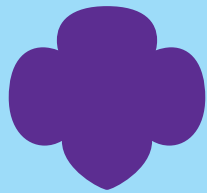


# New Leader's Guide



2023-2024

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“Welcome to Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons and thank you for embarking on the great adventure of Girl Scouting!

Your commitment as a Girl Scout Volunteer will provide a foundation of confidence, experience, respect, and courage that stays with a young woman throughout her lifetime.

Because of you, our Girl Scouts have the opportunity to learn what they are capable of accomplishing and will prepare for a lifetime of leadership, success and adventure – together you will change the world!”

Marla Meyer  
CEO, Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons

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# Getting Started

## The 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.

## The 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.

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

## Our Mission

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

## Organizational Structure

### Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)

A national organization supporting the work of more than 100 councils across the U.S. for more than 100 years. Headquartered in New York City.

### Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons Council

Independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit chartered by GSUSA and operating under the direction of a local board of directors and overseeing all service units and troops within a specific geographic area.

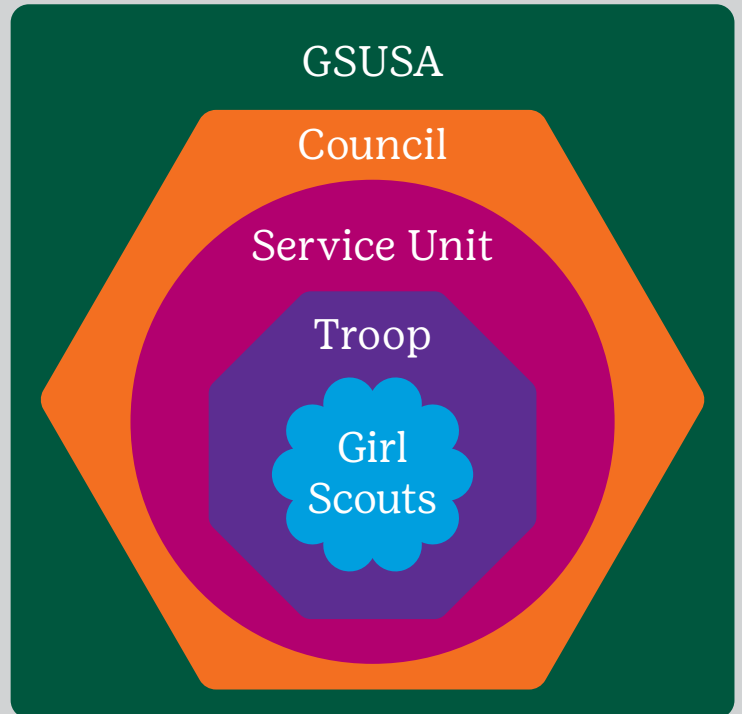
### Service Unit

All Girl Scout members including troops, girls, volunteers, parents, and community members that live in a geographic area.

Service units are led by a team of volunteers who work with council staff to support and serve girls, troops, and volunteers in their area.

### Troops

A group of Girl Scouts supervised by troop volunteers who meet regularly.



## Girl Scout Leadership Experience

What makes Girl Scouts truly unique? Everything is designed especially for, and is tested by, girls! Our program centers around our research-backed Girl Scout Leadership Experience—that is what girls do and how they do it. Activities are girl-led, which gives girls opportunities to explore leadership roles and “learn by doing” in a cooperative-learning environment.

In Girl Scouts, girls will:

**Discover:** Every activity girls tackle in Girl Scouts helps them discover who they are, what they care about, and what their talents are.

**Connect:** Girls collaborate with and learn from other people and expand their horizons. This helps them care about and inspire others locally and globally.

**Take Action:** As girls connect with and show care for others, they become eager to take action to make the world a better place.

So, what does this mean for your troop? Through Girl Scouting, your girls will develop a strong sense of self, demonstrate positive values, seek challenges, solve significant problems in their community, and establish healthy relationships. These aren't just good qualities—they're leadership skills that will last a lifetime!

## Girl Scout Program

No matter what excites your girls, they'll find engaging and fun activities in the four areas that make up the core of the Girl Scout program:



### STEM

Computer science, engineering, robotics, outdoor STEM, and more



### OUTDOORS

Adventure and skill building, from the backyard to the backcountry, through camping experiences for all ages



### LIFE SKILLS

Civic engagement, healthy living, global citizenship, communication skills—to name a few



### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Girl Scout Cookie Program teaches goal setting, decision making, money management, business ethics, and people skills

Whether they complete Girl Scout Leadership Journeys, earn badges, unleash their inner entrepreneur through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, pack for their first hike, change the world through “Take Action” projects, or any combination of these activities, at Girl Scouts, every girl has countless ways to explore our four program areas and hone the skills they'll need to power a lifetime of success—whatever that looks like for them.

Explore the many exciting possibilities with the Award and Badge Explorer at [girlscouts.org/badgeexplorer](https://www.girlscouts.org/badgeexplorer).

## Grade Levels and Where Girl Scouts Can Take Your Girls

As your girls progress through Girl Scouts, they'll learn to take the reins and make their Girl Scout experiences their own—it's what being girl-led is all about! And as a leader, you'll encourage them to dream big and challenge themselves as they take their newfound passions to the next level.

While program elements—like outdoor expeditions and entrepreneurial ventures—align across all grade levels, Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies won't be doing the same activities as seasoned Seniors and Ambassadors. But by building on the knowledge and skills they gain year after year, your girls' confidence will grow exponentially and they'll be eager to take those next steps.

So, what can you expect as they grow through each level of Girl Scouting?



**Girl Scout Daisies (K-1st grade)** sparkle with that first-time newness in everything they do. They go on trips, learn about nature and science, and explore the arts and their communities—and so much more. Daisies can also earn learning petals.



**Girl Scout Brownies (2nd-3rd grade)** work together as they earn badges and explore their communities. Friendship, fun, and age-appropriate activities begin at the Girl Scout Brownie meeting and move out to the community and the wider world. While earning badges, Brownies build skills, learn hobbies, and have fun!



**Girl Scout Juniors (4th-5th grade)** are big-idea thinkers. They're explorers at camp and product designers when they earn their Innovation and Storytelling badges, or even their Bronze Award. Every day, they wake up ready to play a new role.



**Girl Scout Cadettes (6th-8th grade)** chart their own courses and let their curiosity and imagination lead the way. They learn about the power of being a good friend, gain confidence by mentoring younger girls, and can earn their Silver Award.



**Girl Scout Seniors (9th-10th grade)** are ready to take the world by storm, and Girl Scouts gives them countless ways to do it. Their experiences shape their world, while giving them a safe space to be themselves and explore their interests. Seniors can earn their Gold Award and change the world in a tangible, lasting way.



**Girl Scout Ambassadors (11th-12th grade)** know that small acts produce big change. While they get ready for life beyond high school, Girl Scouts helps them take flight. They can also earn their Gold Award and drive lasting impact in their communities.

## Highest Awards

All of the skills and experiences girls gain throughout their time in Girl Scouts set them up for special recognition through the [Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards](#). Through their award projects, your girls will tackle issues close to their hearts and make a real difference—and if they decide to pursue their Gold Award, they'll also be eligible for unique college scholarships and open doors to promising career opportunities. The longer your girls are in Girl Scouts, the brighter their futures will be—and they'll have you to thank for it!

# Learning the Ropes

## Your Role as a Girl Scout Troop Co-Leader

Being a Girl Scout Troop Co-Leader is an incredible journey along which you'll shape the future by working with girls today. With your guidance, encouragement, and go-getting spirit, your Girl Scouts will be ready to embark on a lifetime of leadership, success, and adventure. And along the way, you'll hone your own leadership style and discover that you'll achieve more than you thought possible!

In Girl Scouting, leadership is about more than “being in charge” or having a title; it's recognizing that you're part of a team and understanding that team's needs and interests.



### Leadership is teaching girls:

- They can do and be anything!
- They are decision-makers and should own their decisions.
- They can live the Girl Scout Law every day.

### As a co-leader, see yourself as a coach who:

- Advises, discusses, and cheers on your troop.
- Ensures each girl understands and can carry out her responsibilities within the troop.
- Encourages girls to build their skills and their ethics.
- Gives more responsibilities to the girls as they grow and develop.

### It's important to remember that:

- You may not know everything that the girls want to learn.
- You will be exploring and learning right alongside your girls.
- You are not expected to know everything about Girl Scouts, but you should know where to go for information and ask for help when you need it!
- Council staff and your service unit volunteers are available to help as you get started and throughout your journey.

“To be inspired is great, but to be an inspiration is an honor.”

Juliette Gordon Low, Girl Scouts Founder

## New Troop Co-Leader Training and Resources

We know there's a lot to learn as a new troop co-leader. Don't worry! We've got you covered!

### MyGS

MyGS is your online account where you can manage your troop and family's membership and access the tools to manage your troop. Once you are a registered member, you can log into MyGS from the Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons website [gsdakotahorizons.org](https://gsdakotahorizons.org).

In MyGS you can:

- Manage your Girl Scout membership and the memberships in your household and troop(s).
- View your troop roster of girls and adult volunteers.
- Maintain your contact information and preferences.
- Register for exciting in-person and virtual events for your Girl Scout, your family, or your troop to attend.
- Access the Volunteer Toolkit and gsLearn to make your Girl Scout volunteer experience a breeze!

### gsLearn

gsLearn is Girl Scouts' official online and on demand training platform. Prepared leaders are confident leaders, and with these online courses available when you are, you will have all the info you need to be a great Girl Scout volunteer.

#### New Troop Co-Leader Learning Path

All new troop co-leaders are required to complete the New Troop Co-Leader Learning Path in gsLearn prior to holding troop meetings with the girls.

This 90-minute training includes the following courses:

- Welcome to Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons Council
- Safety in Girl Scouting
- What Girl Scouts Do
- Your First Troop Meeting
- Troop Finances
- Family Engagement: The Key to Success

Additional training is available on topics including Taking Girls Outdoors, Product Programs, and more. We encourage you to take advantage of these on demand training courses to expand your knowledge and skills as a Girl Scout volunteer.

### Volunteer Essentials

[Volunteer Essentials](#) is your go-to reference to answer all your frequently asked questions. Find it on our website under Members.

### Safety Activity Checkpoints

[Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) has everything you need to know to be prepared and keep your girls safe during a range of activities outside the normal Girl Scout troop meeting. Find it on our website under Safety in Volunteer Essentials.

### Award and Badge Explorer

[girlscouts.org/badgexplorer](https://girlscouts.org/badgexplorer)

Use GSUSA's Award and Badge Explorer tool to find out about every award, badge, and pin your girls can earn as they explore interests and learn new skills as Girl Scouts!

## Volunteer Toolkit

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is your official source for delivering easy, fun troop meetings year-round! This fully customizable digital planning tool is accessible on any computer, tablet, or mobile device and provides you with everything you need to run your troop.

Troop Co-Leaders use the VTK to:

- View and download your troop roster with member contact information.
- Choose one of the preselected Year Plans or customize your own.
- Use ready to go meeting plans, activities, and templates.
- Track girl meeting attendance and award earning.
- Add events and troop field trips to the calendar.
- Share the troop's calendar and meeting plans with parents.
- Find links to resources like the Award and Badge Explorer and Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Ready to check it out? Log in to your MyGS and choose Volunteer Toolkit from the menu. The first time you visit you can take a guided tour to get to know all the tools and features. Find more information about navigating the Volunteer Toolkit with the [Troop Co-Leader User Guide](#). We would also be happy to schedule an individual VTK meeting. Contact Member Services to set one up!

## Volunteer Scoop

Volunteers receive a monthly email called “Volunteer Scoop” with important information, opportunities, and reminders for the month ahead. The Volunteer Scoop is also posted to our website each month under Council News.

Be sure you have opted into emails from Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons, so you don't miss any timely information. Visit MyGS or contact Member Services to update your communication preferences.





# Keeping Girls Safe

## Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

From camping weekends to cookie booths to troop meetings, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure their girls have fun and stay safe, no matter their grade level. Adult volunteers must be registered members of Girl Scouts and have successfully completed a background screening.

The helpful chart below breaks down the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls.

Volunteer-to-Girl Ratio Chart	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:
Daisies (grades K-1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Brownies (grades 2-3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Juniors (grades 4-5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
Cadettes (grades 6-8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Seniors (grades 9-10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
Ambassadors (grades 11-12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

## Planning Safe Activities

When preparing for any activity with girls, check Girl Scouts' [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for required guidelines on where to do the activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear for the activity, and the specific steps to follow on the day of the activity. Safety Activity Checkpoints will also note if a certified first-aid is required. If a safety activity checkpoint doesn't exist for an activity you and your girls are interested in, contact Member Services before making any definite plans.

## First Aid/CPR

It is recommended that you have a CPR/First Aid certified volunteer with your group. For some activities, it is required and will be indicated in Safety Activity Checkpoints.

## Be Prepared for Emergencies

Although we all hope the worst never happens, you should be prepared and follow our council's procedures for handling emergency incidents. In an emergency, first provide care for the injured person and/or obtain medical assistance, then immediately report the emergency to council staff by following the Emergency Procedures.

Always keep the following items readily available when with your Girl Scouts. Items are located on our website under [Safety in Volunteer Essentials](#).

- Health and Permission Form for each girl. These must be filled out and signed annually by each girl's caregiver.
- First Aid kit. Visit the American Red Cross' Anatomy of a First Aid Kit for a list of items to include.
- Local emergency services' contact information.
- Council Emergency Procedures

# Support System

## Connecting with Your Service Unit

Service units are Girl Scout members grouped by geography or school. They are led by experienced, dedicated volunteers who support and serve girls, troops, and volunteers in their area.

Service units hold meetings for Girl Scout volunteers throughout the year to share ideas, receive training, and talk about important announcements. They also organize events like community-wide service projects, summer day camps, cookie rallies, recruitments, celebrations, ceremonies, and more!

Your service unit is excited to meet you! You will be connected with your local service unit during your onboarding. Be sure to attend meetings and get to know your fellow Girl Scout volunteers! Your service unit may also have an experienced Volunteer Mentor to assist you as you get started.

## Co-Leaders – Leading Together

All troops must have at least two co-leaders who manage and lead the troop together. If you don't already have a co-leader a membership specialist will help recruit a second co-leader. You can also try asking a friend, co-worker, or neighbor. Girl Scout volunteers don't have to be a parent or have a girl in the troop!

You and your co-leader will want to guide the structure and experiences of your troop. You'll make these decisions collaboratively, as well as with input from the girls and their caregivers.

Before starting troop meetings, you will want to get together and make some decisions about your troop. We suggest meeting for coffee or ice cream to start getting to know each other and how you will work together! Chat about the following topics:

### Your Troop

- Does our troop consist of girls in a single grade level or are we going to be a multi-level troop with girls of two or more grade levels?
- Review your troop roster. What volunteer roles do we need filled?
- How do we want parents to help?

### Troop Communications

- How will we communicate with troop families? Facebook? Email? Text?
- How often will we communicate with troop families?
- Who will manage troop communications?

### Meeting Logistics

- When will we meet and for how long?
- How frequently should we meet?
- Where will we meet? Great meeting spaces include schools, places of worship, libraries, and community centers.
- Will we have parents stay at troop meetings?

### Money Matters

- Will our troop charge dues?
- How much money will we need to cover supplies and activities?
- What will the troop funds cover and what will families pay for?
- Who will be the two signers on the troop bank account?
- What bank should we use?

# Working with Caregivers

## **Family Connections: The Key Ingredient to Successful Troops**

Girl Scouting provides the best opportunities for girls when families step up and play an active part in the troop. Without meaningful support from parents, it's difficult for a troop to be all it can be. Plus, girls feel a special sense of pride when their families take part and show interest in the things they are doing!

## **Parent/Caregiver Meetings**

Kick the year off right with a parent/caregiver meeting! This should be the first meeting you hold to start each troop year—it sets up both new and returning troops for success. Outlining clear expectations, building a team, and engaging families in the Girl Scout experience is a great way to start off on the right foot.

You'll also want to hold additional family meetings ahead of cookie season and at the end of the school year. Use Caregiver-Family meeting plans in the Volunteer Toolkit for meeting agendas, tips, and activity ideas!

## **Building Your Troop Volunteer Team**

Set the stage for a successful troop year by tapping into the people resources already at your fingertips: caregivers and other family members, friends, and members of the community have their own unique strengths and can provide troops with time, experience, and ideas!

Ask each family to fill out the [Parent/Caregiver Involvement Form](#) to start gathering information about how they can help the troop. Most people are willing to help when asked! Some members of your volunteer team might play more active roles than others—and that's OK! One caregiver in your troop might step up as a dedicated troop treasurer, while others might volunteer to transport girls or chaperone a field trip.

Please keep in mind that adult volunteers who will be working with girls other than their own, driving members, and/or handling troop funds and product inventory, must be approved volunteers by registering as an adult member and completing a criminal background check.

## **Troop Volunteer Roles**

### **Co-Leader**

Work with a second co-leader to lead a group of girls and mentor them as they make new friends and develop connections that will last a lifetime. Minimum 2 required for troop to start.

### **Troop Treasurer**

Together with the second bank account signer/treasurer you will open and maintain the troop checking account, keep accurate records, and communicate financial information with troop members and council. All troop bank account signers will hold this role.

### **Troop Fall Product Coordinator**

Coordinate the annual fall product program where girls take orders for nuts, chocolates, and magazines. You'll complete training and then guide the troop.

### **Troop Cookie Coordinator**

Coordinate the troop's cookie program by setting up cookie booths, manage inventory and money. You'll complete training and then guide the troop.

### **Troop Helpers**

Provide extra support to the troop as needed. Work with girls at troop meetings, transport girls, chaperone field trips, supervise cookie booths, or other support as needed.

# Starting the Adventure

## Troop Meetings

### Meeting Frequency and Location

Troops meet on a regular basis. Most troops meet every other week, but some meet weekly or monthly.

Troop meetings are typically an hour and a half. However, Daisies may only want to meet for one hour. As the girls get older and the activities get more involved, meeting times may need to be extended to allow more time to dive deeper into activities and discussion.

A troop meeting place should provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for the participation of all girls. Consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, places of worship, community buildings, childcare facilities, and/or local businesses.

Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons has multiple locations throughout North Dakota and South Dakota that are available for troop and service unit meetings, events and outdoor activities such as camping. Check out our [Reserving a Dakota Horizons' Property or Equipment guide](#) for more information at booking one of our locations.

## Six Elements of a Great Troop Meeting

The only requirement for your meeting is that your girls are laughing, smiling, and having a fun time! Many troop leaders use the basic structure below for their meetings.

1. Ramp up. Plan activities for the girls on arrival at the meeting so they have something to do until the meeting begins. This could be as simple as coloring pages or talking with one another. (5 minutes)
2. Opening. Each troop decides how to open its meetings—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other activity designed by the girls. (5–10 minutes)
3. Troop business. Collect dues and make announcements or plan an upcoming event or trip while families are present. (5 minutes)
4. Let the fun begin. Use the meeting plans found in the Volunteer Toolkit! Activities are already designed to fit easily into this part of your meeting as you help your troop earn badges and complete Journeys. (30–45 minutes)
5. Clean up. Because Girl Scouts should always leave a place cleaner than they found it! (5 min)
6. Closing. Just like the opening, each troop can decide how to close—with a song, a game, a story, or pretty much anything else! Many troops close their meetings with the Friendship Circle. (5–10 minutes)

You can find ready to go meeting plans for all grade levels in the Volunteer Toolkit for free.

You can also plan meeting activities using printed program materials – grade level handbooks, badge booklets, and Journey Books, available for purchase through retail services.

## Your First Troop Meeting

Your first troop meeting is a great chance to get to know the girls and brainstorm all the exciting things they want to do in the year to come. If you're feeling a little nervous about leading troop meetings and experiences with your girls, that's OK!

Just remember that:

- It doesn't need to be perfect. Did an activity run over time? Or maybe a field trip didn't go according to plan? Take a deep breath, roll with the changes, and have fun! The girls aren't expecting perfection from you: your time, attention, and guidance are the best part of your leadership.
- You will learn with your girls. Keeping activities girl-led also means that at some point, the girls will want to earn a badge or complete a project in a subject unfamiliar to you. Be open with the girls when you don't know something and become their partner in learning more. You'll show them that learning is a lifelong process and that with an open mind, they can overcome any challenges that come their way.

After the meeting give yourself a big pat on the back – you did a great job! Record attendance in the Volunteer Toolkit and use the email templates to share what the girls did with caregivers.

## Keeping Families Engaged

Make family part of the formula throughout the year!

- Open a few events to their families throughout the year. Inviting the whole crew to celebrate her accomplishments in Girl Scouting will help parents better understand the value of Girl Scouts and be more likely to invest their time and talents with the troop.
- Keep communication lines open throughout the year whether it's through your troop's social media page, personal emails, or in-person chats.
- Keep caregivers in the loop on what the girls are doing and learning during each meeting and encourage them to let their daughters "be the expert" at home. Use the email templates available for each meeting in the Volunteer Toolkit to easily share what the girls are doing!
- Ask families to help with the troop! Maybe they can help prepare meeting supplies, stop by the retail store to pick up badges, or bring a snack to a meeting.



# Troop Finances

Your girls will probably have some big ideas about what they want to do in Girl Scouts—and that’s awesome! As a troop leader, you’ll coach them as they learn to earn and manage troop funds.

## Troop Funds

Troop activities are powered by proceeds. It’s completely up to each troop to decide what works best for them to support the activities they want to do.

- **Product Programs:** The Fall Product and Cookie Programs are the primary money earning activities for a troop each year. Participation in these programs allow girls to earn rewards and learn important finance and business skills and generate funds for the troop’s adventures!
- **Money-earning activities:** Activities organized by the troop (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with volunteers) and that earn money for the group. Council preapproval and participation in product programs is required.
- **Troop dues:** Some troops decide to collect troop dues to help provide funds for troop activities and supplies. These could range from a few dollars per meeting to a lump sum for the entire school year.

## Product Programs

Product Programs help to power amazing experiences for girls and troops! When a girl participates in a product program, she is exposed to a unique experience and learns essential life skills. Her confidence soars and the leader in her begins to step up in powerful, everyday ways – when she raises her hand in class, says ‘yes’ to a challenge, or finds the silver lining in a bad day. She will gain a ton of confidence and find out what she’s capable of. And there’s more – participating also means big fun, great friends, and a chance to change the world!

Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons hosts two Product Programs a year: Fall Product Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program.

### Fall Product Program

Smaller of the two programs, girls sell nuts, chocolate and magazines to friends and family. The fall product program happens at the start of each new Girl Scout year in October. Learn more about the fall product program at [gsdakotahorizons.org/FallProduct](https://gsdakotahorizons.org/FallProduct).

### Girl Scout Cookie Program

The largest girl-led business in the world giving girls an opportunity to sell cookies at cookie booths, in their online storefronts and in-person. The cookie program is held February to March each year. Learn more about the cookie program at [gsdakotahorizons.org/CookieResources](https://gsdakotahorizons.org/CookieResources).

### Dakota Dough

When Girl Scouts participate in the product programs, they aren’t just learning valuable skills, such as financial literacy and goal setting. They are earning Dakota Dough that can be used to explore new activities! Girls can use their Dakota Dough for event fees, retail purchases, or membership!

## Opening a new troop bank account

No matter how much your troop plans to save or spend, you'll need a safe place to deposit your troop dues, product program proceeds, and other funds. If you've stepped up to lead an existing troop, you may inherit a checking account, but with a new troop, you'll want to open a new bank account.

To open a new troop bank account or change signers on an existing account:

### Identify the two required bank account signers and the bank of your choice.

- Troop bank accounts are required to have 2 registered, approved adult Girl Scout volunteers as signers who are not related or live in the same household.
- Account signers must understand and agree to the [Authorized Signer Responsibilities](#).
- Bank accounts must be opened under the Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons tax ID number.
- Bank accounts can be opened at the federally insured financial institution of your choice.

### Request Authorization to Open the New Troop Account

- Submit the Bank Account Authorization Request Form to council.
- Allow 5 business days for processing.
- Forms will be emailed to approved signers once the Bank Account Authorization Request Form is submitted and approved.

### Open a new bank account.

- Take the Bank Account Authorization Letter and Corporate Resolution Regarding Financial Arrangements of Corporate Accounts received via email to a federally insured financial institution of your choosing.
- Reach out to your financial institution to get specific instructions they may have (by appointment only, documentation they might require you to bring in, all signers must come together, etc.)
- This process can take up to 3 weeks depending on bank policy and procedures (requires council signatures by mail).

### Report new bank account information to council.

- Submit the Bank Account Confirmation/ACH Form within 5 days of opening the new account to confirm the troop has opened the new bank account.
- The council uses ACH for all financial transactions with troop bank accounts, including payments for Fall Product and Cookie Program.

Please refer to the [How To Open a New Bank Account](#) process for more detailed information.

## Financial Management

All funds collected, raised, earned, or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting belong to the troop and must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Funds are administered through the troop and do not belong to individuals. Under no circumstances shall the money be divided among members of the troop for personal use, used by the Account Signers for her/his personal use or donated to another organization.

## Check Register

The GSDH Check Register is an excel workbook that is used to track troop funds all year and makes submitting the Annual Finance Report easy. Download the current year Check Register from our website and start using it as soon as you open the account.

## Annual Finance Report

Troops are required to submit an Annual Finance Report through the Volunteer Toolkit each year by June 15. A copy of the current year May bank statement and the check register must also be submitted. Detailed information about submitting the report will be provided in May.

Find more Troop Finance information on our website under [Volunteer Essentials](#).

# Girl Scout Uniforms

Girl Scouts from each grade level have one official uniform item (a sash, vest, or tunic) to display badges, pins, awards, and other insignia. This item is required when girls participate in ceremonies or officially represent Girl Scouts.

## Retail Services – Uniforms, badges and more!

Retail services has everything you need to help you and your Girl Scouts prepare for the exciting adventures ahead, including uniforms, badges, fun patches, and more! We offer a variety of ways to shop! Visit [gsdakotahorizons.org/shop](http://gsdakotahorizons.org/shop) for more details.

- In-person shopping at our Fargo and Sioux Falls stores.
- Pop-Up Shops at events throughout the council.
- Virtual shopping appointments with one of our retail specialists. You'll browse the retail store to view items, ask questions, and place your order.
- Phone - Call 800-666-2141
- Mail - Send a completed order form to Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons, 1101 S. Marion Rd, Sioux Falls, SD 57106
- Email – Email an order form to [help@gsdakotahorizons.org](mailto:help@gsdakotahorizons.org).
- Online Shopping
  - Juliette's Boutique online store is packed with items you need and Girl Scouts love.
  - GSUSA's online retail store is available 24/7 offering a variety of Girl Scout items. This official retail store also includes branded items that our Juliette's Boutique online store may not carry.

Sash, Vest or Tunic\*



Insignia Tab\*



Council ID Set\*  
"Dakota Horizons"



American Flag Patch



World Trefoil Pin



5 Digit Troop Number\*



Membership Pin\*



\*Color and style vary by grade level.



# Traditions & Ceremonies

## Traditions

Traditions connect Girl Scouts across the globe. They link current Girl Scouts to the trailblazers who came before them and remind them of the camaraderie that comes with a wide network of millions of fellow Girl Scouts and Girl Scout alums.

### Girl Scout Sign

Raise three fingers of the right hand with the thumb holding down the pinky. The 3 fingers represent the three parts of the Girl Scout Promise.

### Girl Scout Handshake

Shaking hands with the left hand and make the GS sign with the right hand. The left hand is nearest to the heart and signifies friendship.

### Friendship Circle

Representing the unbroken chain of friendship among Girl Scouts and Girl Guides around the world, the Friendship Circle involves Girl Scouts standing in a circle, crossing their right arms over their left, and clasping hands with their friends on both sides. Everyone then makes a silent wish as a friendship squeeze is passed from hand to hand around the circle.



### SWAPS

SWAPS stands for “Special Whatchamacallits Affectionately Pinned Somewhere.” They are small tokens of friendship that Girl Scouts exchange with one another, and each SWAP uniquely reflects a fellow Girl Scout, their troop, or a memory of a special event. They’re a great way to share stories and get to know Girl Scouts from across the country and the world.

### Kaper Charts

A chart dividing up troop responsibilities. Indicates all the jobs available and who is responsible during a meeting or a camp-out.

## Ceremonies

Ceremonies help Girl Scouts celebrate special moments and accomplishments throughout the year, such as bridging to another level or earning a National Leadership Journey award. They can plan a ceremony around a theme, such as friendship or nature, and express themselves in words or song. There are all kinds of ceremonies, here are the most popular:



- Bridging ceremonies mark a girl's move from one level of Girl Scouting to another. Find bridging kits for every level.
- Flag ceremonies can be part of any activity that honors the American flag. Be sure to observe flag etiquette during a flag ceremony.
- Investiture ceremonies welcome new members into the Girl Scout family for the first time. New Girl Scouts receive their membership pin as well as their grade-level pin at this ceremony.
- Court of Awards ceremonies honors Girl Scouts' accomplishments. They are presented with their badges, year pins, and other recognitions earned during the year. Volunteers may also be recognized during the ceremony. The Court of Awards can be held anytime during the year, at any location, and as often as the troop wants.
- Opening ceremonies can kick off regular Girl Scout meetings and make them feel special!
- Rededication ceremonies are an opportunity for Girl Scouts, their families, and volunteers to renew their commitment to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

## Girl Scout Days

Throughout the year, Girl Scouts and Girl Scout volunteers celebrate some very special days in Girl Scouting.

- Juliette Gordon Low's birthday or Founder's Day, October 31, marks the birth in 1860 of Girl Scouts of the USA founder Juliette Gordon Low in Savannah, Georgia.
- World Thinking Day, February 22, celebrates the birthdays of Girl Guide/Girl Scout founder Lord Baden-Powell (1857–1941) and World Chief Guide Lady Baden-Powell (1889–1977). The day is also a time to donate funds to the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund.
- Girl Scouts' birthday, March 12, commemorates the day in 1912 when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the organization's first 18 members in Savannah, Georgia.
- Girl Scout Week is celebrated each March, starting with Girl Scout Sunday and ending with Girl Scout Sabbath on a Saturday, and it always includes Girl Scouts' birthday, March 12.
- Girl Scouts Celebrate Faith events give Girl Scouts an opportunity to be recognized at their places of worship during Girl Scout Week, share their legacy of service to others, and deepen their connection to their faith and Girl Scouting. Celebration days include Girl Scout Sunday, Girl Scout Jummah, and Girl Scout Sabbath/Shabbat.
- Girl Scout Leader's Day, April 22, honors all the volunteers who work as leaders and mentors in partnership with girls. On this day, Girl Scouts, their families, and their communities find special ways to thank their Girl Scout volunteers.



# SWAPS

Special Whatchamacallits  
Affectionately Pinned Somewhere

## WHAT

- A tradition of Girl Scouts exchanging keepsakes that started back in the 1950s.
- SWAPS are handmade, unique, themed, and fun!

## WHY

- SWAPS are a great way to build friendships.
- SWAPS create lasting Girl Scout memories.
- SWAPS are a creative activity that can be done as a troop or as an individual.

## WHERE

- SWAPS can be pinned to a hat, jacket, banner, or stored in a memory box.
- SWAPS can be exchanged at camps, events, or during travel.



## Keep the Good Times Rolling

You are off to a great start...keep the good time rolling!

- Hold regular troop meetings.
- Get to know your girls.
- Ask parents/caregivers for help.
- Sign the troop up to go to events together.
- Attend service unit meetings and meet local volunteers.
- Join the GSDH Member Connect Facebook group!
- Review the monthly 'Volunteer Scoop' email.
- Contact Member Services anytime you have a question or need assistance at 1.800.666.2141 or [help@gsdakotahorizons.org](mailto:help@gsdakotahorizons.org).



## Quick References

### Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons Website

[gsdakotahorizons.org](http://gsdakotahorizons.org)

### Volunteer Essentials

[gsdakotahorizons.org/essentials](http://gsdakotahorizons.org/essentials)

### New Leader Resources

[gsdakotahorizons.org/resources](http://gsdakotahorizons.org/resources)

### Badge and Award Explorer

[girlscouts.org/BadgeExplorer](http://girlscouts.org/BadgeExplorer)

### Event Listing

[gsdakotahorizons.org/events](http://gsdakotahorizons.org/events)

### Fall Product Program

[gsdakotahorizons.org/FallProduct](http://gsdakotahorizons.org/FallProduct)

### Cookie Program

[gsdakotahorizons.org/CookieResources](http://gsdakotahorizons.org/CookieResources)

### Retail Services

[gsdakotahorizons.org/shop](http://gsdakotahorizons.org/shop)

### Member Services

800.666.2141 or [help@gsdakotahorizons.org](mailto:help@gsdakotahorizons.org)

## Service Centers

### Bismarck Service Center

735 Airport Road  
Bismarck, ND 58504

### Rapid City Service Center

1202 E St Francis Street  
Rapid City, SD 57701

### Fargo Service Center & Retail Store

1002 43rd Street S  
Fargo, ND 58103

### Sioux Falls Service Center & Retail Store

1101 S Marion Road  
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

