

Fall Troop Management Guide



2023-2024

Welcome

Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons is so glad you're here to lead your girls on another adventure-filled year of fun and friendship! Thank you!

As you prepare for the journey, look over this guide to get your troop off to a spectacular start this fall! Begin by checking out the Successful Troop Experience section and refer to the Table of Contents for topic specific information. Use the QR Code at the bottom of this page to visit the Troop Co-Leader Resources section of our website and access all of the resources listed in this guide!

We are here to help you and your girls have the best Girl Scout experience possible! Please contact us if you need any assistance or just have a story to share about your girls... **we would love to hear from you!**



800.666.2141
help@gsdakotahorizons.org
www.gsdakotahorizons.org

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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.*

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.

Our Mission

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

Scan the code for links
included in this guide.



Successful Troop Experience

Your Troop Volunteer Team

It takes a village to lift up the next generation of leaders. Set the stage for a successful troop year by tapping into the people resources already at your fingertips: parents and other family members, friends, and members of the community have their own unique strengths and can provide troops with time, experience, and ideas.

Adult volunteers who will be working with girls other than their own, driving members, and/or handling troop funds and product inventory, must become registered members and complete a criminal background check. Be sure those volunteers get signed up before they jump into the fun!

At your back to troop parent-family meeting make sure to use the Parent Involvement Form to find out how each family can help. Some members of your volunteer team might play more active roles than others—and that's okay!

Check out these troop volunteer roles:

Troop Co-Leader

Work with a group of girls and mentor them as they make new friends and develop connections that will last a lifetime. (Minimum 2 required.)

Troop Treasurer

Guide girls to set realistic goals, create budgets, and fund the entire troop year! Maintain the troop checking account, keep accurate records, and communicate financial information with troop members and council. All authorized signers on the troop bank account should hold the troop treasurer role.

Troop Fall Product Coordinator

Coordinate the annual Fall Product Program at the troop level. After completing training, you will help guide the troop through a successful program to get off to a great start!

Troop Cookie Coordinator

Coordinate the annual Cookie Program at the troop level. Set up cookie booths, manage inventory and money, and then watch the girls light up when they earn the rewards for being the best cookie sellers ever! You will complete training and then guide the troop through a successful program.

Troop Helpers

Provide extra support to the troop as needed. Work with girls at troop meetings, drive girls, coordinate field trips, supervise cookie booths, or other support as needed by troop volunteers.



Complete the Troop Intent Form

Submit the Troop Intent form by September 1 to ensure that your troop information is displayed accurately for new girls who want to join the fun for the 2023-24 year.

Review your Troop Roster

Make sure ALL troop members, both girls and adult volunteers, have a renewed membership for the 2023-24 year by September 30. To view your troop members' registration status, log in to your MyGS Account at gsdakotahorizons.org and choose My Troop.

- **Girls:** Troop co-leaders or parents can renew a girl's membership. When a girl's membership is renewed by the co-leader, an email is sent to the parent to confirm the girl's information is correct.
- **Troop Volunteers:** Each volunteer in the troop committee needs to have a renewed membership and volunteer roles. Background checks are required every 3 years; volunteers will be notified via email if they need to submit to a background check.
- **Lifetime Members:** Those who hold a troop role need to login and simply renew volunteer roles each year.

Welcome New Girls & Families

Co-leaders are notified via email immediately when girls are added to their troop. Please contact new families with both a phone call and email within 7 days to introduce yourself and welcome the girl and her family to the troop. Be sure to invite them to the next troop meeting!

Tips for Welcoming New Girls

1. Create a welcome letter.
Have the troop write, decorate, and sign a welcome letter.
2. Plan an investiture ceremony.
An investiture ceremony is a chance to welcome a new girl in the world of Girl Scouting.
3. Assign the new girl a buddy.
Prior to the new girl's first meeting, assign the new girl a 'buddy' to help answer any questions and put her at ease throughout the first few meetings.

Host a Back to Troop Family Meeting

A parent-family meeting should be the first meeting you hold to start each troop year—it sets up troops for success!

Why? Because it helps:

- Families understand what Girl Scouting can do for their girl.
- Families and leaders identify ways they will work as a team to support the troop.
- Families and leaders agree on how they will fund their troops supplies, activities, uniforms and memberships. What will the troop pay for and what will families contribute?
- Family and other supportive adults fill key troop positions—you never know until you ask who will make an awesome assistant co-leader or troop fall product coordinator.
- Families know how the troop will communicate things like upcoming events or schedule changes.
- Families learn about uniforms, books, and other important Girl Scout basics.

Use the parent-family meeting guide to host a fun and informative family meeting and get your troop's year off to a great start!

Planning the Year with the Girls

No matter where your girls live, a universal Girl Scout experience connects them to their Girl Scout sisters around the country. And there are so many ways to make sure your girls get the full Girl Scout experience in a way that excites and inspires them!

Check out these resources to guide your planning:

- Log in to the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) and choose a year plan to get started!
- Badge and Award Explorer website provides a snapshot of the badges and awards available for each grade level!
- Grade level handbooks and badge requirement booklets are printed resources available to purchase from our retail stores and GSUSA online shop.
- For Juniors and above, check out information about Highest Awards and additional leadership opportunities on the website.

Connect with your Service Unit

The service unit consists of all Girl Scout members including troops, girls, volunteers, parents, and community members who live in a geographic area.

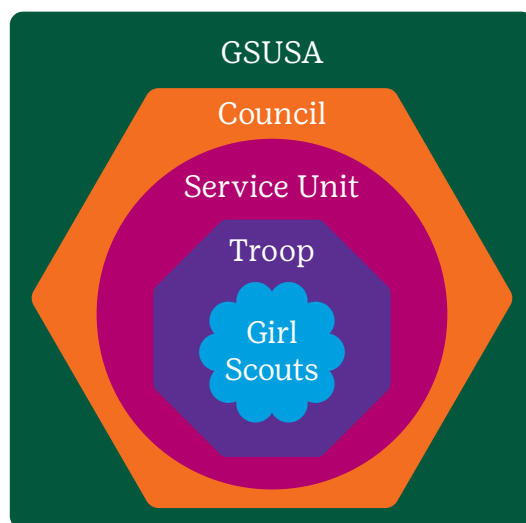
The service unit works in partnership with the council and is led by a team of service unit volunteers. The service unit assists with:

- New Member Recruitment
- Volunteer Support
- Events and Programs for Girls
- Fall Product and Cookie Programs

Service units hold meetings for volunteers where you can learn, network, meet new friends, and stay in the loop!

Every troop should be represented at these meetings, so please plan to attend.

Not sure what service unit your troop is a part of? Contact us and we will get you connected!



Expand your Knowledge with gsLearn

gsLearn is full of essential volunteer trainings and courses, like how to lead activities the Girl Scout way, safety procedures, and advice for guiding Girl Scouts at every grade level.

You'll find gsLearn via the left menu bar of MyGS in My Account. It's accessible on any desktop, tablet, or mobile device, and it will be populated with any trainings you should view.

Troop Finances

Funding the fun! Your girls probably have some big ideas about what they want to accomplish this year in Girl Scouts—and that’s awesome! With your guidance, girls will learn key money skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Troop activities are powered by proceeds earned through the fall product and cookie programs, group money-earning activities (council approved, of course!), and any dues your troop may charge.

The authorized troop account signers should complete the following to ensure troop finances are ready to go for the year:

- Review the Troop Authorized Account Signer Responsibilities to make sure you are aware of your responsibilities as troop account signer.
 - Confirm account signers have a 2024 membership and a current background check on file. Account signers should also hold the troop treasurer role.
 - Download the 2023–2024 Check Register Workbook (Excel) to record transactions as they happen. Keeping this up-to-date all year and reconciling it to your bank statement each month makes it easy to submit the **required annual finance report in June**.
 - Review the Troop Finances section in Volunteer Essentials.
- New for the 2024 membership year, you will not be required to submit the Bank Account Confirmation/ACH Form annually. A Bank Account Confirmation/ACH Form submission is required after opening a new troop/service unit bank account and after making updates to an existing troop/service unit bank account confirming the account has been opened or updated at the bank.

Remember that all funds collected, raised, earned, or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be deposited into the troop bank account and used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Funds are administered by the troop and do not belong to individuals.



Fall Programs & Events

Event List

Take advantage of program opportunities! Share upcoming events and patch programs and help them decide which ones they want to participate in as a troop. Remind families about the event opportunities, too! Remember, girls can attend events even if the troop isn't going.

- Visit the Event List on the website for a variety of program opportunities for girls!
- Check out the Event FAQ page to learn more about events, along with how to register.
- View Program Guides for a quick visual reference of events.
- Explore new topics with a patch program.

Fund Adventures with Dakota Dough

Girl Scouts aren't just learning valuable skills, such as financial literacy and goal setting, when they participate in the cookie program and fall product program. They are earning Dakota Dough that they can use to explore new activities! Dakota Dough can be used in the following ways:

- Retail Services
- Girl Membership Renewal
- Event or Camp Registration

Visit the Dakota Dough page for more information and guidelines.



Fall Product Program

Girl Scouts have the opportunity to participate in the fall product program so their troop can get a head-start on funding their activities for the year.

This program is designed for easy participation with family and friends by selling nuts, chocolates, magazines, BarkBox, and Tervis tumblers while teaching girls five key leadership skills of goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics.

Fall Product Program Checklist for Success

1. Take Fall Product Program Training on gsLearn.

Your troop's fall product coordinator should receive information about training from the service unit's fall product manager in August.

2. Meet with families to share information and set important dates.

Once you've attended training, share the information you learned about the fall product program with the girls and parents! Hand out materials and use the volunteer manual to guide discussion on determining troop goals and setting dates to collect orders and funds.

3. Learn about the Ocelot of Spots Patch Program and share with the girls!

This patch program is a fun way for girls to engage with the theme mascot and learn about ocelots.

OWN YOUR
magic



Council Support

Stay in the Loop

Don't miss out on important updates from council! Make sure you are opted in to receive emails and texts from Girl Scouts. Visit your Member Profile in your MyGS account to update your communication preferences!

- Volunteer Scoop is a monthly email with timely information just for volunteers.
- Girl Scouts Connected is an e-newsletter with upcoming program opportunities and information specific to your area. This email goes to all members who receive emails.
- View the Council News page to find a list of all updates and reminders.
- Join the Girl Scouts Dakota Horizons Member Connect Facebook group to connect with members all over the council. Dakota Horizons will also share important updates with members through this channel.

Staff Support Team

Member Services is your first stop help center! This department is specifically equipped with the tools and information necessary to help answer most questions and resolve most issues on your first contact with the council office! You can reach Member Services at 800.666.2141 or help@gsdakotahorizons.org.

Troop Engagement Specialists support our girls and families through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This includes answering questions, providing service unit and troop volunteers support and delivering amazing programs.

Membership Specialists invite and help new girls and volunteers become Girl Scouts by sharing our story. They will support service units when hosting sign up and renewal events.

Senior Director of Community & Troop Engagement guides the local team and works with the Leadership Team to ensure we are providing you with the best possible Girl Scout experience.

Girl Scout Shop

Dakota Horizons' retail services offer badges, uniforms, awards, gifts, specialty items, and more! We have everything you need to help you and your Girl Scout prepare for the exciting adventures ahead.

Find all the ways to shop at gsdakotahorizons.org/shop





Back to Troop Checklist

- Submit the Troop Intent Form by September 1.
- Review your troop roster in MyGS and be sure that all members have a renewed membership.
- Hold a back to troop family meeting.
- Start planning the year with girls.
- Confirm bank account signers have a 2024 membership, current background check on file, and hold troop treasurer role.
- Prepare for the Fall Product Program.
- Register for fall events.
- Attend service unit meetings.
- Explore gsLearn.

Connect with us along the way and enjoy the adventure!

Service Centers

Find each location's services and hours on the Visit Us page.

Sioux Falls Service Center
1101 S Marion Road
Sioux Falls, SD 57106

Rapid City Service Center
1202 E St Francis Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

Fargo Service Center
1002 43rd Street S
Fargo, ND 58103

Bismarck Service Center
735 Airport Road
Bismarck, ND 58504

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