sometimes girls learn more when they can see how you can be flexible and overcome an activity or trip that doesn't go according to plan.
3. **Celebrate achievements** - whether you do one badge or three-celebrate! It doesn't have to be a big celebration sometimes small recognitions can work just as well.
4. **Variety is key** - Using the Essential Girl Scout Experience will help you provide a variety of activities for girls to get outside, do community service, participate in product programs, or go on a special field trip or outing. Experiencing new things is one of the most powerful elements Girl Scouts offers.
5. **Reach Out** - If you need help or ideas at any time, remember you are not alone. Reach out to your service unit or contact Member Services at [info@gsnorcal.org](mailto:info@gsnorcal.org) or call 800-447-4475, ext. 0, M-F 9am-5pm.

## First Troop Meetings

### Troop Meeting Logistics

#### How will we meet?

Will you meet In-person or virtually? When making your decision: Always check [GSNorCal's Coronavirus updates](#) for guidance on when it is okay to meet in-person

#### Where will we meet?

<p><i>In-person options:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools, libraries, places of worship, or community centers make great meeting places.</li> <li>• The space should be free to use if at all possible.</li> <li>• If you need help finding a place, you can contact your service unit for assistance.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Virtual options:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If meeting virtually, you'll need to decide which platform will work best for your troop. There are lots of options out there, many with free trials and low-cost subscriptions.</li> <li>• You can find several virtual meeting planning tools in the Troop Year Plan including information about discounted <a href="#">gsZoom accounts</a>.</li> </ul>
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#### What day and time will we meet?

- What time will you meet? After school? Before or after dinner? On a weekday or weekend?
- Find out what works best for you and your leadership team.
- You can even send a survey out to families to find a day and time that works best for them too. Try to have meetings when the most Girl Scouts in the troop can join.

#### How often will we meet?

- Most troops meet every other week with some opting to meet weekly and some older Girl Scouts troops may meet monthly.
- Meeting frequency may depend on the work your troop is doing. If they are actively trying to complete a badge over the course of several meetings, once a week may be

good. However, if the Girl Scouts in your troop are very busy, perhaps you may need to meet every other week.

- Remember to be flexible, sometimes the frequency and days will need to change.

### How long will we meet?

- Your meeting duration will depend on the time you will meet- are you meeting right after school? Before or after dinner?
- If you will be including snack as part of your meeting structure-make sure to add an extra 15 minutes to your meeting time.

Here are some suggested meeting durations per program level:

<u>Suggested meeting durations for in-person meetings:</u>	<u>Suggested meeting durations for virtual meetings:</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daisy (grades K-1) 60 to 75 minutes (if including snack)</li> <li>• Brownie (grades 2-3) and Junior (grades 4-5) 75 to 90 minutes (if including snack)</li> <li>• Older Girl Scouts (grades 6-12) 90 to 120 minutes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Daisies (grades K-1) 25 –30 minutes</li> <li>• Brownies (grades 2-3) 30-35 minutes</li> <li>• Juniors (grades 4-5) 40 –45 minutes</li> <li>• Older Girl Scouts (grades 6-12) 60 minutes</li> </ul>

### Meeting Place Considerations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Cost:</b> The space should be free to use if at all possible. If you need help finding a place, you can contact your service unit for assistance</li> <li>• <b>Size:</b> Make sure the space is large enough to accommodate the whole group and all planned activities.</li> <li>• <b>Availability:</b> Be sure the space is available for the day and the entire length of time you want to meet.</li> <li>• <b>Resources:</b> Determine what types of furnishings come with the room and ensure that the lighting is adequate. A bonus would be a cubby of some sort, where you can store supplies or a safe outdoor space for activities.</li> <li>• <b>Safety:</b> Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated or cooled (depending on your location), free from hazards, and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional.</li> <li>• <b>Facilities:</b> Sanitary and accessible toilets are critical. Communication-friendly: Be sure your cell phone works in the meeting space.</li> <li>• <b>Allergen-free:</b> Ensure that pet dander and other common allergens won't bother susceptible youth during meetings.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Accessibility:</b> Be sure the space can accommodate youths and adults of all abilities who may be in attendance.</li> <li>• <b>Speaking Points:</b> If this is your first time asking for a Girl Scout meeting place, here are a few speaking points to get you started. Consider replacing the bolded underlined terms to suit your needs!</li> <li>• <b>First Aid Kits:</b> A recommended First Aid Kit supplies list is listed for you in the GSNorCal Health and Safety Plan. You can also check out the Anatomy of a First Aid Kit document from the resources. In addition to standard materials, the following emergency safety information should be kept with your First Aid Kit:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <a href="#">GSNorCal Health &amp; Safety Plan</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">GSNorCal Emergency Management Plan</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">GSNorCal Emergency Cards</a> with office telephone numbers and emergency telephone number 1-877-636-1912</li> <li>○ Contact information for parents/caregivers (permission and health history forms)</li> <li>○ At home emergency contact information (for trips and events)</li> <li>○ Phone numbers for emergency services such as the police, fire department, hospital, and poison control. There is a template in the GSNorCal Health &amp; Safety Plan for you to keep these important phone numbers.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
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## Talking Points:

If this is your first time asking for a Girl Scout meeting place, here are a few speaking points to get you started. Consider replacing the bolded underlined terms to suit your needs!

“I’m a Girl Scout Volunteer, with a group of **12 Girl Scouts**. We’re doing lots of great things for youths and for the community, like **donating to the local food bank** and **restoring the nearby park**. We’re all about leadership-the kind that Girl Scouts use in their daily lives and the kind that makes our community better. We’d love to hold our meetings here because **this location is close enough for all our members**”

## Meeting Place Safety

<p><b>Outside the Meeting Place</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Lighting</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Does the lighting system illuminate entrances, walkways, and parking?</li></ul></li><li>• <u>Access Points</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are facility access points located in open, well-traveled areas?</li><li>○ Are sidewalks and exterior stairs clear of snow and ice?</li></ul></li><li>• <u>Playground Safety</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Is playground equipment anchored so that it does not tip, slide, or move in an unintended manner?</li><li>○ Are there pinch, crush or tearing points on individual pieces of playground equipment that could injure a Girl Scout?</li><li>○ Do surface materials in fall zones under playground equipment absorb shock (materials such as rubber-like material, sand, gravel; shredded wood products)?</li></ul></li><li>• <u>Pool Safety</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ If the property has a pool, is the pool access locked so that youths cannot enter the pool area unless swimming activities are to be conducted?</li><li>○ Are pool chemicals stored, secured, and out of reach from children?</li></ul></li></ul>	<p><b>Inside the Meeting Place</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Exits</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are there two or more separate, usable exits available?</li><li>○ Are exits ever blocked?</li><li>○ Are exits available clearly marked with emergency lighting?</li></ul></li><li>• <u>Walkways</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are steps clear of trip and fall hazards?</li><li>○ Are handrails and railings on stairs present and secure?</li><li>○ Are floors and walking areas free of trip and fall hazards?</li><li>○ Is floor space adequate for the desired activities?</li></ul></li><li>• <u>Facilities</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are toilets and sanitary facilities accessible?</li><li>○ Do youths or adults have special needs that require adaptations of facilities for their disabilities?</li></ul></li><li>• <u>Indoor Safety</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are electrical outlets protected with outlet covers?</li><li>○ Are extension cords tucked away so that they will not be walked on or trip someone?</li><li>○ Are barriers or warnings provided for hot surfaces like fireplaces, heaters, radiators, and wood stoves?</li></ul></li><li>• <u>Emergency &amp; First Aid</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are fire extinguishers available?</li><li>○ Is first aid equipment readily available?</li><li>○ Is telephone available and operational?<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are emergency phone numbers provided for fire, ambulance, police, and poison control center?</li></ul></li></ul></li></ul>
<p><b>Physical Hazards at the Meeting Place</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <u>Cleaning Supplies</u><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Are all chemical cleaning solutions kept out of reach and properly stored to prevent access to children?</li></ul></li></ul>	



- Medication
  - Are all prescription medications kept out of reach and properly stored to prevent access to children?
- Weapons
  - Are all weapons kept out of reach and properly stored to prevent access to children?
- Bug Free
  - Is the area reasonably free of biting, and stinging insects?
- Machinery
  - Is access restricted to recreational equipment such as ATVs, archery equipment, trampolines, and other sports equipment unless as part of the planned and supervised activity when allowed?
  - Are all tools and power equipment kept out of reach and properly stored to prevent access to children?

### Places of Residence

If you or another volunteer chooses to hold Girl Scout meetings at their residence, they carry the same legal liability as when any other visitor is on their property or at their place of residence. Make sure to carry adequate homeowner's or renter's insurance to protect your financial interests. This means if an accident occurs during a Girl Scout meeting in a home, the homeowner's or renter's insurance would be the primary insurance to cover personal injury and Girl Scout insurance and/or family insurance would be secondary.

### Virtual Meeting Place Safety

- It is important to continue to follow Girl Scout ratios, which means at least two unrelated adult volunteers present when gathering with youth virtually.
- For younger Girl Scouts it is important to also have parents and caregivers be present, within earshot, during virtual meetings to ensure safety and assist with technology, if needed.
- Make sure you know your virtual platform safety features and how to enable them.
- Make sure the virtual meetings are set to private so that only invitees can attend.
- Do not share sign up links so that anyone can join.
- For more information on keeping youth safe during virtual troop meeting review the [Safety Activity Checkpoints for Virtual Troop Meetings](#) and [Computer and Internet Use](#) with the adult volunteers and youth.

### **Contracts and COIs**

When securing a meeting site for Girl Scout meetings, activities or events, the site manager or owner may ask for a **signed contract, use of facilities agreement, or hold harmless agreement**. If Girl Scouts, your service unit, or your committee will be responsible for the site, liability, insurance or payment, you'll need to get the **contract or agreement signed by a designated Girl Scout staff member**. Girl Scouts of Northern California is the legal entity that may sign a contract on behalf of "Girl Scouts." Troops and service units are not legal entities. Therefore, all contracts, agreements, Memorandums of Understanding and facility use forms that benefit or impose responsibility or potential liability on "Girl Scouts" must be approved and signed by authorized staff representatives of Girl Scouts of Northern California. All contracts must be approved and signed in accordance with board-established requirements. GSNorCal's Bylaws establish this requirement for GSNorCal's protection.

- Include the deadline for signing and where and to whom the signed contract should be sent.
- Don't wait until the last minute, as contracts may take 7-10 business days to review and sign.

<p><b>Contact the GSNorCal's Risk Management Team</b> at <a href="mailto:insurance@gsnorcal.org">insurance@gsnorcal.org</a> to be approved and signed by authorized staff representatives of Girl Scouts of Northern California.</p>	<p><b>Instructions for Reserving Facilities that Use Online Reservation Platforms:</b> Email <a href="mailto:insurance@gsnorcal.org">insurance@gsnorcal.org</a> so that council can set up the account for you. See <a href="#">Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise- Meeting Place Considerations</a> for more information</p>
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## Parent/Caregiver Meetings

What 3 key elements should you introduce families to prior to hosting a troop meeting?

1. Adult to Girl Ratio Chart
2. Annual Permission Form
3. Girl Health History Form
4. Cookie Program Line up this season

## Troop Meeting Structure (Video) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgCHvEOY6Vo>

Check out the [New Leader's Guide to Success](#) (page14) for a breakdown of the 6 elements mentioned in the video.

## Preparing for Troop Meetings

### Before meetings

- Have the supplies you need ready. Do youths need to bring anything? Make sure to send reminders.
- Is there anything you can setup or prepare before the Girl Scouts arrive? Having as much as you can ready will help keep the girls engaged. If able, assign a patrol (a few youths) to help you set up.
- Have you practiced what you will say and do with your assistant leader? Being prepared with the content and activities you will be doing will help you feel confident and ready for a fun activity.

### Activity Bank

- Have easy to access "Box of FUN!" filled with simple grab and go activities for when Girl Scouts finish an activity early or when they need a break, such as:
  - Coloring sheets and crayons for younger Girl Scouts
  - Jump ropes, hula hoops, balls
  - Song sheets
  - Easy crafts
- Instructions for simple games and any necessary materials/equipment

### Troop Paperwork and communication

- Use an accordion folder or portable filing system/box that you can collect and store:
  - Health History Forms (in sealed envelope)
  - Annual Permission Form or specific Permission Forms
  - Troop Roster with each Girl Scout's name and parent contact information, and emergency contact information
  - Any other troop paperwork
- Discuss with families the best way to communicate. Will you text, email, set up a group website, communicate via the Volunteer Toolkit or some other method?
- Make sure to allow time before and after troop meetings to speak to any parents who may want to communicate in person. You may need to meet in-person to collect paperwork or

money, or to discuss up-coming trips or activities or any challenges a Girl Scout may be facing.

## **Finances**

- Troop leadership adults should collect money from parents for product programs and parent paid monies for troop expenses and activities.
- Use Cheddar Up or if collecting money in-person make sure both parties count the money and complete a receipt with both parties' signature to acknowledge the transaction and a written record of the payment.
- Have a can with a lid, fanny pack, pouch, or some other method to secure and safeguard troop money received in person.
- Use a Kaper Chart to designate a Girl Scout to be the dues collector. There are a lot of fun ideas on the internet.

## **Safety**

- Follow the adult-to-girl ratio for troop meetings to determine how many registered and screened adult volunteers need to be present.
- Be sure to check [GSNorCal's Coronavirus Updates](#) to see if you are able to host in-person troop meetings. it see if you are able to host in-person troop meetings.
- All troops should have a well-stocked first aid kit at every meeting. Start with a simple store bought first aid kit for your troop meetings and make sure to buy additional bandages.
- Make sure to include first aid supplies for the common injuries that could result from the type of activity your troop will be doing.
- Reference [GSNorCal's Anatomy of a Troop First Aid Kit](#) to ensure you have everything that you need to be prepared.

## **First Troop Meeting Checklist**

### **Cover the basics**

Review the details about when and where the meeting will take place and make sure parents/caregivers are aware. Send out meeting invites and reminders and make sure to send a welcome message to all youth who join your troop.

#### ◆ **New Troop: Early Decisions for the Group:**

[https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/new-troop-decisions.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/new-troop-decisions.pdf)

### **Get ready**

Use the Volunteer Toolkit to verify your troop roster and email parents. This might also be a great time to ask parents to provide you with any needed items, such as health history forms, uniform order forms, and troop dues. Use the tips in this course, the [New Leader's Guide to Success](#), and the [Volunteer Toolkit](#) to plan your agenda

### **Review and practice your agenda.**

Prepare for the meeting by reviewing and practicing your meeting agenda. Make sure to include the six parts of a meeting. Practice your agenda to ensure you stay on time. You'll feel calmer during the actual meeting and ready to adjust as needed.

### **Prepare for fun!**

When the youth and parents see that you're prepared for the meeting and ready to have a great time, they'll follow your lead!

## **First Troop Meetings Tips (video)** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILOBmNOxTGU>

- Get to know your Girl Scouts
- Brainstorm what they want to do
- Introduce them to GS traditions
- Introduce the volunteer team to the Girl Scouts and caregivers
- Learn with your Girl Scouts
- Keep it youth led
- Doesn't need to be perfect, it's just about making it fun!

### First Four Meeting Outlines for new Troops:

- ◆ Daisy: [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/daisy/daisy-first-four-meetings.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/daisy/daisy-first-four-meetings.pdf)
- ◆ Brownie: [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/brownie/brownie-first-four-meetings.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/brownie/brownie-first-four-meetings.pdf)

## **Parent Meeting**

- Hold an annual parent meeting at the beginning of the troop year:
  - Collect Annual Permission and Health History Forms
  - Set the troop up for success
  - Outline expectations
  - Answer questions
  - Build your team
  - Engage families in the Essential Girl Scout Experience
- Hold a parent meeting before participating in product programs
- End of the year meeting:
  - Encourage troop renewal
  - Engage youth and families in summer activities
- Get everyone ready for the next year
- ◆ **Parent Meeting Checklist and Agenda -**  
[https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/parent-caregiver-meeting-agenda.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/parent-caregiver-meeting-agenda.pdf)
- ◆ **Parent/Caregiver YouTube Playlist (in-person and virtual parent meeting videos)** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-vq0XjMOf8&list=PLSxv1arnLys\\_OgYAZib5c3LVMAICyqUNf](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-vq0XjMOf8&list=PLSxv1arnLys_OgYAZib5c3LVMAICyqUNf)
  - In-Person Parent Meeting <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b-vq0XjMOf8>
- ◆ **Adult Interest Survey** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/adult-interest-survey.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/adult-interest-survey.pdf)

## **Getting Adults to Help**

### **Forming Your Troop Support Team**

## Troop Leadership Roles

Every troop will need to secure troop leadership roles right away.

- Registered adult members with an approved background check
- Complete GSNorCal online training
  - Mandated Reporter & Role Training

<u>Troop Leader/Assistant Leader</u>	<u>Troop Treasurer</u>
<p>The troop leader and the assistant troop leader are responsible for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-managing the troop</li> <li>• Ensuring Girl Scout safety</li> <li>• Coordinating and planning troop meetings and activities</li> </ul> <p>Some troops have a main troop leader and assistant leaders serve in a support role, and some troops run as a co-op where many troop leaders share the responsibility of managing the troop and running troop meetings.</p>	<p>The Troop treasurer is the primary signer on the troop bank account along with the troop leader and/or assistant leader who are the secondary signers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The troop treasurer should be a different person than the troop leader to ensure sound financial management of the troop funds.</li> <li>• The treasurer is responsible for keeping the troop financial records and keeping track of troop income and expenses and will work with the troop leader to submit the annual Troop Finance Report.</li> </ul>

## Troop Committee Roles

<u>Product Program Manager</u>	<u>Trip Advisor</u>
<p>Before your troop can participate in the Fall Take Action or Cookie Program, you'll need to secure a GSNorCal trained Product Program Manager. You can get one volunteer to manage both programs or ideally, you can split this role into two roles and recruit two different volunteers.</p> <p>Troop Product Program Managers will work with the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Unit Product Program Manager</li> <li>• Troop leadership team</li> <li>• Girl Scouts and parents in the troop to manage all aspects of the program.</li> </ul>	<p>Before leaving the regular meeting place for a planned activity, outing, overnight, or trip, you'll need a GSNorCal trained and certified Trip Advisor.</p> <p>The Trip Advisor assists youth with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning</li> <li>• Budgeting</li> <li>• Organizing outings, indoor overnights or trips.</li> <li>• making reservations</li> <li>• planning logistics</li> <li>• organizing drivers, chaperones and first aiders when needed.</li> </ul> <p>They also file any necessary paperwork before the trip and are responsible for keeping youth safe during the outing or trip.</p>

<b><u>Outdoor/Camp Advisor</u></b>	<b><u>First Aider</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before leaving the meeting location for a planned outdoor hike, cookout, sleep out, campout, or backpacking adventure, you will need a GSNorCal trained and certified Outdoor/Camp Advisor who is certified and competent in the outdoor skills she/he will be teaching youth.</li> <li>• The Outdoor/Camp Advisor completes training and assists youth in planning, budgeting and organizing the troop's outdoor experience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Troop First Aider maintains the troop first aid kit and accompanies the troop on outings, activities, and trips where a first aider is required as listed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints.</li> <li>• The troop first aider maintains a current first aid and CPR certification, understands Girl Scout treatment protocols and emergency management procedures, and ensures that the GSNorCal Health and Safety guidelines are followed.</li> </ul>

### **Troop Support Roles**

<b><u>Troop Driver</u></b>	<b><u>Troop Chaperone</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Troop drivers drive Girl Scouts to planned Girl Scout activities, outings, overnights, and trips.</li> <li>• This volunteer must be 21+ years old, have a valid driver's license and have a registered, insured vehicle that is in good working condition.</li> <li>• Troop drivers must follow GSNorCal troop driver guidelines and California car seat laws.</li> <li>• Current membership and approved background check is required.</li> <li>• Troop Driver online training is required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Troop chaperones are adults who help meet the minimum adult-to-girl-ratios for troop meetings, activities, and outings.</li> <li>• Troop chaperones support youth, keep them safe, and role model appropriate Girl Scout behavior.</li> <li>• Current membership and approved background check is required.</li> <li>• Troop Chaperone online training is required.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Award Advisor</u></b>	<b><u>STEM Advisor</u></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The award advisor assists older Girl Scouts (Juniors through Ambassadors) with completing the prerequisite badges and Take Action projects required to earn the Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award.</li> <li>• They coach youth in the planning, budgeting, and execution of the Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award Project.</li> <li>• Current membership and approved background check is required if supervising youth, driving youth, or handling troop money.</li> <li>• Highest Award and Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award training is required.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• STEM advisors help Girl Scouts with their Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math related badges, Journeys, and program activities.</li> <li>• Current membership and approved background check is required if supervising youth, driving youth, or handling troop money.</li> <li>• STEM training and resources are available.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Troop Registrar:</u></b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeps track of member information, ensures that all Girl Scouts have completed registration and adult volunteers are registered and screened.</li> <li>• They will create a troop roster, maintain a contact list, and keep track of the troop records.</li> <li>• They annually coordinate the registration process and remind members to register.</li> <li>• This role manages member information and must have a current membership and approved background check.</li> </ul>	

Check out the [New Troop Decisions](#) document for a list and explanation of other troop roles.

## **Co-Op Troops**

All adults who are able to do so will take on a leadership role within the troop. Adults rotate meeting leadership; other roles are divided according to interest and talents. Specifics can be determined according to each troop.

- Whether your troop is a traditional troop or a co-op troop the Troop Leader or the Troop Admin is responsible for compliance.
- All Adult volunteers who take on a specific role be it in a Co-op troop or traditional troop structure, will need to complete role specific training.
- If you need advice for your specific Troops situations reach out to you council staff member.

## **Tips for Recruiting Volunteers:**

### **Be Specific**

- Ask for help specifically—sending a general plea in a newsletter or via email doesn't always work.
- Adults are more willing to volunteer if they understand what is required of them.

### **Be Personal**

- Call parents/guardians of new Girl Scouts, or host a meeting to introduce yourself and welcome them.
- Make yourself available after meetings to greet and chat with the parents—let them get to know you, and take the time to get to know them.
- Send a parent interest survey to find out more about the parents' profession, interests and talents.
- Adults are more willing to help when they feel a personal connection.

### **Be Respectful**

- Be respectful of a potential volunteers' time.
- Give sufficient notice; be specific about what you're asking for and when you need the help.

### **Be Inclusive:**

- Invite the parents to attend troop/group meetings.
- Invite parents to special troop ceremonies.
- Do activities that involve family interaction: e.g. youths develop family safety plans.
- Plan something special: family picnic, awards ceremony, Me and My Guy/Gal activity, etc.
- Families that feel welcomed and included are more likely to want to stay involved and help out.

### **Communicate**

- Open and regular communication is the best way to gain support from parents/guardians. Establish good communication: newsletters, e-group, parent meetings, etc. The more families know about the Girl Scout's plans and the help that is needed, the more likely they are to offer to help.

- Communicate with your adult volunteers to let them know what roles you need help with and give them a clear understanding of the volunteer requirements and how much time each role will take.

### **Recognize and Thank**

- Recognize and thank parents for their contributions. Here are a few ideas for expressing thanks:
- Have the Girl Scouts make thank you cards or small thank you gifts.
- Remember to acknowledge contributions in newsletters or electronic communications.
- Volunteers who feel appreciated are more likely to volunteer again.

Remember to make use of these resources to help you:

- ◆ **Adult Interest Survey** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/adult-interest-survey.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/adult-interest-survey.pdf)
- ◆ **New Troop Decisions** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/new-troop-decisions.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/new-troop-decisions.pdf)

### **Volunteer FAQs**

#### **What are the volunteer requirements?**

Adult Volunteers Must:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Be registered Girl Scout Adult members
- Have current screening clearance
- Complete Mandated Reporter and role-specific volunteer training
- Follow written resources:
  - Volunteer Policy
  - Volunteer Essentials
  - GS Safety Guidelines
  - Position Description

#### **Which volunteers need to be registered and screened?**

All adults who hold volunteer roles with the troop need to register as volunteer members and complete a background check this includes adults who:

- Supervise youth as part of the minimum adult-to-girl ratio
- Handle troop money
- Handle troop product
- Drive youth
- Attend overnight activities/trips

#### **How much is adult membership?**

\$25 annually \*Financial Assistance is available.

#### **How often do volunteers need to register?**

Adults membership must be renewed each year. The Girl Scout membership year runs October 1st- September 30th.

#### **How much does the electronic background check cost?**



The price can vary if your driver's license is out of the state of California, or if you live in certain counties, but starts at \$11.50. If the background check fees will cause financial hardship for the family, financial assistance may be requested.

### **How often do adults need to complete background checks?**

Adult background checks must be repeated every three years during renewal (screening for resident camp volunteers must be repeated annually, consistent with American Camp Association requirements).

## Planning Your Troop Year

**The Volunteer Tool Kit (video)** <https://youtu.be/VAGmVMxyvDQ>

### **Troop Management**

#### **Team Agreements**

A team agreement is a written agreement with agreed upon rules and consequences for negative behavior. The team agreement can be revisited throughout the year to see if it needs any adjustment.

#### Troop Agreement Guidelines:

- Involve youth in discussing and drafting the agreement.
- Relate rules to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Decide on rules and consequences in advance at a calm time.
- Youths and adults must agree to them (some rules are non-negotiable, especially those relating to safety).
- Post the rules at meetings as a reminder to all. For Daisies post a picture of the rule along with simple words.

#### **Kaper Charts:**

A "Kaper" is a Girl Scout word for chore or job, so a Kaper Chart is basically a job or responsibility chart for the troop.

- <https://www.pinterest.com/leaderconnectingleaders/kaper-chart-ideas-for-leaders/>

#### Why Kaper Charts?

- The jobs or Kapers typically rotate or can easily be changed so that all youths get to experience each job and has the opportunity for leadership.
- It's a fair way to divide up chores
- To avoid the appearance of playing favorites or having the leader's daughter get stuck with more than her share.
- Gives Girl Scouts the opportunity takes the lead.

#### Sample Troop Kapers:

For large troops create more kapers, for small troops combine kapers. Here are a few ideas:

- |                               |                   |
|-------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Opening Meeting Leader      | • Activity Leader |
| • Flag Leader- Pledge Starter | • Snack Leader    |
| • Roll Call Leader            | • Snack Helper    |
| • Dues Collector              | • Clean-up Leader |
| • Promise Leader              | • Clean-up Helper |

- Law Leader

- Closing- Squeeze starter

### Troop Government Systems

- ◆ In-Person Troop Government YouTube Playlist <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-KxHzlpgZ8&list=PLSxv1arnLys-aKHwXadZabjiJz8l4lJml>
- ◆ Virtual Troop Government YouTube Playlist <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GciMyPj-WnI&list=PLSxv1arnLys8DwWPxjYQAggThlLru3cu5>

<u>Daisy Circle</u>	<u>Brownie Ring</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Daisy circle works great for most Daisy troops and is led by the troop leader.</li> <li>• The Troop Leader gathers Girl Scouts in the Daisy circle for the Opening, Business, and Closing portions of the troop meeting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Brownie ring works great for most Brownie troops.</li> <li>• The Troop Leader gathers Girl Scouts in the Brownie ring for the Opening, Business, and Closing portions of the troop meeting.</li> <li>• The Brownie ring is very similar to the Daisy circle but expands to the abilities of these now older girls. At this age, girls can begin to lead discussions and brainstorm ideas.</li> </ul>

For Juniors through Ambassadors we suggest using one of these forms of Troop Governance.

<u>Patrol System</u>	<u>Executive Board</u>	<u>Town Meeting System</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The patrol system is the most versatile of the systems of government and is a great way to divide up a large group of Girl Scouts into smaller groups for group activities and decision making.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the executive board form of troop government, Girl Scouts elect one another to executive board positions, such as president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer for the troop.</li> <li>• The number of officers, positions, and length of time served may vary, depending on the needs of the troop. This form of government is typically used for older Girl Scouts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The town meeting system of government generally works best for small groups of, ideally, 12 or fewer, and is typically used mostly for older Girl Scouts.</li> <li>• There is no formalized government structure and Girl Scouts discuss and make decisions as an entire troop.</li> </ul>

### Girl Scout Leadership Experience (video):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJUYPm9g8LE>

### Outcomes and Impact for Girl Scouts

- ◆ Girl Scout Research Institute <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/discover/about-us/research-and-data.html>

<b>3+ Years in Girl Scouts:</b>	<b>Lifelong Benefits</b>
Youths with 3+ Years of Girl Scout troop and camp experiences demonstrate:	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved sense of self, positive values, challenge seeking, relationship building, and community problem solving</li> <li>• Progressive skill building in outdoor skills, entrepreneurship, life skills, and STEM</li> <li>• Leadership and service achievements with her troop and as an individual</li> <li>• Regular participation in fun, challenging experiences that build sisterhood</li> <li>• Meaningful understanding of herself as a person and a leader</li> </ul>	<p>Girl Scouts who participate in Girl Scout troop and camp experiences receive lifelong benefits, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong sense of self as she grows into a confident, capable problem-solver</li> <li>• Active in her community and focused on service</li> <li>• Civically engaged</li> <li>• Educational achievement</li> <li>• Improved economic success</li> <li>• Leadership success</li> </ul>
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**The Girl Scout Leadership Experience** is a roadmap to success. All Girl Scout experiences whether they are troop or camp experiences should provide the key elements of Sisterhood, Supportive Adults, and Special Experiences. This combination will lead to the best outcomes for Girl Scouts and ensure your troop will have a complete and well-rounded year.

<p><b>Sisterhood:</b> All girl, girl-lead safe spaces that provide a sense of belonging and healthy relationships with other girls.</p>	<p><b>Supportive Adults:</b> Consistent and committed adults who make the girls feel important safe, and valued. Supportive adults provide girls with mentorship and guidance from a reliable and caring adult</p>	<p><b>Special Experiences:</b> Make girls feel valued, expand their horizons, and connect them to unique Girl Scout Traditions and experiences.</p>
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## 6 Troop Fundamentals

### 1. Badges and Awards

Either virtually or in-person, earn at least **3–5** badges and awards from a variety of skill building areas.

Tip:

- Explore Badges and Journeys for your Program Level in the Badge Explorer and What Girls Do resources
- Find requirements for badges and Journeys in the Volunteer Toolkit, and many other resources from our online and retail stores.
- Use the Troop Leader Blueprint to find virtual badge and Journey activity plans

### 2. Outdoor

Experience **at least one** outdoor activity as a troop, following COVID-19 guidelines. You can also encourage youth to work with supportive adults in their home to complete outdoor activities.

- Plan a troop meeting outside, be sure to check GSNorCal Coronavirus updates and checklists to see when and how you can safely meet
- Complete outdoor related badges or Journeys
- Take a nature hike
- Plant a garden
- Go to camp

Tip:

- Check out the Volunteer Toolkit for outdoor badge and Journey requirements.
- Check out the GSNorCal Events Calendar for council-planned outdoor activities.
- Check out the Camp Rocks website for GSNorCal sponsored camps.

### 3. Product Program

Participate in the **Fall Take Action** and **Girl Scout Cookie Program**. As entrepreneurs, youth learn essential life skills like: Goal-setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics.

Tip:

- Attend your service unit Fall Take Action kickoff meeting in September/October.
- Attend your service unit Cookie Program kickoff meeting in December/January.

### 4. Traditions

Participate in **at least one** Girl Scout tradition at every meeting, whether it is in-person or virtually such as:

Wearing uniform to troop meeting

- Reciting Girl Scout Promise and Law at every meeting
- Performing a flag ceremony
- Hosting an Investiture Ceremony for new members
- Singing Girl Scout songs

Tip: Look for ideas in the Handbooks, Volunteer Toolkit, and the internet.

### 5. Community Service

Complete **at least one** community service project.

Tip:

- Take part in Make A Difference Day in October
- Complete a Take Action Project as part of your Journey or badge work
- Ask the Girl Scouts which community organization they would like to help or community issue they would like to tackle.

### 6. Special Events

Attend in-person or virtually about **1–3** special events or field trips.

Tip:

- Check with your service unit team to find out what special events and activities they are planning.
- Check out GSNorCal's Events Calendar to see upcoming activities and events.
- Check out the Camp Rocks website to see the GSNorCal Summer Camp and virtual camp opportunities.
- Plan a troop field trip or special ceremony or event.

- ◆ **Six Troop Fundamentals** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/gsnorcal-redesign/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/six-troop-fundamentals.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/gsnorcal-redesign/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/six-troop-fundamentals.pdf)

## **Girl Scout Program**

Using the Girl Scout Program will help you achieve the Essential Girl Scout Experience. The Girl Scout Program includes:

### Badges

Badges are awards youths can earn by completing skill-building activities in the areas of STEM, Outdoors, Life Skills and Entrepreneurship. There are age-appropriate badges available for each level of Girl Scouts. National badges are created by GSUSA and represent approved official national Girl Scout programming.

## **Journeys**

A Girl Scout Journey includes earning several badges on a single topic that culminates in a Take Action project to make the world a better place. Girl Scouts choose a Journey topic that interests them most, then they'll identify a problem, develop a solution, and put a plan into action. Journeys are created specifically for leadership development.

## **Awards**

As Girl Scouts discover their passions and the power of their voices, they'll want to take on an issue that's captured their interest and is meaningful to them. There are several awards that Girl Scouts can earn through Girl Scouts and community organizations. The Girl Scouts' highest awards, Journey Summit Pin for Daisies and Brownies, Bronze for Juniors, Silver for Cadettes, and Gold for Seniors and Ambassadors, honor Girl Scouts who become forces for good and create a lasting impact on their communities, nationally and around the world.

## **Patches**

Patches are given to Girl Scouts for participating in fun events, activities or just for fun! Patches are to be worn on the back of vests or sashes, while badges and awards are worn on the front. Patches can be created by GSUSA, Girl Scout councils, or partner organizations.

## **Product Programs**

As the largest Girl Scout-led entrepreneurial program in the world, the Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Girl Scout Fall Take Action Program are foundational experiences during which youths learn to think like entrepreneurs and develop vital business skills. Money troops earn from Product Programs provides funding for troops for their yearly activities.

- **Fall Take Action Program**

Each Fall, Girl Scout entrepreneurs take action to support conservation efforts for endangered species by selling nuts, candies, and magazines. Taking part in the program gives girls the opportunity and equity to give back to their community while funding their dreams of making a difference.

- **Girl Scout Cookie Program**

Each Winter, our cookies are on a mission: to help youth learn five skills (goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills and business ethics). Skills that are essential to leadership, to success, and to life. 100% of the money revenue raised through the Girl Scout Cookie Program stays with the local council and troops.

## **Camp & Outdoor Programs**

GSNorCal's summer camp sessions allow Girl Scouts to develop a strong sense of self and positive values, build healthy relationships, seek challenges, and have fun while making memories of a lifetime! Whether Girl Scouts love horses, forest trails, beautiful lakes, or pretty much any other outdoor amenity, our summer camps have them covered.

## **GSNorCal Events**

GSNorCal hosts many fun, skill-building in-person and virtual events for troops and individual Girl Scouts to attend. View the GSNorCal's [Events Calendar](#) to see upcoming events.

## **Service Unit Events**

Most service units host local service unit activities and events for the troops and Girl Scouts in each area. Check with your service unit leadership team to see what fun events are coming up.

## Tools and Resources to help plan with your Troop

- ◆ **Badge Explorer:** <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/members/for-girl-scouts/badges-journeys-awards/badge-explorer.html>  
Find a list of the badges and Journey awards that Girl Scouts can earn, including badge requirements. Filter your results by grade level and topic. You can also select awards and badges to customize your PDF download.
  - ◆ **GSNorCal Shop:** <https://www.gsnorcal.org/en/our-council/shop.html>  
By purchasing items at one of our local council shops, or through our online store, you're helping GSNorCal provide quality programs and activities for our Girl Scouts. Your purchases only have this super power through GSNorCal.
  - ◆ **Volunteer ToolKit:** <https://mygs.girlscouts.org/my-account>  
The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is a comprehensive digital tool accessible via the web on your home computers, smartphones, and tablets that provides troop leaders, service unit volunteers, parents, and Juliettes (individually registered members) with access to Girl Scout programming, badge and award requirements, meeting plans, resources, and more!
  - ◆ **VTK Intro Demo Video:** <https://youtu.be/VAGmVMxyvDQ>
  - ◆ **What Girls Do Resource:** <https://www.gsnorcal.org/en/discover/about/what-girl-scouts-do.html>  
Use this handy print out to give to each Girl Scout and their family so they can look at all the badges available at your age level.
  - ◆ **GSNorCal Year Planner:** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/girl-scout-planner.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/girl-scout-planner.pdf)  
Download and use this fillable PDF document to plan and calendar activities for each of the six elements of the Girl Scout Troop Fundamentals with your Troop Leadership Team. TIP: You can also download the [Word version](#). Also included is the Troop Year Planner: Use this troop year calendar to plan the monthly activities you will be completing throughout the year. Key Girl Scout events and themes are included to give you an idea of the events and opportunities in a typical troop year.
- Progression in Girl Scouts (video):** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H\\_8PaZhVchk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H_8PaZhVchk)
- ◆ **Progression Chart:** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/girl-led-progression.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/girl-led-progression.pdf)

## Creating a Safe and Inclusive Space for Girl Scouts

### What is a diverse troop?

A diverse troop has girls of different ethnic, racial, religious, or social statuses that maintain and develop their traditional cultures or special interests within the troop.

### Welcoming every girl:

- Understand that each individual brings a unique – and important – experience to Girl Scouting and embrace those differences.
- Make every Girl Scout feel welcome and focus on building a community.
- Value, develop, nurture, use, and celebrate both group and individual diversity.
- Challenge the biases of others.

### **Creating an inclusive environment:**

- Strive for inclusiveness in all activities, removing barriers to participation
- Emphasize cooperation instead of competition
- Provide a safe and socially comfortable environment for Girl Scouts
- Teach respect, understanding, and dignity toward all Girl Scouts and their families
- Reach out to Girl Scouts and families who are traditionally excluded or marginalized
- Foster a sense of belonging to the community as a respected and valued peer
- Honor the intrinsic value of each person's life
- Treat others fairly

### **Impacts of feeling safe, seen, & heard:**

- Girl Scouts can take risks
- Girl Scouts can be spontaneous & creative
- Girl Scouts can collaborate, listen and connect with others
- Girl Scouts can trust themselves & the world around us
- Helps Girl Scouts validate & process their experiences
- Helps Girl Scouts affirm their identities
- Diminishes burdens & increases the intensity of positive emotional experiences
- Gives meaning to their lives

## **Troop Finances**

### **Troop Bank Account**

- ◆ **New Account Creation Form:** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/finance/troop-bank-account-creation-packet.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/finance/troop-bank-account-creation-packet.pdf)
- ◆ **Change of Signer - used for change of leadership or change of treasurer:** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/finance/troop-bank-account-change-signers-form.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/finance/troop-bank-account-change-signers-form.pdf)

### **Why do we need a bank account?**

You'll need a troop bank account to:

- Participate in either the Fall Take Action or Cookie Programs
- (and to) Safely keep track of troop income and expenses

### **What are the requirements to open a bank account?**

- Troops must already be assigned a troop number by GSNorCal.
- Each troop must have their own bank account.
- All GSNorCal troop bank accounts must have a minimum of 2 signers on the account at all times. No more than 3 signers should be listed.
- If signers change, the bank account signers must be updated following GSNorCal procedures.
- A minimum of \$25 is required to open an account.
- Accounts must be open before participating in council sponsored product programs.

### **Why do we bank at Wells Fargo?**

- GSNorCal has a relationship with Wells Fargo Bank. We've established an easy account creation process for troops.
- Accounts that are set up with this process are free of monthly service fees and provide GSNorCal oversight of troop accounts.
- Using Wells Fargo also gives the council the ability to monitor and manage accounts that become delinquent or dormant or when troops disband without completing the process.
- If you are not using Wells Fargo and have an issue, GSNorCal might not be able to help as easily.

### **What if I don't have a Wells Fargo bank near me?**

Check with your council staff member who is helping you form your troop or check with our Member Services Department by emailing [info@gsnorcal.org](mailto:info@gsnorcal.org) to find out the options for your area.

### **Ways to Fund Your Troop**

#### **Contributions from families**

- Flat amount at the beginning

#### **Money earned by Girl Scouts**

##### Council Sponsored Product Programs

- Fall Take Action Program (October- November)
- Cookie Program (February – March)

##### Entrepreneurship Money-Earning

- Activities are organized by the group (not by GSNorCal)
- Planned and carried out by Girl Scouts (in partnership with adults)
- Specific guidelines for groups wishing to earn additional money



## Donations from the community

- Sponsorships-an individual, business or organization sponsors the troop via a monetary donation.
- Gifts in Kind-an individual or organization donates items, services or meeting space rather than a donation of cash
- Cause-Related Marketing- Girl Scouts pass out flyers and publicize a special sale or meal at a restaurant, and the business donates a portion of the profits from that date
- Fundraising-an individual, organization, or business is asked to make a donation. Girl Scouts may not ask for such a gift - this is considered an adult activity.

## Managing Troop Income and Expenses

- ◆ **Lessons That Last a Lifetime** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=avWfDII6IcU>
- ◆ **5 Tips for Managing Troop Income**- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Rl-YNG5kl0s>
- ◆ **5 Tips for Managing Troop Expenses**- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=spY-6nqmsxO>
- ◆ **Troop finance Tracking sheet**- [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/finance/troop-finance-tracking-sheet.xlsx](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/finance/troop-finance-tracking-sheet.xlsx).  
\* TFR Form dues in June - check with your VSM for what form to use come next June.

## Income Categories

- Troop Dues: Any money paid by Girl Scouts /families to the troop on a weekly, monthly or annual basis.
- Fall Product Program Profit: Income earned by troop/group during this year's Fall Product Program. This amount must match the council records.
- Cookie Product Program Profit: Income earned by troop/group during this year's Cookie Product Program. This amount must match the council records.
- Donations and Contributions: Any monetary and in-kind donations received by the troop from businesses or community sponsors. Make sure you have completed the GSNorCal Donation Form.  
\*Note- any amount above 0 in this category will need to be explained when you complete your finance report
- Fees Collected for Events & Activities: Monies collected by the troop/group to help cover the cost of a troop/group, service unit, or council events or activities.
- Other money-earning activities: All money earned/received for activities associated with a council approved money-earning project such as:
  - Collections of drives
  - Community events
  - Services (car wash, babysitting, raking leaves, walking pets, holiday gift wrapping)\*Note- any amount above 0 in this category will need to be explained when you complete your finance report.
- Miscellaneous Income: Money collected/earned not otherwise classified. Specify what the expense was for in the description.  
\*Note- any amount above 0 in this category will need to be explained when you complete your finance report

## Expense Categories

- National Membership (paid with troop funds): Money paid directly by the troop to pay for GSUSA National Membership Fee and GSNorCal Council Service Fee (\$40 for Girl Scouts, and \$25 for adults).
- Snacks and/or Food: Expenses incurred for food and snacks during troop meetings or for food for camping trips or other troop/group meals.
- Activity & Event Fees Paid: Registration expenses incurred for participation in troop, service unit, and/or council activities or events. Example: Children's Museum entrance fee, service unit Camporee, or council event in Program and Event Guide.
- Activity & Event Expense: Non-registration expenses associated with any troop, service unit, and/or council activity or event. Examples: Identifier T-shirts to wear to event, craft materials for service unit Thinking Day, supplies to make SWAPS to trade, etc.
- Troop/Group Supplies: Expenses incurred for purchase of supplies used by the troop. Items may include troop supplies for regular meetings (i.e. pens, pencils, paper), or supplies specific to a troop activity (i.e. materials to do a Journey or badge activity).
- Service Projects: Any expense related to Take Action or community service projects performed by the troop. Include any materials purchased to implement the project.
- Awards & Recognitions: Journey awards, badges, patches, pins, or other recognition awards purchased to recognize the accomplishments of the Girl Scouts or gifts/awards to recognize contributions of troop adults.
- Cost of Unsold Product from Fall or Cookie: The cost of products from the Fall Product or Cookie Product Programs the troop was unable to sell or return.
- Insurance: The cost to purchase additional insurance for the troop's activities, trips, or events.
- Room or Space Rental: Fees paid for room, space, or facilities rental for troop meetings or activities. Including virtual meeting platforms.
- Recruitment: Fees paid for recruitment related expenses (flyers, advertisements, mailings).
- Other Miscellaneous Expense: Expenses incurred not otherwise classified. Specify what the expense was for in the description.

\*Note- any amount above 0 in this category will need to be explained when you complete your finance report.

### **Involving Girl Scouts In Troop Finances (video):**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZXQBuKKAd1M>

How will you involve the Girl Scouts in your Troop to help manage the finances and make troop decisions?

### **Avoid Impropriety**

- ◆ **Volunteer Essentials: Money** <https://www.gsnorcal.org/en/for-volunteers/VolunteerEssentials/money.html>

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

- Keep good financial records, including receipts (for minimum of three years) for every expenditure, no matter how small.
- Involve Girl Scouts (and sometimes parents) in financial decision-making. The more they know, the better!
- Remember that charging Girl Scouts 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 Girl Scouts and families. The Girl Scouts should have a say on how the money is spent, and be aware of how much is in their account.
- Girl Scout funds must never be held in personal accounts, even temporarily.
- Never write checks to yourself and/or reimburse yourself for expenses.
- Do not write out checks for “Cash”.
- Do not withdraw cash from the troop account- Use the troop debit card or write a check for expenses, whenever possible.
- Do not issue or let non-signers on the bank account use the troop debit card.
- Under no circumstances is it appropriate to “borrow” Girl Scout money for personal use, nor use Girl Scout money for personal expenses.
- Girl Scout adults should not loan money to the troop by paying for expenses beyond a nominal amount, except after previous discussion and agreement by troop members. Any expenditures made personally by Girl Scout adults should be reimbursed in a timely fashion.

### **Reimbursement Guidelines**

There may be times when you need to reimburse another troop adult. Here are some reimbursement guidelines:

- Don’t withdraw cash from the troop bank account, instead, write a check to the troop adult to document the expense.
- You must get the original purchase receipt for troop records.
- Reimburse troop adults as soon after the expense as possible.
- If a troop leader or troop treasurer needs to be reimbursed they must be reimbursed by the another signer on the troop bank account.

### **Cheddar Up**

Girl Scouts of Northern California wants to make your life just a little bit easier! We've partnered with Cheddar Up—the leading group payments platform—to give your troop or service unit an easy tool to collect payments online.

- ◆ **Cheddar Up FAQs** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/cheddar-up-faqs.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/cheddar-up-faqs.pdf)
- ◆ **GSNorCal Online Payment Page** <https://www.gsnorcal.org/en/for-volunteers/troops/online-payments.html>

### **Safeguarding Sensitive and Personal Information (video)**

- ◆ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AQIfGI0hDxk>

Lock up and safeguard personal information. Never email or fax:

- Social Security Numbers
- Dates of Births
- Credit Card Numbers
- Bank Account Numbers and Driver’s License Numbers

## Girl Scout Safety

- ◆ **Volunteer Essentials: Safety-Wise:** <https://www.gsnorcal.org/en/for-volunteers/VolunteerEssentials/safety.html>

- ◆ **Girl Scouts 14 Safety Guidelines (Video):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GslHprZ-Us>
- ◆ **Girl Scouts Safety Guidelines PDF :** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/volunteer-essentials/safety-wise-girl-scout-safety-guidelines.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/volunteer-essentials/safety-wise-girl-scout-safety-guidelines.pdf)

The Safety Activity Checkpoints, an awesome resource that doesn't just lay out the rules. Instead, it gives your troop - Girl Scouts and adults - a checklist of things to do to prepare your troop for all the different types of experiences they can encounter in Girl Scouts.

### **Finding the Safety Activity Checkpoints**

- Go to [gsnorcal.org](http://gsnorcal.org).
  - Click Forms at the top.
  - Scroll down to the list of resources.
  - Click on Safety Activity Checkpoints.
  - Here you'll find the downloadable PDF's for the Activities at a Glance, Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints, and each specific Safety Activity Checkpoint in alphabetical order.
  - In addition to reading these checkpoints yourself, you can also email or print them for co-volunteers, parents, caregivers, and the Girl Scouts themselves.
  - The Safety Activity Checkpoints are reviewed and updated often, so it is best to check our website for the latest versions.
- ◆ **Safety Activity Checkpoints** can be found on the [Forms and Documents](#) page, just select the Safety Activity Checkpoint Topic, then search.

### **Activities at a Glance**

The Activities at a Glance resource lists and links all the activities that currently have a Safety Activity Checkpoint available. It also includes the recommended program level for each activity, whether or not council approval is required, and additional notes for each checkpoint, such as required instructors, experience required, and more.

- ◆ **Activities at a glance** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/sac/activities-at-a-glance.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/sac/activities-at-a-glance.pdf)

### **Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints**

The Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints provides:

- General safety standards and guidelines that apply to ALL activities.
  - The standards and guidelines are meant to be used together with the specific safety checkpoints for an individual activity.
  - It should be reviewed and referenced often.
  - Important topics included in the Introduction to Safety Activity Checkpoints include:
    - Girl Scout Safety Standards and Activity Guidelines
    - First Aid
    - Understanding Which Activities Are Not Permitted
    - Overall Health, Well Being, and Inclusivity
- ◆ **Intro to SAC:** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/sac/introduction-safety-activity-checkpoints.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/sac/introduction-safety-activity-checkpoints.pdf)

### **Specific Safety Activity Checkpoints**

The Safety Activity checkpoints have some key sections to help you get informed and ready to ensure your troop outing is safe as well as fun! All of the Safety Activity Checkpoints are set up with a similar format to make them simple to use.

Key sections and included in all Safety Activity Checkpoints include:

- Name of activity
- Indicates if activity is high-adventure
- Indicates if council approval is required
- Who the activity is permitted for (may have you reference Activities at a glance)
- About activity
- Information on including younger Girl Scouts and Girl Scouts with disabilities

Included in most Safety Activity Checkpoints:

- Helpful resource links
- Safety Activity Checkpoints for activity (may include additional information such as sleeping arrangements, tips for specific activity, what to do on day of, etc.)
- Safety gear

**Girl Responsibilities (video):** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EAq3ceReQJA>

Each Girl Scout is expected to:

1. Assist troop leaders and other volunteers in safety planning
2. Listen to and follow volunteer instructions and suggestions
3. Learn and practice safety skills
4. Learn to Think Safety” at all times and to be prepared.
5. Identify and evaluate an unsafe situation.
6. Know how, when, and where to get help when needed.

### **Leaving the Meeting Place**

A Girl Scout trip is defined as any time a group has an activity at a location other than the regularly scheduled meeting place. If the group will start and end at the regular meeting location, but walk to a local park or other destination, this activity is not defined as a trip. The Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials should be reviewed when planning a trip of any length.

#### ◆ **Trips and Outdoor Quick Glance Matrix:**

[https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/troop/trip-outdoor-learning-matrix.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/troop/trip-outdoor-learning-matrix.pdf)

#### ◆ **Anatomy of the First Aid Kit:** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/anatomy-first-aid-kit.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/anatomy-first-aid-kit.pdf)

#### ◆ **Council Emergency Cards:** [https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer\\_resources/risk/council-emergency-card.pdf](https://www.gsnorcal.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsnorcal/documents/volunteer_resources/risk/council-emergency-card.pdf)

Before leaving the meeting place, here are some things to consider:

#### **Readiness and Progression**

- Care should be taken to determine if troops are ready to participate in troop travel and trips. For example, if the troop cannot follow simple directions during a meeting setting, they may need more practice before venturing out.
- Girl Scouts love trips, and Girl Scouts is a great place for them to learn how to plan and take exciting trips because travel is built on a progression of activities - that is, one activity leads to the next. Girl Scout Daisies, for example, can begin with a discovery walk. As they grow in their travel skills and experiences and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips.

- Review the Girl Scout Travel and Outdoor Progression charts for recommendations on where to start with your troop.

### **Trip and Outdoor Advisors**

- GSNorCal offers a variety of training opportunities for you to prepare for safe and fun travel and outdoor experience with your Girl Scouts. Before venturing outdoors, volunteers are required to have the knowledge and experience to lead a safe and positive travel and outdoor experience.
- Before a troop or group leaves their regular meeting location, at least one adult volunteer must complete the Trip and Outdoor Basics course in the Trip and Outdoor Advisor learning path. You'll find also find additional training in this learning path when your troop is ready to progress to cooking, overnights, and camping.

### **Covid-19**

- Our goal as Girl Scouts is to model leadership by prioritizing the health and safety of our members and communities, keeping kids in school, and reducing the community spread of COVID-19, an extremely contagious virus that spreads easily in the community.
- Restrictions and guidelines change often. Be sure to check GSNorCal's Coronavirus Updates page and the Current COVID-19 Guidelines in both the planning stages of your trips and in the days before.

### **Adult-to-Girl Ratios**

- Be sure to follow the correct Adult-to-Girl ratio for the activity you will be doing. If your activity is considered a trip, you will need to follow the Events, Travel, and Camping ratios.
- More information on adult-to-girl ratios can be found in Volunteer Essentials and in our Adult-to-Girl Ratios module.

### **Important Forms**

- Ensure Troop Leaders/Chaperones have the correct Permission and Health History Forms on them at all times.
- Permission Forms:
  - [Annual Permission Form](#) - Use this form when the destination is located within 60 miles or 1 hour driving time of the regular meeting place, does not exceed 6 hours in duration, and is not considered high-adventure.
  - [Activity/Event Permission Form](#) - Use this form when the destination is located further than 60 miles or 1 hour in duration, exceeds 6 hours in duration, or is considered high-adventure.
  - [Health History Forms](#):
  - [Girl Health History Form](#) - Use this form for all troop meetings, activities, trips, and events.
  - [Girl Health History Form with Physical](#) - Use this form for resident camp, trips lasting three nights or more, or when Girl Scouts will be participating in physically demanding or strenuous activities.
- More information on these forms can be found in [Volunteer Essentials](#) and in our Permission and Health History Forms module.

### **First Aid Kit**

- A first aid kit is required at the meeting place and should be taken with the troop on outings and trips. As you plan for activities and events it may be necessary to stock up

more on certain supplies or to customize your first aid kit based on the activity or needs of the girls. Be sure you also have GSNorCal's emergency management information included.

## Transporting Girls

- How parents decide to transport Girl Scouts between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility.
- For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities—outside the normal time and place—in which a group will be transported in private vehicles you'll need to find enough drivers to include all the Girl Scouts.
- Every driver must be a registered adult volunteer with an approved background check on file, be at least 21 years of age, have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Before transporting Girl Scouts all drivers must take the Troop Driver course.
- Drivers must complete, sign, and turn in the Troop Driver Form to the troop/group leader. Drivers must update and review the form on a regular basis.
- It is the troop leader's responsibility to make sure that all drivers have met all of these requirements before allowing them to transport any Girl Scouts in the troop or group.

## Supporting volunteers

Supporting Volunteers are needed to ensure the safety of the troop on a trip for safety and to help provide a fun, supportive, and special experience. Be sure every adult volunteer is a registered Girl Scout member with a cleared background check, completes Mandated Reporter training, follows the [Volunteer Safety Guidelines](#), understands the rules and expectations of their role for the trip, and which Girl Scouts they are responsible for. Also, ensure the Girl Scouts know which volunteer they report to.

Here are some volunteer roles you may want to consider as you plan to leave the meeting place:

- **Troop Chaperones/Helpers** - Needed to fulfill adult-to-girl ratios and help with various activities and tasks.
- **Trip Advisor** - Needed before leaving the regular meeting place; they can assist Girl Scouts with planning, budgeting, and organizing the trip.
- **Outdoor/Camp Advisor** - Needed before leaving the meeting location for a planned outdoor hike, cookout, sleep out, campout, or backpacking adventure; they can assist Girl Scouts in planning, budgeting, and organizing the troop's outdoor experience.
- **First Aider** - Maintains the troop first aid kit and accompanies the troop on outings, activities, and trips where a first aider is required as listed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- **Troop Driver** - Drive Girl Scouts to planned Girl Scout activities, outings, overnights, and trips.

## Continuing Your Learning

- All required training is on the Volunteer Learning Portal.
- You will earn a virtual badge for each course you complete.
- We recommend you complete your program level course next to learn more about characteristics, program, and uniforms for your troop level
- Learn more about finances and safety in the Managing Troop Finances and Safety-Wise courses, they are broken down by topic so you can easily review the topics you want to learn more about.

**gsLearn** is GSUSA's new Learning Management System

Service Unit and Troop Volunteers have access to gsLearn through [gsnorcal.org](https://gsnorcal.org). To access:

- Log into MyGS
- Click on My Account
- Click on gsLearn

Need help accessing gsLearn? Contact [info@gsnorcal.org](mailto:info@gsnorcal.org)

\*Volunteer role training must still be taken on GSNorCal's Volunteer Learning Portal.

**Troop Support- Troop Helper and/or Friends & Family Network**

- Start by taking the [Mandated Reporter](#) course, then choose your role below:
- [Troop Treasurer](#)
- [Troop Driver](#)
- [Troop Chaperone](#)
- [Troop Fall Product Volunteers](#)
- [Troop Cookie Volunteer](#)
- [Troop First Aider](#)
- [Trip and Outdoor Advisor](#)
- Trip Advisor
- Camp Advisor
- Backpacking Advisor
- Extended Travel Advisor
- [Highest Award Advisor](#)
- Bronze Award Advisor (Junior Leaders)
- Silver Award Advisor (Cadette Leaders)
- Gold Award Advisor (Senior and Ambassador Leaders)
- [STEM Resources](#) (Daisy-Ambassador)