

girlscouts
of greater new york

Leader's Guide to Success Handbook



Welcome to Girl Scouts!

Our Vision:

A New York City in which every girl feels empowered to lead in her community, workplace, and the world.

Our Mission:

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:
To serve God* and my
country,
To help people at all
times,
And to live by the Girl
Scout Law.

Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be
honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong,
and responsible for
what I say and do,
and to respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to
every Girl Scout.

**Members may substitute for the word God in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.*



Girl Scout Levels



Daisy:
Kindergarten
& 1st grade



Brownie:
2nd & 3rd grade



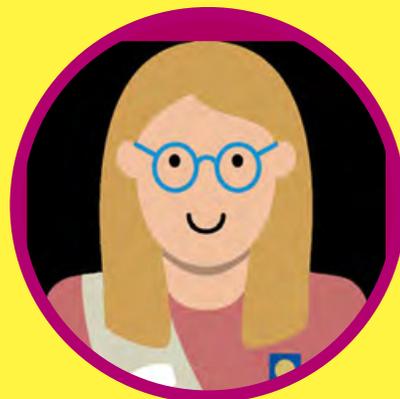
Junior:
4th & 5th grade



Cadette:
6th, 7th, and
8th grade



Senior:
9th & 10th grade



Ambassador:
11th & 12th grade

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Girl Scout Structure & Support

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) A national organization supporting the work of 110 councils across the U.S. for more than 100 years.

Girl Scouts of Greater New York An independent 501(c)(3) organization chartered by GSUSA operating under the direction of a local board of directors and overseeing all service units and troops within a given geographical area. The only 100% urban Girl Scout council in the country!

Service Units Comprised of volunteers who support the work of troop volunteers in a given geographical area.

Troops Volunteer-supervised groups of Girl Scouts who participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.



Ways to Volunteer with Girl Scouts of Greater New York

Our vision is a New York City in which every Girl Scout feels empowered to lead in their community, the workplace, and the world —and we can't achieve that without the support of our dedicated volunteers!

Troop Engagement Roles

Co-Leader

Each troop is led by two co-leaders. As a co-leader, you will lead your Girl Scouts through a fun and engaging year of badges, journeys, special trips, community service, and outdoor adventures.

Troop Support Volunteers (Parents & Adult Volunteers)

Parents or adult volunteers who assist co-leaders in running the troop smoothly and successfully. These volunteers provide hands-on support during meetings and activities, allowing co-leaders to focus on leading the girls. Support may include helping set up and clean up meetings, chaperoning trips, assisting with events, or leading a badge or activity under the guidance of the co-leaders.

Troop Cookie Program Volunteers/Managers

Supports co-leaders during the cookie season by helping to manage the logistics of the program. This includes assisting with digital and initial cookie orders, coordinating and staffing cookie booths, and helping with the distribution and tracking of cookie inventory. Their role helps reduce the administrative workload for co-leaders and ensures the cookie program runs efficiently and successfully.

Short-Term Volunteer Roles

Short Term Volunteer

Provide essential support to our Girl Scout council and broader community by partnering with GSGNY staff to deliver impactful programming. In this role, you will help lead Girl Scouts through a variety of initiatives, including the Leadership Institute, Troop 6000, Robotics, Camp Programs, and Highest Awards, creating meaningful experiences that inspire girls to lead with courage, confidence, and character.

Event Volunteer

Support Girl Scout events by assisting with a variety of tasks, including managing sign-in and registration, facilitating activity stations, and providing behind-the-scenes support to ensure events run smoothly and girls have a positive experience.



Troop Leader Roadmap

Your path to getting the most out of your first year as a Girl Scouts of Greater New York (GSGNY) Troop leader!

Your Volunteer Experience Specialist will direct you every step of the way. From guiding you through the onboarding process to introducing you to your Service Unit Manager, we're here to help!

STEP 1: Register

- Purchase a membership and create a troop.
- Complete a background check from Asurint.

STEP 2: Start Training

- Sign up for the Leader's Guide to Success training
- Complete assigned self-guided training sessions in gsLearn

Step 3: Plan Your Meetings

- Set your meeting location, time, and frequency
- Ensure that your co-leader has registered and completed their background check and trainings *(Note: all troops must be led by two unrelated adults who reside in separate households, and one must be female.)*
- Register youth Girl Scout members. Create your year plan in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). Bonus: Sign up for a live VTK training to help you get the most out of this handy planning tool!
- Set up your troop bank account

Step 7: Get the most out of your Girl Scouting experience

- Attend a Service Unit meeting.
- Sign up for council programs and events
- Visit Camp Kaufmann

Step 6: Continue Training

- Explore gsLearn courses relevant to your troop
- Complete trainings like CPR, First Aid, and other skills-based trainings that will allow you take Girl Scouts on camping and overnight trips

Step 5: Connect with Other Volunteers

- Join GSGNY Leaders on BAND - a social media platform where GSGNY volunteers can connect
- Connect with your Service Unit Manager

Step 4: Hold a Caregiver Meeting

- Set expectations
- Collect dues
- Connect adult volunteers with troop roles

Checklist for New Troop Leaders



Registration & Training

- Register as a Girl Scout co-leader..
- Complete your background check.
- Register for and attend the Leader's Guide to Success training.
- Complete the assigned self-guided trainings in gsLearn
 - GSGNY Leader's Guide to Success Courses

Setting Up Your Troop

- Identify your co-leaders and share their contact information with council staff.
- Secure a meeting location that adheres to GSGNY guidelines.
- Request a bank letter and open your troop's bank account.
- Update your troop record in myGS with your meeting place, day, and time.
- Meet with your co-leader(s) to plan your parent/caregiver meeting.
- Hold your parent/caregiver meeting.
- Plan and hold your first official troop meeting with your new Girl Scout troop!

Connecting with the Girl Scout Community

- Join [GSGNY Leaders on BAND](#).
- Connect with your Volunteer Experience Specialist.
- Attend a Service Unit meeting.
- Visit our Events Catalog to sign up for council events and activities.



Getting Started

Planning Your First Troop Meetings

Family Meeting

Why hold a family meeting? While Girl Scouts learn the Promise and Law and play games to get to know each other, caregivers can meet each other and discuss shared goals for the year. Here is some areas you'll want to touch on during your family meeting:

- Explain what Girl Scouting can do for their Girl Scout!
- Discuss the days and times the troop will meet, including your troop meeting calendar
- Find ways you can work as a team to support the troop
- Fill key troop volunteer positions
- Agree on what the troop pays for and what families pay for individually
- Establish how the troop will communicate: upcoming events and schedule changes
- Share information about uniforms, forms, and other important basics

First Troop Meeting

The first troop meeting of the year is the perfect time to set expectations with Girl Scouts and get ready for a fun-filled year! Here's a checklist for your first troop meeting:

- Cover the basics. Review meeting details, ensure families know when and where meetings will occur
- Get ready! Use the VTK to verify your troop roster and email caregivers. Use this time for caregivers to provide you with any outstanding items, such as health history forms and troop dues
- Know the agenda. Refer to our Six Elements of a Great Troop Meeting (pg XX) and the VTK sample meeting agenda
- Review and practice your agenda. You'll feel calmer during the meeting and feel prepared to adjust as needed
- Prepare for FUN! When Girl Scouts and families see that you're prepared and ready for a great time they'll follow your lead!
- Establish how the troop will communicate: upcoming events and schedule changes
- Share information about uniforms, forms, and other important basics

Getting Started

Six Elements of a Great Troop Meeting

1. Start-up! Girl Scouts will complete a small activity when they arrive. This activity should keep Girl Scouts engaged until the meeting begins (5-10 minutes)
2. Take care of troop business. Collect dues, make announcements, or discuss upcoming events and trips while families are present (5-10 minutes)
3. Open the meeting. Troops can decide how to open their meetings; most troops begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law. Use your right hand as the quiet sign (5-10 minutes)
4. Let the fun begin! Use the meeting plans found in the VTK for inspiration! Activities are designed to fit easily into this portion of your meeting (30-45 minutes)
5. Clean up. A Girl Scout should always leave a place cleaner than they found it! (5 minutes)
6. Close the meeting. Troops can decide how to close their meetings; many troops use the friendship circle, but any activity works! (5-10 minutes)

For more tips on how to run engaging troop meetings, refer to **Your First Troop Meeting** and **GSUSA Grade Level Essentials** in gsLearn.



Managing Troop Finances

Funding Troop Activities

Troop activities are funded in two main ways: troop dues and the Cookie Program.

Troop dues provide startup funds for troop activities and supplies. Troops may collect a few dollars at each meeting, or a lump sum at the start of the school year. This is something that you can decide with caregivers at the Family Meeting.

The Cookie Program is the primary money-earning activity for a troop. Several virtual and on-demand trainings are provided to help prepare volunteers and families for this exciting season!

Opening A Troop Bank Account

All Girl Scout troops are required to have a troop bank account. If you're starting a new troop, you will need to open a new account. Here are the steps:

1. Complete the Bank Letter Request form.
2. Once your request has been processed, you will receive your bank letter and additional paperwork to bring to the bank.
3. Head to the bank and open your account!

Your troop number should be included in your troop bank account (i.e., Girl Scout Troop#1234-GSGNY Leaders' Names), and all banking correspondence should be forwarded to the address of at least two registered and background-cleared signatures on the account.

Please note that these members must be non-related and reside at separate residences.

Once you've opened your troop account, email customercare@girlscoutsnyc.org **your bank name, routing and account number, and the cosigners names.** You'll also need to submit the completed ACH Debit Authorization and a voided check to customercare@girlscoutsnyc.org. This will allow your troop to participate in the Cookie Program!



Misappropriation of Funds

Misappropriation of Girl Scout funds is strictly prohibited and will result in immediate dismissal. It can lead to prosecution or collections.

Examples of misappropriation of Girl Scout funds include, but are not limited to:

- Using funds for personal use or non-Girl Scout-related purposes
- Spending funds without group approval or in such a way that does not benefit the whole group
- Co-mingling Girl Scout funds with personal funds
- Self-reimbursement*
- Theft/embezzlement

GSGNY reserves the right to immediately suspend a volunteer if GSGNY has reason to suspect misappropriation of Girl Scout funds. Evidence of misappropriation will result in the immediate removal of the volunteer responsible. Removal is final and binding; a removed volunteer is not eligible for re-appointment.

Once the volunteer responsible is removed from their volunteer role, they must remove their name and authorization as a signer from all Girl Scout bank accounts within 10 business days. This generally *involves both account signers going to the bank together.*

The individual is required to pay back misappropriated funds in full to GSGNY within 10 business days. Actions, decisions, and records relating to misuse of funds and steps taken are confidential. Information pertaining to a case will be reviewed only by relevant GSGNY staff.

Tips & Tricks for Managing Troop Finances

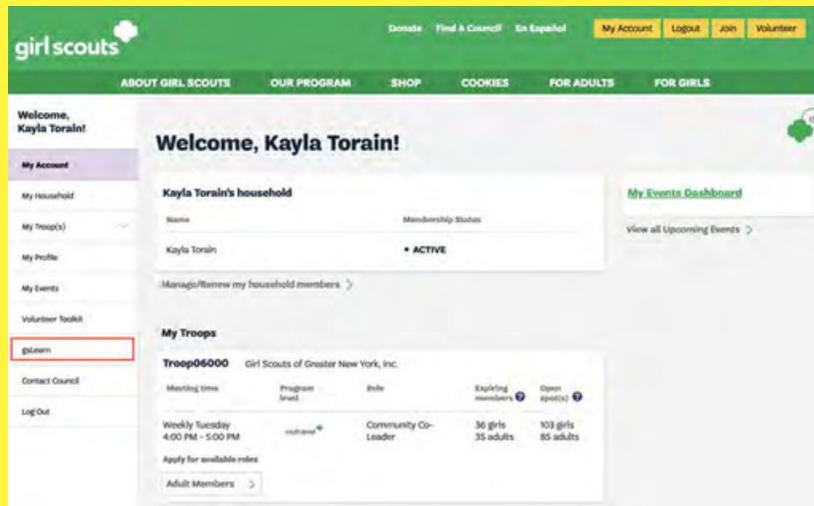
Here are some tips for opening a troop bank account and managing finances:

- Be sure to find a bank with free checking and low fees
- Ensure your account can complete ACH transfers and comes with a debit card that you can use during trips and activities
- The use of digital wallet apps (Venmo, Zelle, etc.) is permitted through your authorized Girl Scout troop bank account
- All digital wallet activity should be able to be tracked through a bank statement
- During the Cookie Program, however, Girl Scouts should only take payment for cookies through the Digital Cookie App
- All troops are required to submit an Annual Troop Finance Report (ATFR) by June 30th, so be sure to stay organized and save itemized receipts
- Sign in to the VTK to easily manage your troop finances online and submit your ATFR.
- All troops are required to submit an Annual Troop Finance Report (ATFR) by June 30th, so be sure to stay organized and save itemized receipts
- If your troop would like to participate a money-earning activity outside of the Cookie Program, please fill out the Troop Money-Earning Activity Application
- Troops may accept donations of up to \$249; anything over this amount must be processed through the Advancement Department
- If your troop disbands, be sure to complete an AFTR and close your bank account to avoid accruing fees

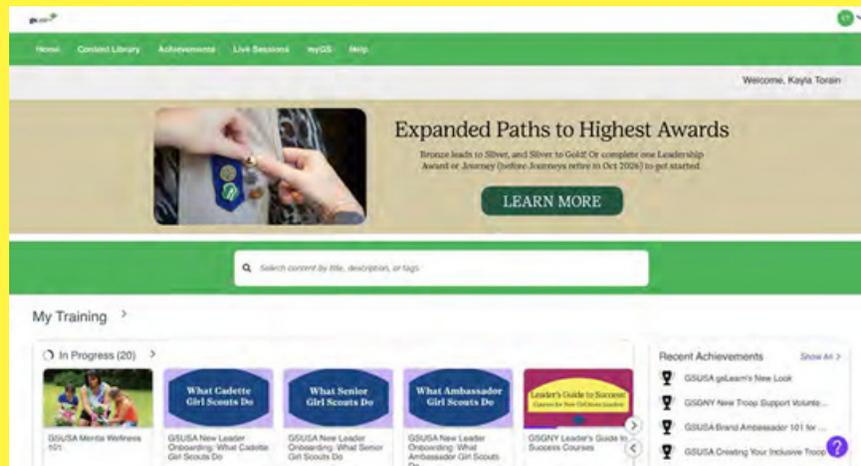
Getting Started

myGS: A Quick Guide to gsLearn

To help you feel as prepared as possible in your co-leader role, we offer on-demand trainings via the online platform gsLearn. gsLearn can be accessed from the left panel of your myGS account.



Your gsLearn dashboard will look like this:



Click 'See All Assigned Courses & Learning Paths' or search for your desired course by name. The GSGNY Leader's Guide to Success Courses are particularly helpful and should be completed within 2 weeks of becoming a co-leader.

gsLearn Essential Training Checklist

Getting Started

- GSUSA New Leader Onboarding: What Girl Scouts Do?

Troop Meeting Foundations

- The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)
- Your First Time as a Troop Leader
- Family Engagement - The Key to Success
- Your First Troop Meeting

Troop Administration

- Funding the Fun - Managing Girl Scout Troop Finances
- GSUSA Volunteer Toolkit: Troop Finance View
- The Girl Scout Cookie Program

Troop Safety

- Troop Safety
- Girl Scouts Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Course
- Field Trips and Travel

FAQ's

When and where do we meet?

Girl Scouting is super flexible! Co-leaders choose the location, day, time, and frequency of their troop meetings. You can also have a blended experience—sometimes virtual, sometimes in-person.

How much time will I need to give my troop?

Co-leaders typically spend between 4-8 hours per month planning activities and meeting with their troop, plus 1-2 hours at Service Unit meetings and events.

Do I need to plan everything myself?

No! GSGNY provides troop leaders with a variety of resources to support the planning process, including the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK).

You will also receive the Leader's Tribune, our newsletter just for volunteers, twice a month. Here you'll find program information, training opportunities, and highlights from around our community. Finally, we encourage all leaders to attend their local Service Unit meetings. This is the best place for you to stay in the know and connect with other volunteers with a wealth of Girl Scout knowledge!

Do I need council's approval to buy badges?

No. Co-leaders will check if their Girl Scouts has completed the requirements to earn the badge, fun patch, or award. Co-Leaders working with Girl Scouts that have special needs can modify activities. Special Recognition Awards and the Highest Awards are the only things that need council's approval.

How much does it cost to volunteer?

All volunteers must purchase an annual Girl Scout adult membership (\$30) and cover their own transportation and apparel costs. The Girl Scout Youth Membership will be \$45. Financial aid can be requested. Many other volunteer trainings are offered free of charge by Girl Scouts of Greater New York.

Do you have to pay the membership fee in order to participate in Girl Scouts?

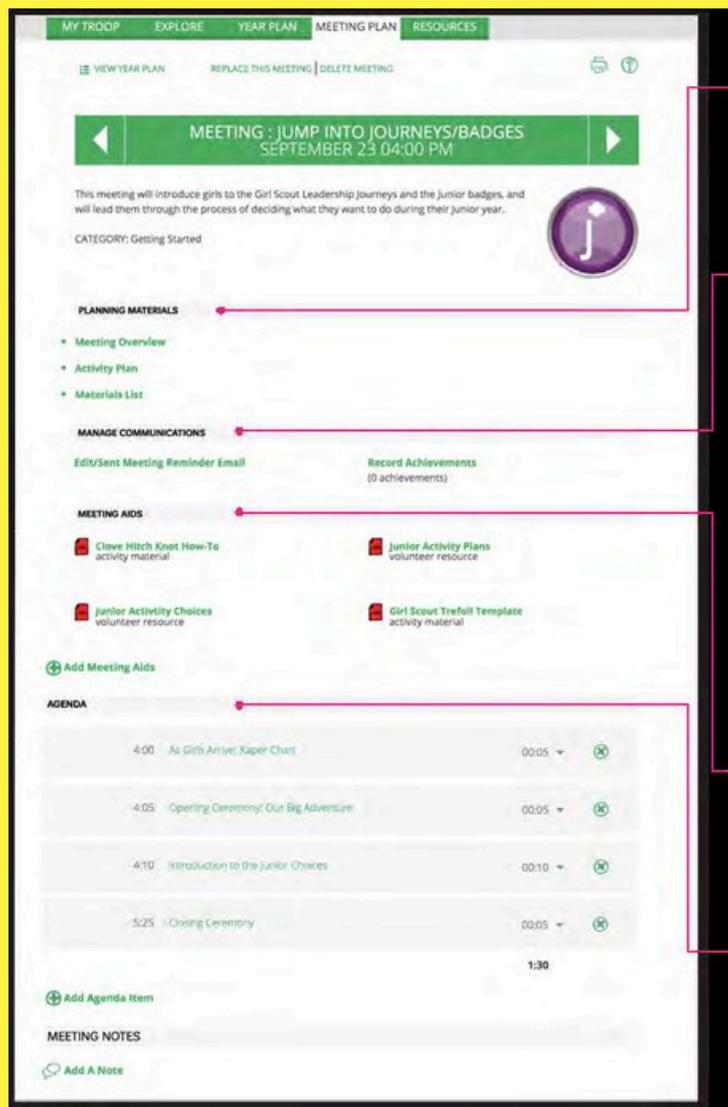
Yes, the Girl Scout membership provides liability insurance for members, which protects volunteers and Girl Scouts during Girl Scout programs, meetings, activities, and events. Every youth who participates with your troop must be registered before joining activities.

All adults supervising Girl Scouts are required to have a Girl Scout membership and an eligible background check on file.

The background check from Asurint is covered by council and must be completed every 3 years.

The Meeting Plan Tab

The **MEETING PLAN** tab has a robust collection of tools and information to help you plan engaging activities every time .



PLANNING MATERIALS: High-level resources show you from start to finish what your Girl (s) will achieve during the meeting (1 . Meeting Overview), what you'll do and say (2 . Activity Plan), and the meeting aids plus the materials you'll need (3 . Material List) .

MANAGE COMMUNICATIONS.

Email people your Girl Scout might collaborate with to earn each badge or award . Emails are prepopulated with relevant information, but you can customize it based on your needs. You can even attach meeting aids or other relevant documents from your council website at the bottom of the screen before sending.

You can see the full picture of what your Girl has earned on the MY TROOP tab, with the option to download. You can see the full picture of what your Girl has earned on the MY TROOP tab, with the option to download.

MEETING AIDS. These documents and videos are the leg-up you need for each meeting! Some are geared toward the adult supporting the meeting and some are for the Girl completing the activities . You can find more information on how to use these resources in the Activity Plan .

AGENDA. Wondering how you'll kick off your meeting's activities? Here, you'll find instructions and details for each activity, materials needed, time it takes to complete, and recommended sequencing. You'll also find suggested opening and closing activities that are part of typical troop meetings.

There are lots of ways to customize your meeting agenda:

- Drag and drop activities to reorder in the agenda.
- Use the dropdown on an activity to change the amount of time allotted for a certain activity.
- Delete an activity by clicking the "X" to the right. Be careful you aren't deleting a required activity to earn an award, though!
- Click Add Agenda Item at the bottom to add your own activities!
- Add a note at the end to remind yourself about important things to remember for each meeting.

If at any time you want to replace or delete an entire meeting, use the respective links at the top of the meeting plan .

If you want to download or print your year plan or meeting plan, look for these icons at the top of the page:

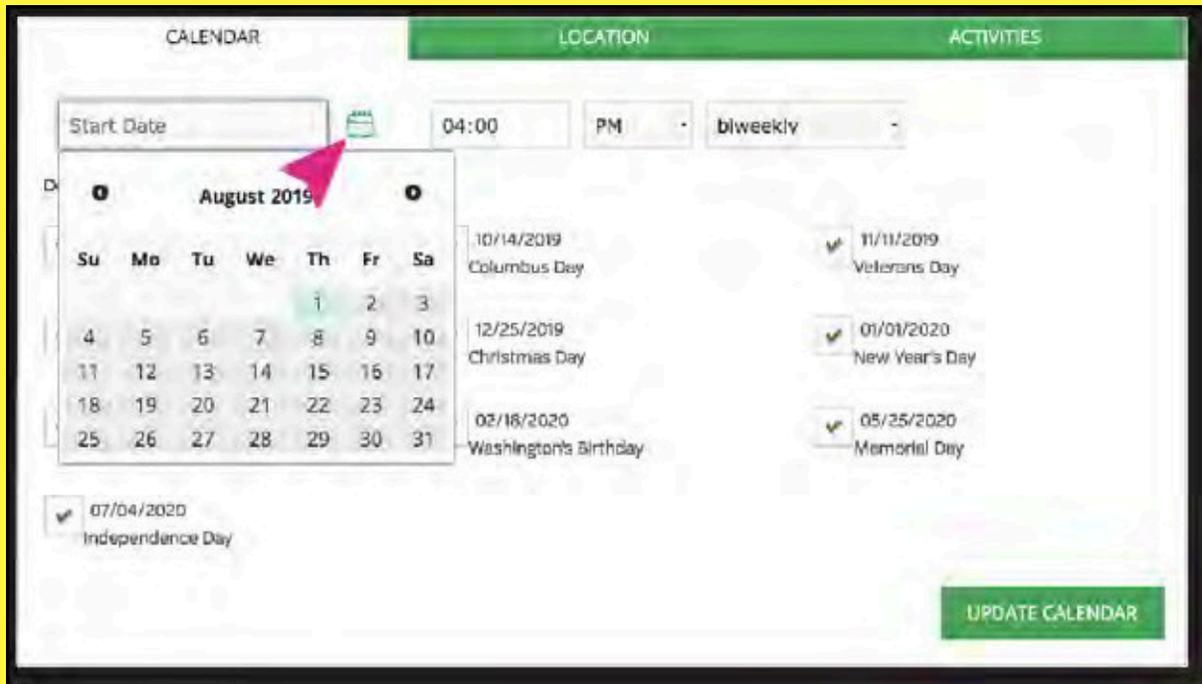


Add Dates and Locations

As an individually registered Girl Scout, you may not need to set dates for meetings. However, the system requires that you set meeting dates for your year plan.



At the top, click the green 'Manage Calendar' link. Using the pop-up widget, choose a date, time, and occurrence for your meetings. Click 'Update Calendar' when finished. You can always change or update this later.



Once you've set up meeting days and times, you'll notice that the 'Manage Calendar' looks entirely different. Now you can customize each meeting, add the location, or even reset the entire schedule.





CALENDAR: To edit the schedule, select the green calendar icon to the left of each meeting date to change the date or time of that specific meeting.

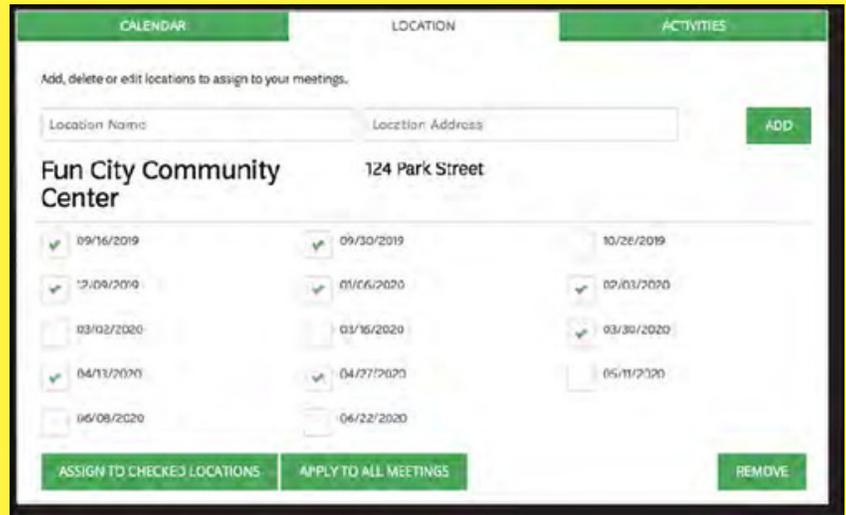
You can also choose to cancel one or more meetings or combine meetings. Select the two meetings you'd like to combine, then select the new date that the meeting will occur. After you've made changes, click Save, and your year plan will be updated.



To the right, you'll see a green gear icon. This takes you back to the original view of the **Meeting Date and Location widget, where you** can reset the entire cadence of your meetings if needed.

LOCATION: Now that your dates are set, you can connect an address to each one. If you're meeting in multiple locations, add each address, then connect it to the appropriate meeting using the checkboxes.

Click 'Assign' or 'Apply' and then close out of the window.



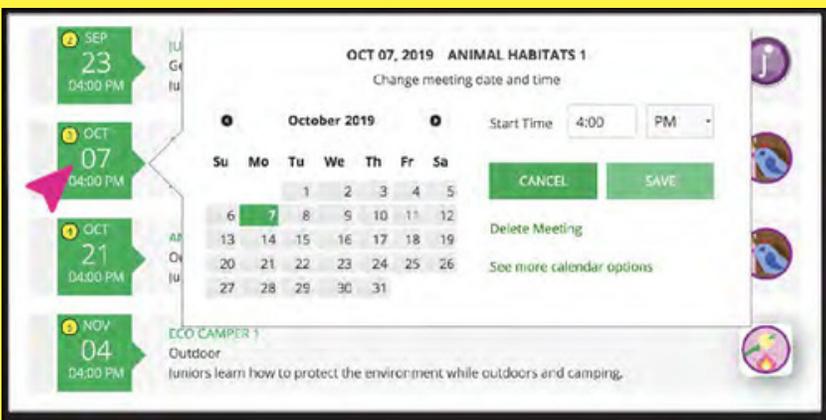
TIP: Manage Your Meetings



Select the calendar icon to change the date, cancel or combine meetings .



Select the gear icon to reconfigure the calendar from a specific date forward .



TIP: You can also get to the **Meeting Date and Location** widget simply by clicking on a date in your year plan .

Volunteer Toolkit Resources

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is your digital portal for easy, fun Girl Scout activities year round! With this step-by-step guide, you'll discover how you can help your girl Scouts take their experience to the next level!

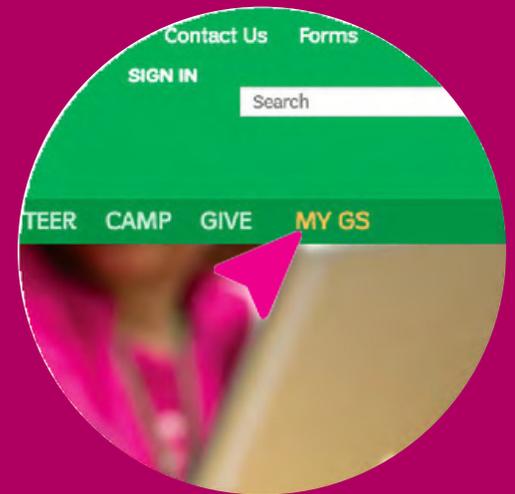


Where To Find the Volunteer Toolkit

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) can be used from any computer, tablet, or smartphone with internet access. For the best results, use a VTK-friendly browser such as Chrome, Firefox, or Edge with a cleared cache and follow the steps below:

1. Visit www.girlscoutsnyc.org.
2. In the upper right-hand corner of your screen, click MY GS and log in to your MyGS account.
3. Select Volunteer Toolkit from the left panel of your My Account page to log in using the credentials provided by the council.

NOTE: The Volunteer Toolkit does not work on Internet Explorer.



Basic Navigation

Welcome to the Volunteer Toolkit! Here's everything you need to know to get started and have the best Girl Scout year ever.

The Volunteer Toolkit is divided into tabs that have unique tools to help troop leaders plan meetings; these tools will also help your Girl Scout earn awards and track her achievements!

If you're on a computer, you'll see the GREEN TABS across the top of your browser window.

Mobile users will see a grey dropdown menu at the top of their screen, with each tab beneath.



TIP: Do you have more than one Girl Scout? Access each one from the grey dropdown menu at the top of your screen.

TIP: Print – Download – Help

You'll notice these three icons on almost every page of the VTK.



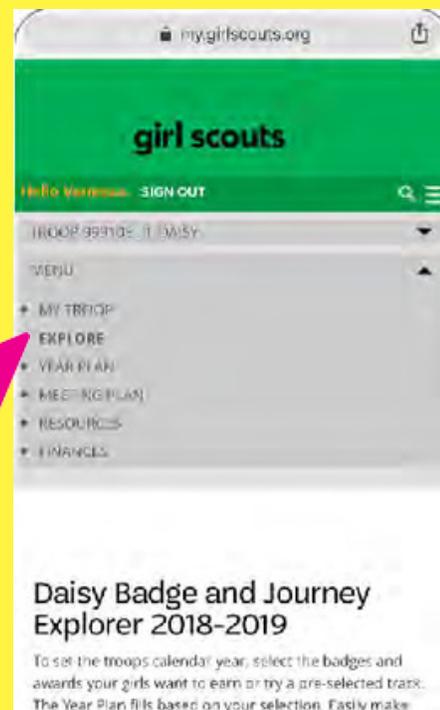
Print your current screen by clicking the green printer icon.



Download the page or resource by clicking the green down-arrow bracket icon.



Seek out additional help by clicking the green question mark icon OR by clicking the binoculars next to Take a Guided Tour.



MY TROOP

You'll see your Girl Scout's personal information and any awards she's earned under this tab . From here, you can also easily renew her membership.

EXPLORE

Wondering where to get started? You can see all the exciting options in the EXPLORE tab . You'll be able to:

- Browse prebuilt tracks of badge and Journey activities.
- Create your own activity track with your Girl Scout(s).
- Preview tracks and badge requirements before you add them to your year plan.
- See an overview of all preselected tracks at the bottom of the page . It's even printable, so you can easily review your options!

Don't worry! You can always add, remove, or change your plan as you go, one meeting at a time.

Once you've chosen your year plan will be populated. Note that a year plan is required in the Volunteer Toolkit before other features become available.

YEAR PLAN

From this tab, you can:

- Set meeting dates and locations
- Add badges, Journeys, and activities to your plan
- Preview badge and Journey requirements

You'll also find exciting Girl Scout partnerships and promotions in the rotating banners at the top of your screen . Tired of seeing them? Just click the "X ."

MEETING PLAN

Make every meeting a success! Here you'll find:

- Set meeting dates and locations
- Add badges, Journeys, and activities to your plan
- Preview badge and Journey requirements

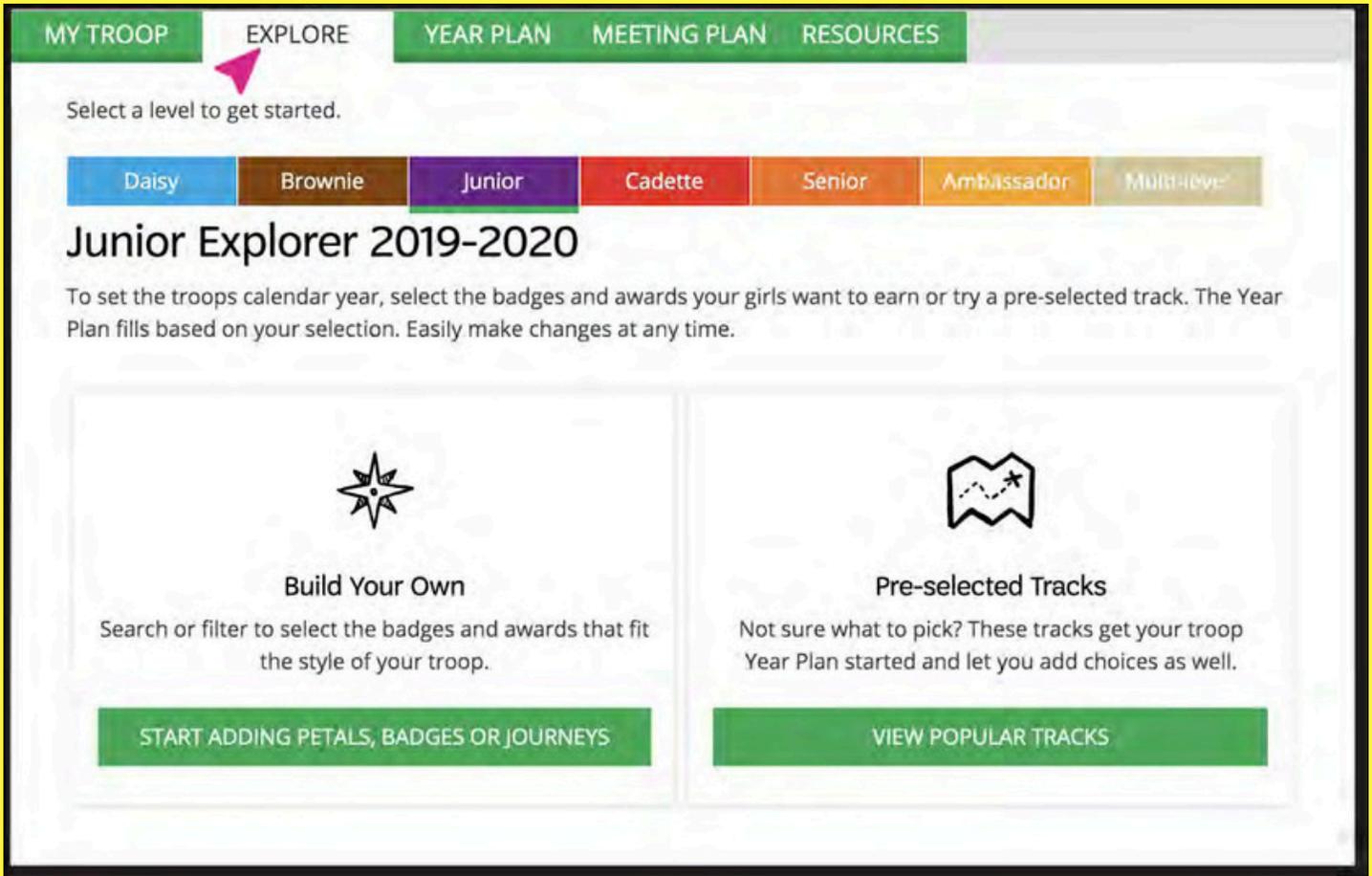
Here you can also track the achievements she earns along the way.

RESOURCES

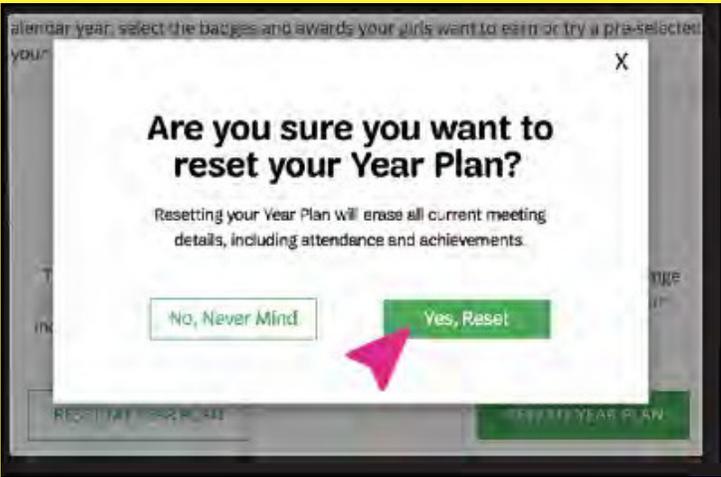
Where do badges belong on her uniform? Which awards can she earn at the next grade level? If you've got questions, you'll find the answers you need on the RESOURCES tab.

Set Up a Year Plan

When you log into the Volunteer Toolkit the first time, you'll need to select a year plan before you can customize meetings or activities. The EXPLORE tab displays prebuilt year plans for you to choose from based on the grade level you select.



IMPORTANT: Each time you choose a new year plan from the EXPLORE tab, it will reset your entire year . Any activities, meeting dates, and customizations will be lost . To add badges and Journeys or edit your existing year plan in any way, use the buttons on the YEAR PLAN tab .



Build Your Own

Allows you to build your year plan from scratch! You can mix and match badges, Journeys, and activities with the interests of your Girl Scout(s). Build Your Own also allows you to search through all badges and Journeys regardless of grade level.

Use the filters to sort through all available programming and the Select Meeting checkboxes to choose which badges and Journeys to add to your year plan.

Preselected Tracks

PRESELECTED TRACKS are a preset selection of meeting plans for a specific Journey or set of badges.

Click View Popular Tracks, which allows you to preview each combination of awards. Once you've found the right one, click Select Track, and your year plan will be created.

Once you've made your selection in the EXPLORE tab, you'll automatically be taken to the YEAR PLAN tab. This is also the tab you'll be brought back to each time you log in.



Add Badges, Journeys, and Awards

Girl Scouts are ready for whatever comes their way—and that includes changes in meetings or their year plan. Start by using the green ‘Add badge/Journey’ link at the top of the year plan, or use ‘Search to Add Meetings’ at the bottom of the year plan.

Use the search feature or filters to sort through available meeting types and choose which ones you’d like to add to your year plan.

Once you’ve made your selections, click ‘Add to Year Plan.’

Note: Meetings already in your plan will be clearly marked.

TAKE NOTE: Meeting titles with numbers at the end are part of a series and you’ll want to add all of them to meet the requirements for the award .

ADD A PETAL, BADGE OR JOURNEY

Search to Add a Petal, Badge or Journey Meeting

Search for a badge or journey award by name

Or Use Filters

1. Select your Girl Scout Level(s)

Daisy Brownie Junior Cadette

Senior Ambassador Multi-level

2. Select the type of meeting plan you want

Award Earning Badges Pinals Clean/Brigging Intro/Family Meeting

Journey

3. Select your categories

It's Your Planet - Love It It's Your Story - Tell It It's Your World - Change It Outdoor

STEM

CANCEL VIEW LIST

TIP: View Past Year Plans

Each July the VTK resets. Your year plan will be archived and you’ll no longer be able to make changes . However, you’ll still be able to view the plan through the green **Past Years** link at the top of your **YEAR PLAN** tab .

Achievement and attendance records DO NOT archive.

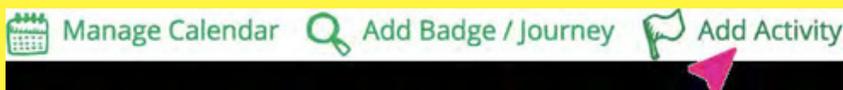
Please download a copy of this information for your records .

Add Activities to Your Year Plan

Meetings and badges are only one part of a go-getting Girl Scout's year! You can also add things like field trips, service projects, and cookie booth sales to your year plan . And the Volunteer Toolkit connects to your council website so you can browse and add council events, too . Any activity you add will appear in blue and show up chronologically .

At the top of the year plan, click Add Activity .

CUSTOM ACTIVITY: Add your activity name, date, time, location, and any details or special instructions to your year plan .



CUSTOM ACTIVITY	COUNCIL ACTIVITY				
Activity Name	mm/dd/yy'	04:00	PM ▾	06:00	PM ▾
Location Name	Location Address				
Cost	Activity Description				
ADD ACTIVITY					

COUNCIL ACTIVITY: Our system does not currently allow you to search and add council activities to your year plan from the council activity calendar . If you would like to add council activities you have registered for to your year plan, you can use the Custom Activity tab .

Programming

Pillars, Processes, and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience

These four pillars make up the foundation of what we do in Girl Scouts:



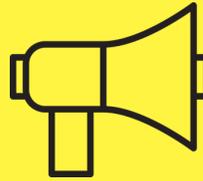
STEM

Computer science, engineering, robotics, outdoor STEM and more



Outdoors

Adventure and skill-building, including camping experiences for all age levels, from the backyard to the backcountry



Life Skills

Civic engagement, healthy living, global citizenship, communications skills



Entrepreneurship

The Girl Scout Cokie Program is the largest girl-led business in the world. The program teaches goal setting, decision making, money management, business ethics, and people skills

These three processes are how we put our programming into action:



Girl Led

Girl Scouts actively participants in their experiences, are able to make choices, and know their voice matters. As volunteers, we work to find opportunities where girls can take an active role and make choices and decisions.



Learn By Doing

Girl Scouts engage with topics through hands on activities. Concepts are reinforced through reflections and discussion.



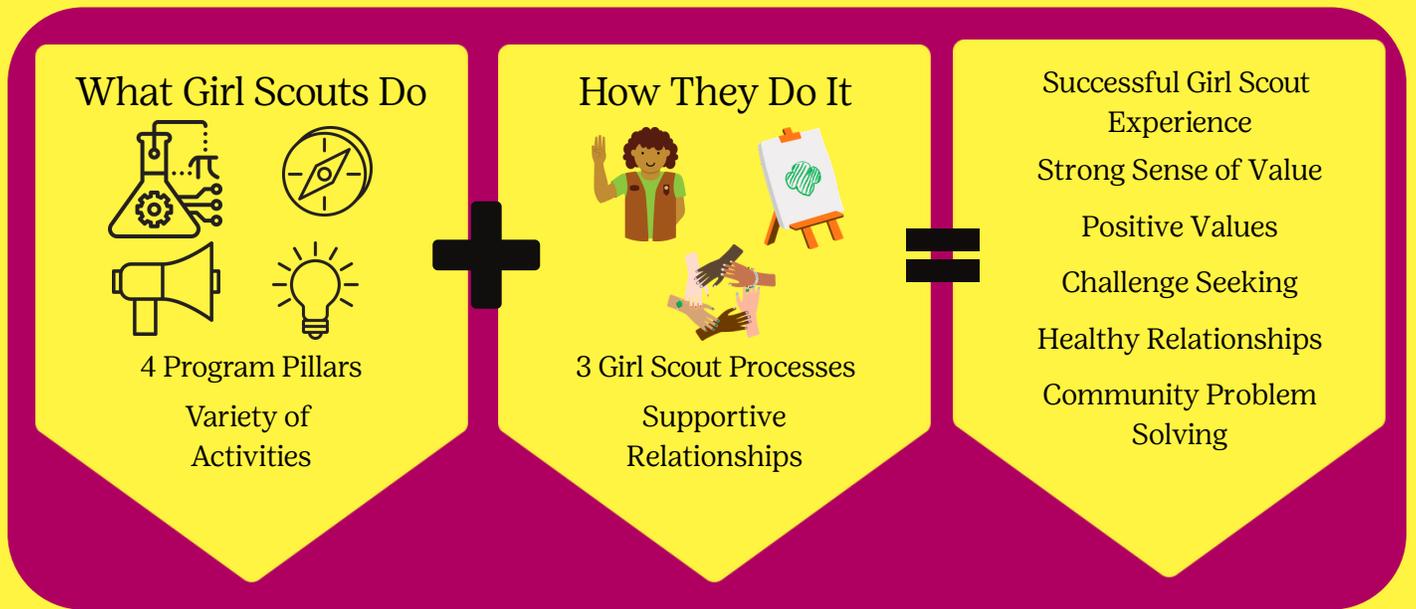
Cooperative Learning

Girl Scouts learn to share knowledge and skills in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation as they work towards a common goal.

Programming

Pillars, Processes, and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Girl Scout Leadership Experience



Elements of a Foundational Girl Scout Experience across all delivery models



Programming

Badges, Journeys, and Fun Patches

As a troop leader, you will lead activities that introduce Girl Scouts to themes across 4 pillars: STEM, Outdoors, Life Skills, and Entrepreneurship. Badges are awards that Girl Scouts earn by completing skill-building activities. It typically takes 2-4 hours to complete most badge steps. Once earned, badges are worn on the front of the Girl Scout uniform.



Through Journeys, Girl Scouts identify a problem they want to explore and brainstorm creative solutions that will make a difference. Then they created and implement a plan to put their solution into action. Like badges, Journey awards are worn on the front of the Girl Scout uniform.

Journeys will expire October 1, 2026.



Patches, or “fun patches,” are just that—for fun! Some patches have a curriculum; others are given out for special events or activities. Think of them as a scrapbook of your Girl Scout experience! Patches are worn on the back of the Girl Scout uniform.



Programming

Earning a Badge

- To earn a badge, Girl Scouts follow core steps that typically build progressively. In the Volunteer Toolkit, you'll find a resource guide to accompany each badge, with activity options for each step.
- As you think about activities that would fulfill the badge requirements, talk with your troop and choose activities that suit their ability, level, and interests. Be sure to keep the process Girl Scout-led and modify the steps as needed.
- If you're thinking through an activity and it doesn't seem feasible, choose something else! Remember, you have the flexibility to adapt activities while maintaining the integrity of the badge.

Eco Learner Badge

Nature gives us many gifts! In this badge, Daisies learn some ways to give back by protecting nature.

- Be prepared to protect nature when you go outdoors.
- Keep living things safe when you walk in nature.
- Learn how to protect nature from trash.

When a Girl Scout has earned this badge, they'll have learned 3 ways to protect the environment when they go outdoors.



Scribe Badge

In this badge, Juniors will discover how they can encourage, entertain, and excite people with their writing.

- Write a poem
- Create a short story
- Use words to share who they are
- Tell the world what you think
- Write an article

When a Girl Scout has earned this badge, they'll have learned how to write both fiction and nonfiction.

Advocacy, Community Service, & Take Action Projects

Advocacy: Girl Scouts of Greater New York is committed to being a voice for the issues that are important to girls in our communities. In partnership with the Girl Scouts of the USA, we engage with local leaders to build support for the Girl Scout Movement, promote leadership opportunities, and help all girls build the skills and confidence they need to advocate for themselves and others.

Community service projects make the world a better place, right now. From short-term community service projects, like hosting a toy drive for children living in temporary housing, to recurring projects, like a monthly volunteer shift at a soup kitchen, this work fills an immediate needs in the community and is a great way for Girl Scouts to give back.

Take Action projects—also called service learning—take community service to the next level. These projects allow Girl Scouts to identify areas where they'd like to help their community and engage more deeply by addressing the root causes of an issue.

Highest Awards

Each year, more than 50,000 Girl Scouts earn their Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award, investing more than one million hours into making the world a better place. The Highest Awards are a progression of projects and journeys that build tangible, real-world skills that give Girl Scouts an edge both personally and professionally.

Bronze Award: Juniors team up with other Girl Scouts to make a difference in their neighborhood

Silver Award: Cadettes research an issue, create a plan to address it, and take action to improve their community

Gold Award: Seniors and Ambassadors partner with local leaders to solve problems in their communities and beyond, discovering the power to effect measurable, lasting change

If you have any questions about the Highest Awards, please email highestawards@girlscoutsnyc.org.



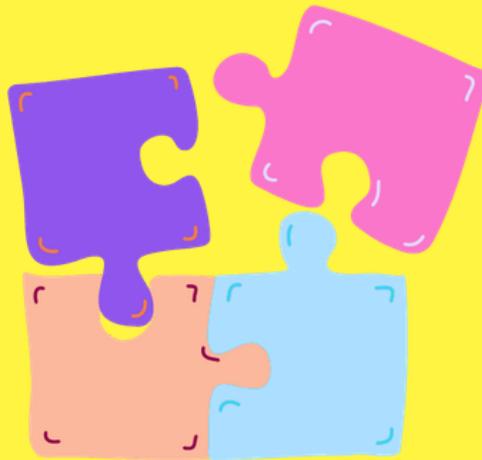
Programming

Girl Scouts for All

Girl Scouts for All (GSFA) is a council-wide initiative that ensures every girl can participate fully in Girl Scouts, regardless of ability, background, or circumstance. GSFA reflects GSGNY's commitment to equity, inclusion, and access by creating welcoming and supportive experiences for all girls.

Program Purpose

Girl Scouts for All works to remove barriers to participation by offering tailored supports, resources, and accommodations. The program supports girls with a wide range of needs to build confidence, develop leadership skills, and experience a true sense of belonging in Girl Scouts.



Who the Program Serves

Girl Scouts for All supports girls with disabilities or differing abilities who benefit from reasonable accommodations, inclusive environments, or adapted programming. The program is designed to ensure that every girl has equitable access to the Girl Scout experience by removing barriers to participation and providing opportunities for girls to engage, learn, and lead alongside their peers.

[Learn more about Girl Scouts for All](#)

Trip & Activity Planning

Where can we go?

Most trips taken by Girl Scout troops are short, one-day trips within the 5 boroughs. Some troops opt to venture outside New York City, going on overnight trips or to Camp Kaufmann. For trips longer than 3 nights or international travel, council approval is required.

What additional training do I need before taking a trip with my troop?

One Day Trip within NYC	Day Trips and Overnights outside of NYC	Two or more nights 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> GSGNY Leader's Guide to Success training <input type="checkbox"/> GSGNY Leader's Guide to Success Courses <i>via gsLearn</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Activity Checkpoints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> GSGNY Leader's Guide to Success training <input type="checkbox"/> GSUSA Foundations 1-4 <i>via gsLearn</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Activity Checkpoints <input type="checkbox"/> CPR/First Aid <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Adventures: Sleep Out <input type="checkbox"/> *Overnight Adventures: Camp Out  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> GSGNY Leader's Guide to Success training <input type="checkbox"/> GSUSA Foundations 1-4 <i>via gsLearn</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Activity Checkpoints <input type="checkbox"/> CPR/First Aid <input type="checkbox"/> Overnight Adventures: Sleep Out <input type="checkbox"/> *Overnight Adventures: Camp Out <i>*ifmaking a campfire</i>

Who do I need to notify?

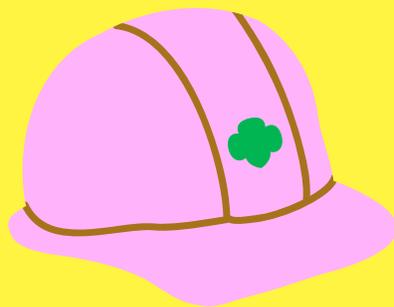
One Day Trip within NYC 	Day Trips and Overnights outside of NYC	Two or more nights 
<p>Girl Scout parents and caregivers</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Caregiver Permission Form <p>No trip application is needed unless it's a high risk activity* or additional insurance is required. <i>*Refer to the Safety Activity Checkpoints for a list of activities requiring council approval.</i></p>	<p>Girl Scout parents and caregivers</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Caregiver Permission Form <p>Girl Scouts of Greater New York</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Troop Trip and Insurance Application 	<p>Girl Scout parents and caregivers</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/Caregiver Permission Form <p>Girl Scouts of Greater New York</p> <p>↓</p> <p>Required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Troop Trip and Insurance Application 

Trip & Activity Planning

Safety Activity Checkpoints

Whether your troop is visiting a local science museum, Camp Kaufmann, or Savannah, GA (the birthplace of Girl Scouts!), you will need to review the Safety Activity Checkpoints. Here are some tips:

- Read through the introduction, which covers important safety information that applies to all activities.
- Review activities that are not permitted with Girl Scouts.
- Read through the sections specifically related to activities that you plan to do with your troop. If you do not see your activity listed in the SAC, or have questions about what's allowed, please reach out to your Volunteer Experience Specialist.
- After you've reviewed the Safety Activity Checkpoints, be sure to share them with Troop Support Volunteers, caregivers, and Girl Scouts.



Keeping Girl Scouts Safe

General Safety Guidelines

- Keep caregivers informed. Communicate regularly about troop meetings and activities and be sure to use permission slips any time the troop is doing anything outside of regular troop meetings.
- Girl Scouts should never be left alone and should always use the buddy system.
- Adults should never be alone with Girl Scouts. There must be a minimum of two registered adult volunteers always present, one of whom must be female. Be prepared with a first aid kit, non-emergency number for local law enforcement, and a charged cell phone.
- Be aware of your surroundings, whether in your regular meeting space or venturing out with your troop. Assess any risks and take appropriate action.

Emergency Procedure

Although we all hope the worst never happens, it's important to know and follow our council's procedures for handling emergency incidents.

At the scene of the incident, safety is your priority. Provide care for the injured person and obtain medical assistance, then immediately report the emergency to GSGNY staff. Call our office at 212.645.4000 during business hours, or the emergency line at 212.645.4009 after business hours.

Each troop should have an adult certified in CPR/First Aid to ensure troop safety. Make sure a general first aid kit is available at your meeting place and is brought on trips and activities. If a kit is not available at your meeting place, use troop funds to purchase one.

Always keep the names and numbers of our council office, parents/caregivers, and emergency services such as law enforcement, fire department, and hospital.

Safety Resources

The safety and well-being of Girl Scouts and adult members is our highest priority. As a volunteer, it is imperative to know and understand the safety policies and procedures in place, and where to look for information when necessary.

- **Volunteer Essentials: A guide to all** policies and procedures, including safety.
- **Safety Activity Checkpoints:** Activity-specific guidelines for everything from camping to participating in a parade. These guidelines are available on our website and in the Volunteer Toolkit.
- **Girl Scouts of Greater New York website:** Check out girlscoutsnyc.org for more information.
- **Activity Accident Insurance: This is automatically included upon** registration and applies to all adult and youth members who may become injured during a Girl Scout activity.

Keeping Girl Scouts Safe

Adult Supervision

Adult-to-Youth Ratios for Troop Meetings

The adult-to-youth ratio for troop meetings means a minimum of two registered, approved adult volunteers who are unrelated, including one female, must be present at troop meetings for up to this number of Girl Scouts:

- 12 Girl Scout Daisies
- 20 Girl Scout Brownies
- 25 Girl Scout Juniors
- 25 Girl Scout Cadettes
- 30 Girl Scout Seniors
- 30 Girl Scout Ambassadors
- 12 Multi-level Girl Scouts

With one extra registered, approved adult volunteer for every additional:

- 1-6 Girl Scout Daisies
- 1-8 Girl Scout Brownies
- 1-10 Girl Scout Juniors
- 1-12 Girl Scout Cadettes
- 1-15 Girl Scout Seniors
- 1-15 Girl Scout Ambassadors



Adult-to-Youth Ratios for Outings, Activities, Camping, and Travel

The adult-to-youth ratio for outings, activities, camping, and travel means a minimum of two registered, approved adult volunteers who are unrelated, including one female, must be present at troop meetings for up to this number of Girl Scouts:

- 6 Girl Scout Daisies
- 12 Girl Scout Brownies
- 16 Girl Scout Juniors
- 20 Girl Scout Cadettes
- 24 Girl Scout Seniors
- 24 Girl Scout Ambassadors

With one extra registered, approved adult volunteer for every additional:

- 1-4 Girl Scout Daisies
- 1-6 Girl Scout Brownies
- 1-8 Girl Scout Juniors
- 1-10 Girl Scout Cadettes
- 1-12 Girl Scout Seniors
- 1-12 Girl Scout Ambassadors

Keeping Girl Scouts Safe

Commitment to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging

Girl Scouts of Greater New York is committed to offering a safe and inclusive space for all children and their families. We want all Girl Scouts to feel welcome participating in Girl Scout programs. What does that mean in practice?

DEIB in Action

- Welcome personal sharing about people’s cultural traditions, languages, and diverse family structures. Make this kind of sharing a consistent, reliable part of your time together.
- Learn the most valuable ways to support individual children and adults with disabilities and learning differences. Ask caregivers, “What can I do to support your child so they feel successful in our troop?”
- Create access, and don’t assume what someone needs. Asking is the most respectful way to find out what someone needs.
- Provide a wide variety of activities for Girl Scouts. Notice when children do not relate to an activity and get curious about why. Find ways to connect with and relate to the children in your care.

To learn more about creating safe and inclusive space in your Girl Scout troop, check out these courses on gsLearn:

- Child & Adolescent Mental Health
- GSUSA Mental Wellness 101
- GSUSA Creating Your Inclusive Troop
- GSUSA Delivering Inclusive Program



Keeping Girl Scouts Safe

Accessibility & Inclusion

Girl Scouts of Greater New York strives to educate and empower all Girl Scouts and volunteers to embrace diversity, equity, and inclusion in our community.

Key Support for Inclusive Conversation

- **Plan Inclusively:** Involve Girl Scouts in the planning, design, and implementation of an activity. The Girl Scout Experience should represent and encourage girl-led activities that are accessible and adaptable to all Girl Scouts.
- **Consider Physical & Technological Barriers:** Be mindful of physical barriers that restrict participation, such as blocked pathways, stairs, dim lighting, etc. Be sure to consider apps, websites, and technology accessibility when meeting virtually.
- **Make Accommodations:** Ensure reasonable accommodations to support participation, such as large-print activity instructions, smaller or larger activity supplies, verbal instructions, additional time for tasks, etc.
- **Encourage Open Communication:** Speak to provide understanding; listen to find understanding. Speak directly to the Girl Scout (if appropriate) to learn how best to support them through an activity or task. Provide feedback, ask questions, and check in along the way.
- **Consider Social & Attitudinal Barriers:** Support normative social behavior and experiences. Be mindful that your fear, assumptions, or expectations of a Girl Scout with a disability does not create additional social and attitudinal barriers.

What You Can Do

- Encourage the membership and inclusion of Girl Scouts with disabilities in all troops.
- Encourage and welcome adult members with disabilities into volunteer and troop leadership roles.
- Model appropriate and skillful interactions with girls and adult members with disabilities.
- Examine your thoughts and attitudes to foster a safe and supportive environment.

Essential Volunteer Resources

How do I ensure that Girl Scouts are safe during our meeting and activities?

Refer to: [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)

Mandated Reporters:

If you are a mandated reporter (such as a school official, health or social service worker, or caregiver), you are legally required to report suspected abuse or neglect. You may also be required to submit a written report within 48 hours of making an oral report.

To report child abuse in NYC, call the New York State Central Register (SCR) Hotline at 1-800-342-3720 (TTY: 1-800-638-5163) at any time, 24/7. If the child is in immediate danger, call 911 or your local police department.

The SCR will direct your report to the Administration for Children's Services (ACS), which will conduct the investigation. The GSGNY Emergency Phone Line is open Monday through Friday, 5:00 P.M. – 8:00 P.M., Saturday and Sunday, 12:00 A.M. – 11:59 P.M.

This line is intended for after-hour emergencies, including but not limited to: Reporting an incident or accident Reporting a transportation issue during a Girl Scout event Reporting medical emergencies, fires, severe weather events, and threats of violence during a Girl Scout meeting or event. For serious life-threatening issues, please call 911. Emergency Line: (212) 645-4009

Where can I find more onboarding and program support?

Refer to: [Volunteer Essentials, Forms and Documents](#)

Is there a general reference guide for volunteers about Girl Scout policies?

gsLearn: From [Managing Troop Finances](#) to [Creating Your Inclusive Troop](#), you'll find hundreds of helpful on-demand training modules on this platform.

Volunteer Toolkit (VTK): The Volunteer Toolkit is the virtual planning assistant that will help power a fun-filled—and organized!—Girl Scout year. You can:

- Explore meeting topics and program activities
- Print step-by-step activity guides
- Edit troop roster and update contact information
- Contact caregivers
- Take attendance and track badge achievements
- Track and share financial information
- Service Unit Managers: Service units hold monthly meetings, and they're a great opportunity to ask questions and learn from volunteers just like you. They may also hold training sessions ahead of Cookie Season or host other events for Girl Scout troops in your community.
 - Award & Badge Explorer: The Award & Badge Explorer provides a comprehensive guide to all of the badges and Journey awards that Girl Scouts can earn, which are searchable by grade level and topic. You'll find downloadable badge requirements that you can share with your troop and a link to purchase badges from the Girl Scout store.

How can I get Short-Term Volunteer Support?

Contact your Volunteer role's supervising GSGNY Staff Member directly or email Customer Care (customercare@girlscoutsnyc.org) with the subject line "Short-term Volunteer Support".

girlscoutsnyc.org

Girl Scouts of Greater New York

40 Wall Street, Suite 708,

New York, NY 10005

212.645.4000

customercare@girlscoutsnyc.org