



**Girl Scouts**  
**Heart of the Hudson**

Volunteer Partnership  
Handbook: Policies,  
Procedures, and More!



**Girl Scout  
Promise, Law,  
and Mission**

## **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.

## **Girl Scout Mission**

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

\*Girl Scouts of the USA makes no attempt to define or interpret the word "God" in the Girl Scout Promise. It looks to individual members to establish for themselves the nature of their spiritual beliefs. When making the Girl Scout Promise, individuals may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word "God." Note: This disclaimer appears in the National Leadership Journey adult guides, but not in the Girl Scouts' books. It is included here as a reminder to you, as a volunteer, that it is your responsibility to be sensitive to the spiritual beliefs of the Girl Scouts and adults in your group and to make sure everyone feels comfortable and included in Girl Scouting. Please feel free to share this information with families.

## Introduction

The GSHH Volunteer Partnership Handbook: Policies, Procedures, & More is established upon the principle that the direction and success for Girl Scouting rests in the voluntary participation of its adult members in collaboration with the staff of Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc.

This document outlines the policies and procedures of GSHH. It is not the intent of this document to repeat national policies, but to adopt specific local policies and procedures fitting our council. These policies and procedures are intended to provide the basis for reasonable and consistent guidance for our volunteers. Volunteers are not employees of Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, and the policies and procedures contained herein do not constitute an employment contract and are subject to change at the discretion of the Board of Directors of Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc.

All members of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) are responsible for adhering to the policies, practices, procedures, and guidelines in GSUSA's [Blue Book of Basic Documents](#), [Volunteer Essentials](#), and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). These documents are published by GSUSA and are used throughout the national organization.

Within this document, the term "GSHH" is used interchangeably with the words "the council." The term "volunteer" is defined as any person who is not a paid staff member, who is approved and appointed by GSHH and delivers Girl Scout programming. Their participation affects the health, safety, and/or finances of the youth or adult membership.

These policies and procedures will be reviewed annually to ensure they reflect the volunteer management goals of GSHH, the current policies and trends in Girl Scouts, as well as current legislative requirements.

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# Part 1: Policies

## PART 1: POLICIES

### COMMITMENT TO PLURALISM

#### Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Belonging Statement

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson draws inspiration from our Girl Scout Promise and Law in its Belonging Statement. Being a member of Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson means you are part of a community of diverse races, ethnicities, gender identities, sexual orientations, abilities, and religions. We commit to providing an equitable and accessible Girl Scout Leadership Experience to all Girl Scouts in our council. We are champions for Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access.

These are our promises to you:

- We will listen and seek to understand from **diverse voices and experiences**. We will act on what we have learned.
- We will offer a **culture of welcoming and belonging** to all members, potential members, and community partners of Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson.
- We will provide **brave and safe spaces** for Girl Scouts to participate with us. Members can expect to be themselves in a secure and respectful environment.
- We will incorporate **the principles of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility** at all levels of our movement.
- We believe every member (youth and adult) of Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson should have **respect and acceptance** in our organization.
- We commit to a journey of being an anti-racist and anti-oppressive organization.
- We **welcome** you to join us in our movement and mission.

**I belong. You belong. We belong.**

## EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

GSHH maintains a strong policy of equal opportunity, In keeping with GSUSA's [Blue Book of Basic Documents](#); we recruit, train, promote, and dismiss volunteers on the basis of competence and volunteer position performance, without regard to race, creed, color, ethnicity, religion, lineage or citizenship, national origin, gender marital status, familial status, age socioeconomic background, source of income, disability, genetic information, predisposing genetic characteristics, carrier status, domestic violence victim status, or any other characteristic protected by law. Furthermore, to assure the membership of GSHH reflects the diversity of population groups within its jurisdiction; GSHH is committed to a policy of equal opportunity and outreach in the recruitment selection, placement, development, and recognition of volunteers and in the extension of Girl Scouting to adults in all communities within its jurisdiction.

Adults and volunteers are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where children are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Girl Scouts welcomes those interested members in grades K-12, regardless of race, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, family structure, religion, and socioeconomic background. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of everyone involved (e.g., financial constraints, religious holidays, accessibility of appropriate transportation, and meeting places.)

Any volunteer who engages in or encourages discrimination in any form is subject to release from their volunteer position at the discretion of GSHH.

## MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

All Girl Scouts and adults participating in the Girl Scout Movement must be registered as members with GSUSA and pay the annual membership dues as outlined by GSUSA, except those adults who are lifetime members. At times there are adults who are working on a short-term project, in a temporary advisory or consulting capacity, who do not work with Girl Scouts or Girl Scout funds directly, in which membership is not a requirement. Members agree to abide by the policies, principles, and procedures of GSUSA and GSHH.

## VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS & BENEFITS

### Basic Volunteer Requirements

- Membership Registration - Adult volunteers (18+ years and out of high school) participating in the Girl Scout Movement must be registered as an Adult Member with GSUSA and individually pay the annual membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime members.
  - Note: if the member has turned 18 during the membership year and started as a Girl Member, they will retain their Girl Membership until September 30 of that year. They can

participate as an Adult Member the following membership year beginning October 1st, provided they are registered.

- Must complete and pass a background check.
- Must believe in the Girl Scout Mission.
- Must accept the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Should have adequate time to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position.
- Must complete required training based on volunteer role.
- Must demonstrate an understanding that services are rendered without payment.
- Must accept supervision and provide feedback to GSHH.

Benefits to volunteers include:

- GSHH newsletter and publications.
- Learning opportunities and support from GSHH staff.
- Supplementary accident insurance as part of GSUSA membership.
- Volunteer experience that may be useful for career development.
- Supporting youth growth and leadership.

## **Volunteer Rights and Responsibilities**

Volunteers are a valuable resource to GSHH, its staff, and members. Volunteers shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated respectfully, the right to supervision, the right to full involvement and participation, and the right to appropriate recognition for work done.

In return, volunteers shall agree to perform their duties to the best of their abilities, to support the goals and policies and procedures of GSHH, and to ask for assistance and/or guidance from the Service Unit Team or GSHH staff if they find themselves in a situation that they are unsure of or may conflict with those goals and policies of GSHH, as detailed in the [Conflict Resolution](#) section of this document.

Further, volunteers shall agree that they will not use the Girl Scout name, related activities, publications, and/or facilities for public or private promotion of their own views and opinions on topics unrelated to Girl Scouting (including, but not limited to, views on sexual orientation, religion, family situations, politics, etc.).

## VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

GSHH is committed to the highest ethical standards, and we expect all volunteers to act in the best interest of the organization and its mission. The mission demands that we, as stewards, act in an ethical manner to uphold the public trust and the values of responsibility, integrity, openness, honesty, accountability, and respect in all that we do in the name of Girl Scouts.

I agree to uphold these values, and I will:

1. Affirm the Girl Scout Promise and Law
2. Take all required training based on volunteer role, and comply with GSHH policies, procedures, and safety guidelines.
3. Welcome Girl Scouts and adults from a variety of backgrounds and include them in activities. Make an intentional effort to learn about, experience, and appreciate cultures other than my own.
4. Honor the leadership role of the youth members of Girl Scouts and support their decisions.
5. Act responsibly when overseeing Girl Scout funds, ensure responsible use of the GSHH tax exempt letter, maintain accurate records, and file required reports. Girl Scout funds are only to be used in direct support of Girl Scout programs and to pay for appropriate Girl Scout expenses.
6. Model the behavior that shows respect for local, state, and federal laws and ordinances, as well as follow GSHH Volunteer Policies and Procedures, [Volunteer Essentials](#), [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#), and in [GSUSA's Blue Book of Basic Documents](#).
7. Work together with GSHH staff in a mutually respectful way.

## BACKGROUND CHECK

Caregivers and youth members trust that Girl Scouts is a safe place, and we do not take that trust lightly. GSHH is committed to maintaining policies and procedures that create a safe environment for its members. One of those policies is to conduct a background check (BC) for all new volunteers, to be repeated every three years.

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. requires all members to complete a Background Check (BC) prior to appointment as an eligible volunteer. The background search is a required component of the Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson volunteer screening procedure, the goal of which is to screen prospective adult volunteers and place capable and qualified adults in all operational positions.

### **Volunteer Roles that require a background check every three years\*:**

- Board of Directors Member
- Board Development Committee Members

- Service Unit Manager(s)
- Service Unit Recruiter
- Troop Leader/Co-Leader
- Troop/Service Unit Treasurer
- Troop Driver
- Troop Cookie Chair
- Troop/Service Unit Annual Giving
- Troop Fall Product Chair
- Service Unit Looker Data Volunteer
- \*Adult Member – background check required if attending an overnight trip.
  - The Adult Member\* role is for adults who are not volunteering either by choice or due to non-eligibility issues.

\*GSHH reserves the right to request a background check at any time. If the volunteer refuses to submit to a background check, GSHH has the right to revoke/deny participation as a volunteer.

## **Background Check FAQs**

**Q. When does the background check need to be done? I've volunteered for years – why am I getting this now?**

A. GSHH will conduct a background search on new volunteers at the time of appointment to their role, and on all renewing volunteers, every three years. Returning volunteers will be asked to renew their background check 90 days BEFORE their current BC expires. They will receive another prompt via email to renew the BC at 45 days and at 30 days. If a volunteer is receiving a message in error, please reach out to [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org).

**Q. How do I complete a background check?**

A. Online. All volunteers will receive instructions via email to complete their background check from our independent vendor: Asurint. The email will come to you once you've registered for the volunteer role requiring a background check.

**Q. How long does it take for a background check to be processed?**

A. Background Checks are processed by GSHH's vendor, Asurint, typically within 2-3 business days. Depending on the county, or if multiple states are involved, a BC may take longer to complete.

**Q. Can I submit a completed background check report from another vendor or organization?**

A. GSHH requires that background checks be completed by its vendor Asurint to ensure consistency. Background checks from other vendors or organizations are not accepted.

**Q. How much does a background check cost?**

A. Cost of a background check starts at \$6.25. Additional fees may apply based on volunteer address history.

**Q. Is there council support available to help with cost?**

A. Yes, GSHH has council support available. Please complete the following from [Background Check Council Support](#). Once received our Conversion Specialist will reach out to follow up and process background check.

**Q. What information does GSHH look for on a background check report?**

A. GSHH is looking for criminal offenses and/or charges and presence on sex offender databases. GSHH does not check credit or financial information.

**Q. Do you check credit? Will this affect my credit rating?**

A. GSHH does not run a credit check, nor do we request any credit-related information. The BC process does make mention of the “Fair Credit Reporting Act” because that is the legislation that governs background checks as well as credit checks. We legally must include that information, even though we are not checking credit.

**Q. Is my information kept confidential?**

A. GSHH will maintain the confidentiality of all information included in a background check, including information regarding disqualification decisions. Additionally, Asurint uses multiple layers of security to ensure information is kept in strict confidence. From the point of entry, all data is encrypted upon submission to their web server.

**Q. Why is a social security number requested?**

A. The social security number trace performs multiple functions in the background check process:

- It is an identifier – it verifies that the person is who they say they are and that they have a valid social security number.
- It uncovers any aliases a person may have used, so we are checking all names associated with that number, not just the name they have provided.
- It uncovers any additional counties that the person may have resided in, which enables us to check all jurisdictions.
- It gives us better assurances that we are looking at the correct person – especially if a volunteer has a common name.

**Q. What if I don't have a social security number issued by the US, or I don't want to provide it?**

A. A valid US social security number should be entered when ordering you BC so that Asurint can be confident they are returning accurate results. The well-being of our Girl Scouts is our TOP priority. Thank you for helping GSHH keep them safe!

If you do not want to provide your social security number, or you do not have one, you can enter it as 111-11-1111; however, GSHH will require you to provide one form of photo ID and two letters of recommendation after the background check has been completed by the vendor.

**Q. What if I don't agree with the information reported in the background check?**

A. For disputes regarding information obtained by Asurint, please contact Asurint's customer support as follows:

- Phone: 800-906-1674
- Email: [support@asurint.com](mailto:support@asurint.com)

**Q. What could exclude me from volunteering with GSHH?**

A. Volunteer Disqualification:

- Murder
- A crime against a child
- A crime requiring offender to be on the sex offender list.
- Misdemeanors, convicted in the past 5 years.
- Identity theft and/or forgery
- Embezzlement
- Any crime in which a weapon was used.
- Manufacturing of illegal drugs
- Selling certain types of drugs
- For all other conduct and offenses, GSHH will review the applicant's situation on a case-by-case basis. The decision whether to allow volunteer participation will be within the discretion of GSHH.

The factor used to determine disqualification of a person from volunteer participation is as follows: The nature and severity of the criminal conduct, the position for which the person seeks to volunteer, length of time since the criminal conduct occurred, the circumstances under which the crime was committed, the degree of rehabilitation, and the number of crimes committed by the prospective volunteer.

GSHH reserves the right to disqualify or restrict the duties of any person who has been:

- Arrested

- Convicted of certain crimes
- Places on probation or deferred adjudication for certain crimes, and/or who has committed acts that are considered contrary to the community standards of justice, honesty, or good morals, or have, plead guilty or no contest to certain crimes.

Volunteer approval may include a restriction of handling funds if there is a record of:

- Stealing
- Petty theft
- Misuse of credit cards
- Passing bad checks

## DRIVERS

Individuals who drive vehicles for Girl Scout trips must be at least 21 years old with a valid driver's license, carry current motor vehicle insurance in compliance with New York State law, be a registered member with Girl Scouts, and have a current, eligible background check.

The primary volunteer in charge of a Girl Scout outing or trip should inquire with all drivers that they are 21 years or age, without a driving restriction, have a valid driver's license, are a current auto insurance policy holder, and fit all the Girl Scout qualifications above. It is not necessary for the primary volunteer to maintain a copy of these documents.

Volunteer approval may result in a driving restriction if there is:

- Offense involving driving under the influence.
- Reckless operation
- Loss of license

## SEX OFFENDERS AND OTHER CRIMINAL ACTS

A Registered Sex Offender may not serve as a volunteer with GSHH in any capacity, and they may not participate in any way, either in troop, service unit, or in GSHH activities where youth members may be present. Troop meetings and activities may not be held or conducted at any residence where a member of the household is a Registered Sex Offender.

Troop leaders, assistant troop leaders, troop volunteers, and parents or guardians of youth members are required to immediately notify GSHH if they are, or an immediate family of household member is, or become aware that any troop leader, troop assistant leader or other troop volunteer, or troop family member is a Registered Sex offender, has pending charges, has pled guilty or no contest, or has been placed on probation or deferred adjudication, regarding sexual offenses.

In addition, the individuals identified above are also required to immediately notify GSHH if they have been convicted, have pending charges, are placed on probation for a crime, or become aware of another person in their household or other adult associated with a troop has been convicted, has pending charges or has been placed on probation.

When GSHH in its discretion determines that it is reasonably necessary to safeguard youth members, GSHH may notify the parents or guardians of all youth members of a troop regarding: (a) the status of a troop leader, assistant leader, volunteer or family member as a Registered Sex Offender; (b) the requirements of the policy; and (c) the steps taken by GSHH to comply with the policy (for instance, the dismissal of, or written notice as described above to, the Registered Sex Offender.) For instance, if a family member of a Registered Sex Offender withdraws their youth member from the troop, or if a troop co-leader or other troop volunteer has been dismissed, GSHH may determine it is not necessary to give notice to the parents or guardians of the other youth members of their status as a Registered Sex Offender.

## HARASSMENT, HOSTILITY, AND BULLYING

GSHH is committed to an environment and climate in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, and equitable treatment. It is the policy of GSHH to provide all volunteers, staff, and members (youth and adult) with an environment free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment, hostility, and bullying; and therefore, it will not be tolerated.

Harassment on the basis of race, creed, color, ethnicity, religion, lineage or citizenship, national origin, gender status, age, socioeconomic background, source of income, disability, genetic information, predisposing genetic characteristics, marital status, military or veteran status, carrier status, domestic violence victim status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable law will not be tolerated and is grounds for release.

Harassment can take many forms, including verbal remarks, physical behavior, visual displays, or other conduct that interferes with an individual's sense of safety or well-being. All employees, contractors, volunteers, interns, and applicants have the right to work in an environment free from hostility and disrespect. This policy includes physical violence as well as intimidation, stalking, coercion, display of weapons, threats, and talking or joking about harassment or hostility, whether in person or through some other means of communication such as writing, telephone, voicemail, e-mail, or any form of social media.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Resources, "bullying" is defined as aggressive behavior that is intentional and that involves an imbalance of power or strength, typically repeated over time.

Cyberbullying is bullying that occurs online. Whether cyberbullying occurs in e-mail, a text message, an online game, or on a social networking site, it is prohibited. This includes rumors or images posted online where other people may see them. GSHH will cooperate with police, schools, and other organizations that share our values that are attempting to enforce laws, regulations, and rules regarding cyberbullying regardless of the potential punishment. Anyone, regardless of volunteer or member status, who violates this policy and/or refuses to abide by this policy, is prohibited from holding volunteer position with GSHH and from attending Girl Scout activities, events, and meetings. Any volunteer who engages in or encourages bullying is subject to release from their volunteer position.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT

GSHH prohibits sexual harassment and retaliation against its applicants, interns, contractors, volunteers, or employees by another individual. Sexual harassment is a form of sex discrimination and is unlawful under federal, New York State, and local law. Sexual harassment includes unwelcome conduct which is either of a sexual nature, or which is directed at an individual because of that individual's sex or gender, gender identity or gender expression (including, but not limited to, transgender status), and/or sexual orientation. Sexual harassment can be verbal, visual, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual based on sex or gender, gender identity or gender expression, and/or sexual orientation. This includes but is not limited to sexual advances or flirtations, requests for sexual favors, obscene or vulgar comments or gestures, sexual jokes or comments about a person's body, and propositions or suggestive or insulting comments of a sexual nature. It is unlawful and against this policy for males to sexually harass females or other males, and for females to sexually harass males or other females.

In accordance with this policy, GSHH will not condone or tolerate the following:

- Any display or demonstration of sexual activity between volunteers or between volunteers and youth members.
- Sexual advances or sexual activity of any kind between volunteers and youth members.
- Infliction of sexually abusive behavior upon youth members, including sexual touching and bodily contact, exhibitionism, voyeurism, and/or involvement of youth members in pornographic materials.
- Unwelcome sexual conduct/harassment of any Girl Scout member, volunteer, or employee of the same or opposite sex.
- Any other similar inappropriate behavior in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local law.

GSHH maintains an environment that encourages any volunteer who believes they have been the subject of any unlawful or unwelcome harassment as defined in GSHH policy, to report the incident using GSHH's [Incident Form B](#). Similarly, a volunteer who believes that a youth member is the victim of any form of harassment must immediately report the fact using GSHH's [Incident Form B](#). The designated staff will initiate an investigation and, depending on the findings, take appropriate corrective action.

If the harassment involved unwanted physical touching, coerced physical confinement or coerced sex acts, the conduct may constitute a crime. Contact the local police department or, in an emergency, dial 911.

GSHH reserves the right to refuse appointment/reappointment to any position and to dismiss or suspend from any position or affiliation with GSHH, and volunteers who, participating in Girl Scout activities, violate the aforementioned policy.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

A conflict of interest exists when the interests or concerns of any volunteer member or member of their family or any party, group, or organization in which the volunteer is actively involved may be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of GSHH.

Volunteer members or any member of their family, acting individually, or on behalf of another entity to which they have allegiance or obligation, should not utilize their position with GSHH for any personal advantage or for the advantage of another entity. A volunteer or any member of his/her immediate family shall not engage in conduct or activities which constitute a conflict of interest.

The purpose of the Conflict of Interest policy is to protect GSHH's constituents when volunteers are contemplating entering a transaction or arrangement that might benefit the private interest of a volunteer or family member holding a leadership position over Girl Scout members or other volunteers.

Volunteers are prohibited from soliciting directly or indirectly any Girl Scout member or their families for any business relationship, charitable organization, or vendor relationship that may be perceived as a conflict of interest.

**Duty to Disclose:** Volunteers shall disclose in writing a full description of any activity, interest, or relationship that might create or appear to create a conflict of interest as soon as practicable, prior to the inception of the activity, interest, or relationship. In connection with any actual or possible conflict of interest where a volunteer or family member is expected to gain financially, the volunteer must disclose the existence of the financial interest and be given the opportunity to disclose all facts

to their service unit leadership and GSHH staff representative to consider the proposed transaction or arrangement.

If a volunteer has brought legal action against GSHH or has caused GSHH to initial legal action, GSHH has the right, at its discretion, to decline to appoint that person to a volunteer position within GSHH, or to remove that volunteer from their position if currently in place. Legal action includes any or all remedies of existing federal and state law.

This policy statement is not intended to apply to gifts and/or similar entertainment of nominal value that clearly are in keeping with good business ethics and do not obligate the recipient.

Any matter of question or interpretation that arises relating to this policy should be referred to the Chief Executive Officer for a decision.

All members of the Board of Directors will be required to sign an appropriate Conflict of Interest Disclosure.

This policy is intended to supplement but not replace any applicable state and federal laws governing conflicts of interest applicable to nonprofit and charitable organizations.

## CONFIDENTIALITY

Volunteers are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of all propriety, privileged, or sensitive information to which they are exposed while serving as a volunteer, whether this information involves a staff member, volunteer, member (youth or adult), or other person, or overall GSHH or personal business. Confidential information includes, but is not limited to, non-public technical, business, and financial information and plans, as well as private information about councils, young people, volunteers, customers, suppliers and employees. Information may include names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and information that might relate to family health, circumstances, living arrangements, or financial matters.

Personal, medical, and/or financial information about any youth or adult member which becomes known to a volunteer must be treated as confidential and may only be shared when necessary and only through established systems or the appropriate GSHH staff member/process. Health or medical information may be disclosed to the extent necessary solely for treatment or emergency purposes.

Names, addresses, e-mail addresses, and phone numbers of youth members and adults must not be shared with any individual or business outside of Girl Scouting except as required for safety or for emergency purposes. Confidential information about members must not be published through any means including any internet channels or social media. Volunteers should be aware that most e-mails are not necessarily sent through secure channels and must only send content which is not confidential. to, non-public technical, business, and financial information and plans, as well as private

information about councils, young people, volunteers, customers, suppliers and employees. Information may include names, addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, and information that might relate to family health, circumstances, living arrangements, or financial matters.

Any volunteer who belongs to multiple youth serving organizations is expected to protect the confidential information, brand, program pieces, and reputation of Girl Scouts. Using or sharing our information with competing organizations is strictly prohibited and may be a basis for release, suspension, or cause for not being reappointed to a position.

Failure to maintain confidentiality may result in termination of the volunteer's relationship with GSHH. Members of the Board of Directors and all board committee members will be asked to sign GSHH's Confidential Non-Disclosure Agreement or other similar documents.

## WHISTLEBLOWER

Retaliation against anyone who has reported an allegation of harassment, sexual harassment, or any violation of any GSHH policy is expressly prohibited and, if it occurs, will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including releasing the person who has engaged in the retaliatory behavior from their volunteer position. Any whistleblower who believes they are being retaliated against must contact the CEO immediately using the Member Care email at [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org) using the subject line ATTN: CEO. The right of a whistleblower for protection against retaliation does not include immunity from any personal wrongdoing that is alleged and investigated. No volunteer making a good faith report shall be subjected to any retaliation from GSHH.

## CHILD ABUSE

GSHH supports and maintains environments free of child abuse and neglect. All states require certain professionals and institutions to report suspected child abuse. Failure to report suspected child abuse can result in criminal and/or civil liability. All states require the report to be made to some type of law enforcement authority or child protection agency.

Reporting to a parent or relative will not satisfy the reporter's legal duty under the statutes. The following guidelines outline how reporting should happen in GSHH.

While volunteers are not mandated reporters within GSHH, we would encourage them to report suspected child abuse and/or neglect. GSHH requires all staff members to act as mandated reporters.

GSHH requires all volunteers in volunteer roles who work directly with Girl Scouts and other youth in Girl Scout activities to complete the [Girl Scout Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention](#) course on gsLearn every two years.

The Office for Children and Family Services offers an additional online training module as well. While not required, it is strongly encouraged that volunteers complete the Office for Children and Family Services online training module, which can be found [here](#).

Ideally the person with the most direct knowledge of the suspected abuse should be the one to call the OCFS Hotline. However, this is not a requirement. Volunteers suspecting child abuse have two options:

- 1) Report child abuse to OCFS: Volunteers who suspect abuse or neglect may contact the OCFS Hotline Number at 1-800-342-3720 directly.
- 2) Report child abuse to GSHH: If a volunteer suspects child abuse and is not comfortable calling the hotline, they may complete and submit GSHH's [Incident Form B](#). Once suspected child abuse is reported via the form, a staff member is mandated to report it to OCFS.

In all cases, please preserve confidentiality of all reports made. Discuss only with the appropriate GSHH staff member and with OCFS/law enforcement personnel.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflicts and disagreements are an inevitable part of life, but if handled constructively, they show young people that they can overcome their differences, exercise diplomacy, and improve their communication and relationships. Respecting others and being a sister to every Girl Scout means that shouting, verbal abuse, or physical confrontations are never warranted and cannot be tolerated in the Girl Scout environment.

When a conflict arises between youth members or a youth member and a volunteer, get those involved to sit down together and talk calmly in a nonjudgmental manner, keeping in mind that each party may need some time – a few days or a week – to calm down before being able to do this. Talking in this way might feel uncomfortable and difficult now, but it lays the groundwork for working well together in the future. Whatever you do, do not spread your complaint around to others – that won't help the situation and causes only embarrassment and anger.

You'll also find conflict resolution activities in some older Girl Scout programming.

If a conflict persists, be sure you explain the matter to your volunteer support team. If the supervisor cannot resolve the issues satisfactorily (or if the problem involves the supervisor), request Member Care to escalate your matter to a higher level.

## DELINQUENT FUNDS

Members with amounts due to GSHH or a Girl Scout troop more than 45 calendar days past due are not permitted to handle money, product, or distribute product program sale rewards for GSHH until

the amount owed is paid in full. GSHH reserves the right to restrict or remove from volunteer roles any person who owes money to the council including a Girl Scout troop.

Restriction or dismissal from a volunteer role may occur as a result of delinquency and/or mismanagement of funds. Reappointment to a volunteer position is at the discretion of the council. GSHH will make a good faith attempt to collect any monies owed and reserves the right to use outside collection agencies. If restitution is not paid within 45 calendar days, GSHH retains the right to file criminal and/or civil charges. If one adult member has a financial restriction, no other member of the household may be listed on the troop/group's bank account.

GSHH reserves the right to take legal action if the funds owed are not remitted. Legal action includes, but is not limited to, taking out a warrant to appear in small claims court, reporting to law enforcement, and submission to legal and/or collection agencies.

GSHH volunteers who are authorized signers are personally responsible for all financial consequences of overdrafts that they initiate.

A volunteer owing a debt to GSHH or a Girl Scout troop for more than 90 calendar days will be removed from their volunteer position. They will not be eligible to be reappointed or serve in an appointed volunteer position until such time as that debt is paid in full. When the debt is paid in full, the volunteer may serve only in a volunteer role that does not have financial responsibilities for one full Girl Scout year or upon reevaluation. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to contact GSHH and request a review of volunteer eligibility status.

Additional restrictions or actions may be applied for specific circumstances; the volunteer will be notified in writing of any restrictions or actions taken.

Volunteers, at all levels, must follow the policies and procedures related to Finance and Money Earning as detailed in both this document and [Volunteer Essentials](#). This includes but is not limited to:

- All individuals handling Girl Scout funds must be a registered member and have a valid background check completed.
- Adhering to requirements for submitting annual finance reports by the established deadlines.
- Following requirements and guidelines for appropriate money-earning activities.

As a Girl Scout Volunteer, being financially responsible contributes to your Girl Scouts' opportunity to fully participate in the Girl Scout program. When a Girl Scout volunteer misappropriates troop and/or service unit funds, GSHH reserves the right to notify all affected volunteers, parents, and caregivers. By maintaining and securing Girl Scout funds under your volunteer responsibilities, you are ensuring a bright Girl Scout experience for the girls you support and lead.

## CONTRACTS AND AGREEMENTS

No volunteer may waive liability of a third party on behalf of GSHH.

When planning an event, there may be times where we need to obtain a Certificate of Insurance and have it on file a minimum of 10 business days prior to your scheduled event.

Please consult GSHH’s [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) to determine if the facility offering the activity to your troop requires GSHH to have a copy of the facility’s Certificate of Insurance on file.

Troop leaders need to request a Certificate of Insurance from the facility. To do this, simply call the facility and ask for the current Certificate of Insurance with GSHH listed as a Certificate Holder, including the information below:

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc.  
 119 Highland Avenue  
 Eastchester, NY 10709

The certificate can be emailed to [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org) with “Certificate of Insurance” in the subject line.

The following chart outlines who may sign contracts/agreements and when a Certificate of Insurance (COI) is required.

WHAT	WHO	IMPORTANT
Contracts and/or agreements for most service unit and troop activities	May be signed by either the local volunteer or assigned staff member <b>IF</b> no payment required or payment is less than \$100; however, . . .	. . .if the contract or agreement requires a payment greater than \$100, a review is required prior to the volunteer signing the contract. Submit contract to <a href="mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org">membercare@girlscoutshh.org</a> With the subject line “Contract _____” for review.
Bus Rentals	A <a href="#">COI</a> (\$1,000,000 coverage) is required for all bus rentals.	
Horseback Riding	A <a href="#">COI</a> (\$5,000,000 coverage) is required for activities involving horses.	

## ALCOHOL AND DRUG USE (including marijuana)

No volunteer may purchase, consume, possess or be under the influence of alcohol, marijuana, illegal drugs/substances, or prescription over-the-counter medications which impair performance or judgment on GSHH property, in the presence of youth, or while conducting GSHH business.

Violators of the alcohol and drug policy will be asked to leave GSHH property or activity site. Any violation of this policy will be grounds for appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including removal from volunteer role.

Alcoholic beverages may be responsibly served to/consumed by adults of legal age at GSHH adult events off GSHH property, when youth is not present.

This policy does not prohibit volunteers from the lawful use and possession of prescribed medications, except that volunteers may not use or possess cannabis (even medical cannabis) on GSHH premises, while operation a GSHH vehicle, or in the presence of youth.

## TOBACCO/SMOKING/VAPING

Volunteers function as role models at all times, and therefore the use of tobacco/smoking/vaping products is prohibited whenever youth members are present in any environment or on any GSHH property. This policy applies to all types of smoking/vaping nicotine products and similar apparatus and the use of tobacco in any form. This policy applies to all adults, girls, and guests attending all Girl Scout events on or off council properties.

## WEAPONS

Firearms and/or weapons are prohibited while on GSHH's property (owned or leased), driving a GSHH owned, rented, or leased vehicle, or at meetings, events, or trips. Weapons include firearms, knives, explosives, and other items with the potential to inflict harm. Any violation of this policy will be grounds for appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including removal from volunteer role.

Excluded from this provision is any equipment that a volunteer would use in a typical camping environment while engaged in camping activities or by a trained adult while conducting a GSHH approved Girl Scout program activity and must be used according to the guidelines outlined in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

## UNIFORMS

Girl Scouts are part of a heritage more than 110 years in the making, and it shows when they wear their uniform! Official Girl Scout uniforms help our members tell stories and offer ways to display their big accomplishments like badges earned and awards received.

GSHH highly recommends all its Girl Scouts have one official uniform item such as a vest, sash, or tunic – to be customized with each new achievement. Each item pairs well with a classic white shirt and khaki bottoms or optional official items available in our retail stores. Girl Scouts should wear their official uniform item at events when they’re representing the Girl Scout Movement – bridging ceremonies, community gatherings, parades, flag ceremonies, etc.

However, if Girl Scouts might get their uniform dirty at community service events or while working animals or when sorting through recycle bins, we recommend more casual Girl Scout attire, such as troop t-shirts or easily washable items.

Even though it is preferable for all GSHH Girl Scouts to have a uniform item, no GSHH Girl Scout is ever to be turned away from participating in any Girl Scout activity due to lack of uniform. Girl Scouts must feel safe, valued, included, and respected for who they are, no matter what they are wearing. They should face no barriers to participating joyfully with the Girl Scout sisters in all Girl Scout activities, programs, and events.

## ANIMALS

Animals may not be brought onto any GSHH property or into any GSHH sponsored activity without the written permission of the Vice President of Facilities and Property Management or designee. Exceptions will be made for animals needed to assist people with disabilities and for fulfilling program activities.

## PROPERTY

No person should use, alter, or deface GSHH property or equipment without permission from a GSHH staff member. The use of GSHH properties and/or equipment, for personal gain or for the purposes of solicitation or distribution of literature for non-sanctioned Girl Scout events is prohibited.

No sale or solicitation of materials or services of any type is allowed on GSHH properties without the written permission of GSHH.

“Solicitation” means requesting another person to purchase goods and/or services; donate goods, services, or money to any person or organization; or sign petitions or the like for any purpose.

All property modifications, including projects and repairs must be submitted to the Vice President of Facilities and Property Management. Requests will be reviewed with the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Operating Officer within 30 business days.

### Property Reservation

- Everyone must have a current GSHH membership to make a reservation in [Doubleknot](#).
- All reservations must be made in Doubleknot.

- Reservations through Doubleknot are required for GSHH Property usage.
- If something needs to be cancelled, please reach out to Member Care. Cancellation should be reported as soon as possible, as others might want to use the space.
- Reservations are first-come, first-served.
- If you see something that needs repair, report using [this form](#).
- For any overnight at a camp/program center or day use at the camp, [this form](#) must be filled out.
- When booking archery, low ropes, and boating, please be advised that this is a multi-step process:
  - GSHH will reach out to a facilitator from its database and share with them the date/time you are looking for.
  - If the facilitator comes back with a YES, then GSHH will put you in contact with them via email.
  - GSHH doesn't handle the pricing with the facilitator/volunteers. This is something that the volunteer will need to discuss with the facilitator.
  - If, for some reason, there is no facilitator available, GSHH will issue a refund for that reservation (Boating, Archery, Low Ropes).
- If there is a medical emergency, please call 911. For all other emergencies, call the emergency number posted at all facilities. When at Camp Addisone Boyce or Rock Hill Camp, please call the Ranger whose number is posted.
- Building capacity for all camp buildings and program centers is noted on the website.
- You might be sharing a program center or camp with other volunteers/Girl Scouts. Please be respectful of other groups.

## NEW LEADER ONBOARDING: CREATION OF NEW TROOP:

**Thank you for starting a new troop with Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Inc.**

Please note that these steps are **required for all leaders** who are starting a new troop with us.

Here are the **required steps listed in order** that must be completed to start your troop:

- 1. Register as a member.**
  - a. Council financial support is available.
- 2. Complete a background check.**
  - a. Must be done through our approved company, Asurint.
  - b. Council financial support is available.
- 3. Sign up for and complete Volunteer Essentials training.**

- a. This training is interactive. You must answer all questions throughout the webinar.
- b. If you are found to not have complied with the webinar requirements, you will be asked to retake all or some of the training.
- c. It is required that volunteers retake Volunteer Essentials every three years to remain current.

#### **4. Sign the Leader Agreement**

- a. Emailed to you (virtual form) upon completion of Volunteer Essentials training.

#### **5. Open a troop bank account.**

- a. Select a GSHH approved bank from the [Schedule of Banking Options](#)
- b. Submit a [Bank Account Request](#) form to [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org).
- c. Both troop signers must be present with photo ID.\*
- d. Signers must be unrelated (must not be related by blood, marriage, or partnership) and at least one signer must be female. This helps maintain an objective and unbiased perspective when supervising girls and reduces potential conflict for volunteers.
- e. Once account has been opened, return [ACH Form](#) to [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org).

\*Some banks require you to make an appointment when opening an account, we recommend you call ahead to confirm.

**After all of these steps are complete**, you will hear from the Conversion Specialist confirming that your troop is officially open for girls to join. At that time, you may also host your first troop meeting.

If a volunteer has previously served as a leader with Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, we will ask them to provide the date of their last Volunteer Essentials training. If it has been more than three years, they will be required to retake the training.

#### **Q: Can I meet with my troop before all the steps above are completed?**

**A:** No. All mandatory steps must be completed before your troop is open for girls to join and before you may host your first troop meeting. This ensures safety, compliance, and readiness.

#### **Q: What if I already took Volunteer Essentials training?**

**A:** If you have previously served as a leader with Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson Inc., we will ask you for the date of your last Volunteer Essentials training. If it has been more than three years, you must retake the training.

#### **Q: How often do I need to take Volunteer Essentials training?**

**A:** Leaders are required to complete Volunteer Essentials training once every three years to remain current.

**Q: Who can open the bank account with me?**

**A:** Either another unrelated troop leader/co-leader who has an active background check and has taken volunteer essentials, or the troop treasurer who is registered and background checked. Both leaders must go together to a GSHH-approved bank, and they must be unrelated.

**Q: Where can I find the Bank Account Request Form?**

**A:** The [Bank Account Request Form](#) is available on the GSHH website under Forms and Documents. Council staff can guide you through the process and provide the required paperwork if necessary.

**Q: Who can I contact if I need help with any of these steps?**

**A:** Contact [Member Care](#) for support throughout the process, including membership registration, background checks, training, and banking.

**Q: How long will this process take?**

**A:** The timeline depends on your schedule. It will take as long as it takes you to register, complete the background check, sign up for and complete training, and visit the bank. Each person's experience will be different, as it depends on your availability and scheduling.

## Part 2: Procedures

### PART 2: PROCEDURES

#### VOLUNTEER PHILOSOPHY

Volunteers are GSHH's greatest asset in guiding generations of Girl Scouts to become leaders in their own lives and in the world. It is through this volunteer leadership that the Girl Scout Movement serves its young people and realizes its mission to build girls of courage, confidence, and character who will make the world a better place. To ensure satisfaction with volunteer's role and to utilize the talents of volunteers effectively, it is essential that the following policies and procedures be established and maintained. Together we can work to ensure the safety and well-being of all members.

GSHH will create a culture of appreciation that includes both formal and informal methods to recognize all volunteers for their time, talent, and impact. Volunteers can also be nominated or nominate other volunteers for more formal council and national recognition consistent with the GSUSA guidelines, such as Adult Recognitions in Girl Scouting. More information can be found on GSHH's Adult Recognitions [webpage](#).

#### VOLUNTEER WELLNESS

Volunteer service can involve multiple commitments. Enthusiasm, energy, and positive attitudes are essential to providing youth members and adults with worthwhile and enjoyable leadership experiences. To this end, it is vital that adult volunteers do not overextend themselves by volunteering for too many overlapping roles. Building a broader base of adult support by encouraging others to participate increases and expands the opportunities for everyone to grow and share. GSHH is committed to providing enriching quality experience for both youth and adult Girl Scouts.

#### VOLUNTEER/STAFF PARTNERSHIP

GSHH staff are employed to provide full-time managerial and specialist expertise, research capability, and continuity to support the delivery of programs to youth members through volunteers.

Volunteers and staff are considered partners in implementing the Mission, the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, and the goals of GSHH. It is essential that each partner understands and respects the needs and abilities of the other.

## VOLUNTEER ROLE

A volunteer is any adult 18 years of age or older and out of high school who, without compensation or expectation of compensation, performs a task on behalf of GSHH. A volunteer must be approved (registered adult member of Girl Scouts, background check approved and trained) and appointed by GSHH prior to performing the task.

All adults accompanying troop/group meetings or activities on a regular basis or attending any overnight activity or who at any time assumes care, custody, or control of youth members and/or Girl Scout money must be a registered Girl Scout adult member, background check approved, and trained volunteer of GSHH and GSUSA.

GSHH has two main categories of volunteers:

- **Operational Volunteers:** Adult members who provide direct/indirect services to youth members and adults. Operational volunteers are appointed for a term of up to one year, depending on the volunteer position held.
  - Episodic volunteers are also operational volunteers who serve on a one-time or limited basis. If an episodic volunteer is responsible for Girl Scout youth, they must have current registration, background check, and training. Outside facilitators and experts presenting programming for events are not considered episodic volunteers.
- **Governance Volunteers:** Members who communicate ideas, influence proposals, and make decisions that govern GSHH and its members. They are accountable to the voting members of GSHH. Governance volunteers are elected or appointed.
- Volunteers are 18 years of age or older and out of high school.
- Girl Board Members must be 16 years of age by the date of the Annual Meeting.

Unless otherwise specified, Volunteer Policies and Procedures apply to all volunteers.

## POSITION DESCRIPTIONS

Each volunteer position will have a volunteer position description that defines specific responsibilities, clarifies expectations, and forms the basis for assessment volunteer performance, reappointment, rotation to another position, and/or release. Volunteers review and sign their [position description](#) and complete their required training. Troop leaders will sign their position descriptions every two years when they complete their [Girl Scouts Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention](#) training. Service Unit Team positions will review and re-sign their position descriptions every year.

## ACCEPTANCE AND APPOINTMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

Volunteer eligibility is determined, and acceptance is completed online. Prior to applying for a volunteer position, it is the responsibility of the prospective volunteer to review the volunteer position description for the role for which they are applying.

Girl Scout troop volunteers must be appointed to their position, using the procedures below. It is the responsibility of the prospective volunteer to complete all the required steps. GSHH reserves the right to limit volunteer involvement until all steps have been completed.

1. Prospective volunteer reviews the volunteer position description located on GSHH's website to determine their interest in becoming a volunteer.
2. Prospective volunteers join Girl Scouts by registering online, selecting the appropriate volunteer role, and paying GSUSA's annual membership dues. Once registration is complete, they will receive their volunteer welcome letter and next steps with required training.
3. Prospective volunteer successfully completes required background check. Background checks are conducted every three years for current/active volunteers. GSUSA will notify volunteers as to when their background check needs to be renewed.
4. Troop-level volunteer roles will complete their first part of required training through completing Volunteer Essentials.
5. Volunteer appointments are conditional based on successful completion of all required training for their position.

### Appointment Terms

- Operational volunteers may be appointed for a term of up to one year and will be reappointed based upon completion of responsibilities as outlined in their volunteer position description.
- Terms for governance volunteers (including delegates, members, and Officers of the Board of Directors and its committees, etc.), vary, and are detailed in [Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. Bylaws](#).

## TRAINING AND SUPPORT

To ensure volunteers are prepared to deliver high-quality programming and leadership, they need to complete training for their role. Volunteers are encouraged to continually develop their skills throughout their leadership volunteer experience.

All new Girl Scout troop leadership volunteers complete the following mandatory training upon acceptance of their leadership role.

- Complete Volunteer Essentials training

All new Girl Scout troop volunteers must register and complete GSHH council training prior to participating in specific Girl Scout activities, complete the following mandatory training before planning any activities that include overnights, fire building, and outdoor cooking, camping out, etc.

- Mandatory Training required for specified Girl Scout Activities: First Aid/CPR, Sleep In, Cook Out and/or Camp Out
- Mandatory Training is required for the following Service Unit Team roles:
  - Service Unit Manager
  - Service Unit Recruiter
  - Service Unit Treasurer
  - Service Unit Adult Recognitions Chair
  - Service Unit Annual Giving Chair
  - Service Unit Delegate/Alternate
  - Service Unit Fall Product Chair
  - Service Unit Cookie Chair

Other training may be offered to be completed within specified timeframes.

Some of the mandated training courses are recorded in volunteer's Salesforce account. Volunteers should keep personal records of their training history on their Adult Learning Card.

Troops may decide to cover the cost for volunteer training as a troop expense.

## VOLUNTEER SUPERVISION, PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT, AND REAPPOINTMENT

Service Unit Team volunteers are essential in providing support, guidance, and supervision to other volunteers. In addition, GSHH staff shall be available to all volunteers for consultation and assistance. To have the best experience, volunteers are encouraged to utilize this support system to help navigate new roles, address situations, and identify opportunities.

Supervision of volunteers may include periodic verbal and/or written coaching based upon expectations outlined in the volunteer position description. The purpose of the coaching could be to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of GSHH volunteers, to evaluate changes that need to be made, to help assess whether a position is a good fit or make any other recommendations to help the volunteer be successful in their role.

In the case of unsatisfactory performance, the volunteer will be asked to make changes or to fulfill specified requirements to correct the unfavorable behavior within a specified timeframe. Failure to improve performance will subject a volunteer to redirection or release. At any time, a volunteer may be appointed to another Girl Scout position, removed from a position, or may resign from a position.

Service Unit Team members will be reappointed based on past performance, adherence to GSHH and GSUSA policies and procedures, support of the Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law, supporting GSHH goals, as well as positive relationships with the community parents, other volunteers, and GSHH staff. Service Unit Team positions are a one-year term, renewable up to three consecutive terms. Service Unit Team members will be evaluated on their performance prior to reappointment. There will be mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and time commitments.

Volunteers with financial responsibility to troop/groups or to GSHH will not be reappointed to a position if required financial responsibilities have not been met.

Girl Scout bank accounts are managed by two unrelated, registered, trained, and background checked adult volunteers associated with the troop or group. If one adult member has a financial restriction, no other member of the household may be listed on the troop/group's bank account. Bank co-signers are responsible for submitting the troop/group's financial report to GSHH annually.

## VOLUNTEER RESIGNATION

A volunteer may resign from their volunteer position at any time following these steps:

1. Prior to giving notice, we encourage the volunteer to discuss the reason(s) with the GSHH Community Engagement Specialist who works with their Service Unit.
2. At least two weeks prior to leaving, the volunteer should submit a written resignation outlining the specific position(s) from which they are resigning and the reason(s) for leaving.
3. When applicable, we ask that the volunteers assist in identifying a replacement and communicate their decision with members of the Service Unit Team.

The volunteer may be required to balance Girl Scout funds/accounts and return property and records. The volunteer and their Community Engagement Specialist will be responsible for completing all necessary steps to ensure a smooth transition.

## VOLUNTEER REDIRECT/RELEASE

Either GSHH or the volunteer may initiate a redirect or release from a volunteer position prior to the end of the term of appointment for any reason. Situations may arise in which GSHH may initiate a release of a volunteer from a position prior to the end of the term of appointment. Any action to release a volunteer will receive careful and detailed consideration.

GSHH may release a volunteer because of, but not limited to:

- Restructuring positions or elimination of the volunteer position in which the individual serves.
- The volunteer's inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position.
- Conduct not consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Movement.

- Not demonstrating the core values of the Girl Scout Mission. This may include but is not limited to: Speaking poorly of Girl Scouts, parents, volunteers, or GSHH staff; posting negative comments on Facebook or other social media websites, etc.
- Failure to support GSHH policies, activities, and/or goals.
- Refusal to comply with GSHH or GSUSA policies and procedures. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - Unauthorized possession of dangerous weapons on Girl Scout property or while conducting volunteer activities, as stated in the policy prohibiting weapons.
  - Willful violation of security or safety rules; negligence or any careless action, which endangers the life or safety of a child or another adult.
  - Failure to ask permission and/or follow guidelines for additional [money-earning events](#).
  - Failure to submit annual financial reports.
  - Failure to submit a [Troop Activity Notification](#) form and/or follow [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
  - Poor or improper use of grant funds, including failure to submit grant financial reports, evidence of funds spent including receipts, a well-documented grant funds spending plan, and lack of communication with GSHH staff philanthropy team.
  - Acts of discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, ethnicity, religion, lineage or citizenship, national origin, gender status, familial status, age, socioeconomic background, source of income, disability, genetic information, predisposing genetic characteristics, carrier status, domestic violence victim, status, or any other characteristic protected by law;
  - Membership in an organization whose goals are not compatible with those of GSUSA or GSHH.
  - Abuse, neglect, mishandling, or mistreatment of youth members or adults.
  - Conviction of a felony or engaging in criminal conduct, acts of violence, or making threats of violence towards anyone.
  - Being intoxicated or under the influence of controlled substance drugs while volunteering; use, possession, or sale of controlled substance drugs in any quantity while on Girl Scout premises and/or while conducting volunteer activities except medications prescribed by a physician which do not impair volunteer performance.
  - Breach of confidentiality of personal or health information.
  - Refusal to participate in or unwillingness to comply with conflict resolution procedures with GSHH staff, other volunteers, or parents.
  - Misappropriation of funds or debt incurred to GSHH, service unit, or troop.

All volunteers who are redirected or released will be notified in writing. GSHH will maintain confidentiality; however, it may be necessary to notify other approved volunteers and/or members impacted by the change in volunteer status.

Volunteers who are released or redirected from their volunteer position are no longer approved volunteers with GSHH. They are still considered members of GSUSA and GSHH unless it is determined they are unable to meet the membership requirements related to accepting the principles and beliefs of the Girl Scout Movement or by supporting the mission and values of the organization.

Volunteers who are released or redirected from a volunteer position may or may not be restricted from attending and/or participating in Girl Scout activities/events as members depending on the nature of the situation.

## REINSTATEMENT OF RELEASED VOLUNTEERS

Girl Scout volunteers who have been released may be considered for reinstatement to their volunteer position. A former/prospective volunteer who wishes to be reinstated as a volunteer with GSHH may submit a request in writing after a period of 24 months from the date of GSHH's decision to restrict or remove the individual from their position. Fulfillment of the waiting period and submission of request does not guarantee an applicant will be reinstated as a volunteer.

Volunteers who were removed due to the results of their background check must wait ten years from the time of the infraction to request reinstatement. Fulfillment of the waiting period does not guarantee that an applicant will be appointed as a volunteer.

When a volunteer is reinstated, GSHH reserves the right to coach the volunteer for a minimum of 12 months to ensure compliance with the Girl Scout Promise and Law and their volunteer position description. Coaching may include, but is not limited to, check-ins with GSHH staff, trainings/refreshers, troop/event drop-ins, etc. Should a reoccurrence arise where the reinstated volunteer is having the same issues/behaviors that led to their original release, GSHH reserves the right to immediately release them from any and all volunteer positions with the organization.

GSHH reserves the right to limit or deny reinstated volunteer involvement as deemed appropriate.

## GIRL SCOUT BRAND AND OTHER YOUTH SERVING ORGANIZATIONS

To ensure the integrity of our brand and safety of our members, all volunteers are charged with ensuring that youth members participate in activities that are safe, girl-led, and conducted under the supervision of registered and trained adult Girl Scout volunteers.

Girl Scouts will continue doing what is best for our youth members and that means strongly girl-led. All Girl Scout members should:

- Use the full name of Girl Scouts whenever possible. Do not refer to Girl Scouts as “Scouts” or “Scouting.”
- If possible, wear uniforms proudly and publicly whenever you are representing Girl Scouts. Do not mix uniform pieces with those of other youth-serving organizations.
- Use Girl Scouts’ name, logos, and likenesses according to guidelines provided by Girl Scouts of the USA. If you wish to use the Girl Scout logo, please contact GSHH’s marketing department at [marcomm@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:marcomm@girlscoutshh.org) for assistance and approval.
- Use flyer templates when able to advertise Girl Scout-sponsored events. These events include, but are not limited to, recruitment events and service unit events.
- Use templates whenever possible. However, if a member would like to create a flyer or assets such as banners, bookmarks, post cards, etc. without a template, a copy of the artwork must be submitted to [marcomm@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:marcomm@girlscoutshh.org) for review. Please allow at least five business days for review.
- When participating in community events such as parades, flag ceremonies, or festivals, request a distinct Girl Scout booth or marching space, if possible.
- If Girl Scouts are members of multiple youth-serving organizations, ensure that funds earned by Girl Scouts are spent on Girl Scout expenses and Girl Scout troop experiences only.
- Refrain from sharing membership information including, but not limited to, name, phone numbers, email addresses, program level, and membership status. These activities are strictly prohibited.

## FLYERS/INFORMATION IN MAILBOXES

It is against federal law to insert flyers in mailboxes. Girl Scouts and Girl Scout volunteers may not place any matter without putting postage into a mailbox. This includes flyers, Girl Scout Cookie Program information, letters, etc. All troops/service units must check with school districts about their policies in sending materials home with students before distributing.

## GRADE-LEVEL TROOPS/GROUPS

Youth members participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in troops or independently, in these program grade levels:

- Girl Scout Daisies: Grades K-1

- Girl Scout Brownies: Grades 2-3
- Girl Scout Juniors: Grades 4-5
- Girl Scout Cadettes: Grades 6-8
- Girl Scout Seniors: Grades 9-10
- Girl Scout Ambassadors: Grades 11-12

Multi-grade level troops are also available to best fit the needs of families and local communities.

Bridging youth members to the next grade level early is not recommended, due to the progressive nature of the Girl Scout program. If you bridge a member from grade-level to another early, they may not be physically, mentally, or emotionally ready (i.e. bridging a member just finishing second grade to Girl Scout Juniors instead of allowing the full second year Brownie experience). There may be some experiences Girl Scout may not be able to participate in because of their age.

## OPPORTUNITY CATALOG

The Opportunity Catalog is an online listing of troops in GSHH. The Opportunity Catalog helps ensure that those who want to be a Girl Scout have the opportunity to participate in a troop experience.

Troops seeking to open additional spots in their troop can do so by emailing a request to [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org). As your troop starts the new year, it is the ideal time to update your information should changes to your meeting situation occur. Leaders can update their troop meeting information under the 'My Troops' tab in their [MYGS](#) account.

Troops will remain open and searchable in the opportunity catalog until filled with 12 youth members. All current troop members have until September 30<sup>th</sup> each year to renew in their current troop; on October 1st any remaining spots will be re-displayed to be filled.

## COUNCIL FINANCIAL SUPPORT GUIDELINES

GSHH would like all youth members to have the opportunity to engage in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, regardless of financial status. GSHH's Council Financial Support (formerly known as Financial Assistance) is based on need without regard to race, creed, color, religion, national origin, ability, or any other characteristic protected by federal or state law.

To ensure we best serve our membership when awarding Council Financial Support, we consider the total number of requests and our available funds.

What does Council Financial Support cover?

Council Financial Support is offered for:

- [Council Financial Support/Financiero del Consejo](#) for adult volunteers or youth. Use this form for assistance with GSUSA membership dues, assistance with uniform pieces and book resources and GSHH Program.
- [Camperships](#)- Camperships offer financial assistance for GSHH members attending council-led summer camp programming at Camp Addisone Boyce (day camp) and Rock Hill Camp (resident camp). Campership funds can be applied to bus fees for transporting campers to GSHH's day camp. Applications open the first day of summer camp registration each year and close on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

Any adult volunteer who receives council financial support must complete all criteria for their volunteer role, including training, or they will be asked to reimburse the council for their membership fee.

Troops that have had the opportunity to participate in the Fall Product Program and the Girl Scout Cookie Program may consider using troop funds to renew youth Girl Scout memberships.

Receipt of council financial support indicates commitment to participate in GSHH's Product Programs (fall and cookie).

Steps for requesting Council Financial Support for membership:

1. Council Financial Support can be requested for the membership fee on the payment screen during the online membership registration process (listed as 'Financial Assistance' on the dropdown of payment options). Your request is noted as pending. Requesting Council Support does not guarantee approval.
2. GSHH will send you an e-mail with a link to the online application for Council Financial Support. The e-mail is sent to the e-mail address used during the online membership registration process.
3. A parent/caregiver must complete the online form and submit it to GSHH via the online form.
4. GSHH will review the application and notify applicants of eligibility.

Steps for requesting Council Financial Support for uniform pieces, book resources and GSHH Program Fees:

1. Parent/Caregiver/Volunteer can find the [Council Financial Support/Financiero del Consejo](#) on our website OR send a request into our Member Care team [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org)
2. GSHH will review the application and notify applicants of eligibility.

## BANK ACCOUNTS

All troops, groups, and service units must open a separate business checking account into and out of which all funds flow. All Girl Scout accounts must have two unrelated (must not be related by blood, marriage, or partnership) and at least one signer must be female, approved, registered, background checked, and trained adult signers who are responsible for troop funds. If one adult member has a financial restriction, no other member of the household may be listed on the troop/group's bank account. These accounts, the signers, and the use of GSHH's EIN must be authorized in writing by GSHH.

The bank account must only be used to support the Girl Scout program; money earned by Girl Scouts can only be used to fund their Girl Scout experience. Funds of more than one troop may not be co-mingled in one bank account with funds from other troops; each troop must have its own bank account. Co-mingling funds will be regarded as misappropriation.

Troops, groups, and service units must follow GSHH procedures when opening accounts, closing accounts, or changing bank account signers at a financial institution. Some helpful tips can be found in Volunteer Essentials in the [Troop Finance](#) section. GSHH has the authority to change bank account signers, request bank statements, or close accounts whenever deemed necessary.

[Schedule of Banking Options Revised August 2025](#). GSHH strongly recommends TD Bank for all troop/group/service unit accounts when possible.

The Bank Account Information and [ACH Authorization form](#) must be completed by all GSHH troops, groups, and service units that have been given permission to open a bank account in the GSHH name. This form must be completed for new bank accounts as soon as it is opened or if there are any changes in authorized signers. This form should also be completed any time a change in banking information occurs. The information on the completed form will be available to the designated GSHH staff.

Troops, groups, and service units may obtain debit/check cards. The debit/check card must not be used for personal purchases. The cardholder(s) are responsible for obtaining purchase receipts, securing the card(s), and are legally responsible for the transactions posted to the card. Online banking is permitted.

All Girl Scout funds must be deposited into the troop/service unit bank account, and all itemized receipts of purchases, bank receipts/deposits, and monthly bank statements must be kept on file for a period of three years.

GSHH reserves the right to review troop, group, and service unit accounts. If a troop, group, or service unit fails to submit its annual finance report, it is subjected to a full financial audit and/or

closure of the account by GSHH and will be put on the financial alert list until either the report is submitted, or new signers have been identified and trained. Other situations that may result in a financial review include, but are not limited to:

- Complaints from parents/caregivers
- Suspected misuse
- Mismanagement or theft of funds

Financial reviews may be initiated at the full discretion of GSHH.

## FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Volunteers who oversee Girl Scout funds whether for troops, groups, service units, or any other reason, are accountable to GSHH and youth members in all financial matters.

For GSHH troop bank accounts, the Girl Scout volunteer bank signers are responsible for:

- Good management of funds including timely deposits of funds.
- Up-to-date recordkeeping
- Monthly review of bank statements
- Effective management of funds
- Submission of timely reports to affected members, their parents, and GSHH
- Receipts showing how the money was spent.
- Documenting all cash withdrawals

If cash is collected, receipts must be provided to document the reason for the payment. Girl Scout bank accounts are managed by two registered, trained, and background checked adult volunteers associated with the troop or group. Bank co-signers are responsible for submitting the troop/group's financial report to GSHH annually.

Failure to exercise proper management over finances will result in release from the volunteer position.

All troops, groups, and service units are required to submit an annual finance report to GSHH. Parents/caregivers can view completed troop finance report(s) on the Volunteer Toolkit. It is important to comply with this procedure as financial transparency at all levels of Girl Scouting encourages trust and confidence. Additionally, any registered Girl Scout and their parents/caregivers will be given access to view financial records upon request.

If troop funds or resources (including but not limited to program supplies, Girl Scout cookies, etc.) are lost due to circumstances beyond the volunteer's control, the volunteer must submit either an insurance claim and/or file a police report. GSHH is not responsible for loss of troop/group or service

unit funds or resources due to any circumstance involving a police report (ex. Theft) or insurance (ex. Fire).

The troop, group, and service unit bank signers have access to the Finance Tab on the Volunteer Toolkit. They have the option to submit the finance report through the Finance Tab or via email to [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org) annually by the July 15<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Volunteers with financial responsibility to troops/groups or to GSHH will not be reappointed to a position if required financial responsibilities have not been met.

Delinquent funds are a part of financial accountability and responsibility. Please see the [Delinquent Funds](#) section for information and guidance.

## MONEY EARNING ACTIVITIES & DONATIONS

### DONATIONS

#### **Girls May NOT Ask for Monetary Donations**

According to the GSUSA [Blue Book of Basic Documents](#) policy “**Girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money** except for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors, who may solicit philanthropic donations to their councils of cash or in-kind goods for Girl Scout Gold Award projects, provided they have secured prior written permission from their council’s Chief Executive Officer, Chief Development Officer, or their designee.” *Blue Book, page 20*

Since girl members may not ask directly for charitable donations of money, no direct ‘fundraising solicitations’ may be initiated by troops. This includes soliciting financial support for other causes (e.g. raising money for a food pantry, animal shelter, humanitarian need, crisis, etc.). Since troops hold girl money earned through product sales or other money earning activities, the troop can decide to donate to a cause from their funds.

#### **In-Kind Contributions to Troops/Service Units**

Girls may ask for **in-kind** contributions. In-kind donations are goods or services, other than cash, which are donated to be used by troops/service units for Girl Scout mission-based activities. Examples of in-kind gifts include contributions of food for a food drive, pet food or pet toys for a shelter drive, program supplies, camping equipment, program space, etc.

Troops/service units should keep a record of all in-kind gifts as this may be requested by the Finance or Philanthropy departments.

The contribution should be recognized locally by having Girl Scouts send thank you cards.

If the donor requires a letter of confirmation as proof of not-for-profit status and/or corporate authorization or special acknowledgement letter on corporate letterhead, please contact [philanthropy@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:philanthropy@girlscoutshh.org).

### **Adults May Ask for Monetary Donations for Council**

According to the GSUSA *Blue Book* policy: “Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. **Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by the Girl Scout council and in which the local council is a beneficiary.**” *Blue Book, page 20*

GSHH recognizes fundraising by adults that benefits the service units and/or GSHH properties as benefitting the Council, provided the project is approved by Council and the money earning activity or fundraising plan is approved and follows GSHH policies and procedures. All fundraising activities should be reviewed with the Philanthropy department prior to start.

- Troops or service units may not apply for corporate or foundation grants intended to benefit only the troop or service unit.

### **ACCEPTING MONETARY DONATIONS AND IRS COMPLIANCE**

While girl members and adult members may not solicit monetary donations for their troops or service units, they may accept donations made voluntarily, e.g. a local civic organization makes an annual gift to the local service unit; a family member wants to fund a special troop activity; etc.

Troops or service units with potential donor or sponsorship opportunities (e.g. local rotary makes an annual donation to the local service unit) should contact the Philanthropy office at [philanthropy@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:philanthropy@girlscoutshh.org) to review before applying/accepting.

- When accepting gifts, any gift of \$250 or more must be sent to GSHH’s corporate office for recording and acknowledging in accordance with IRS regulations. Gifts will be processed as quickly as possible (about 5 business days) and funds passed through to the troop/service unit bank account via an ACH transaction for the troop/service unit use in compliance with the donor restriction.
- Donors should be advised to make the donation to GSHH and indicate that it is restricted for a specific troop/service unit. The donor must provide this specific instruction/ documentation of such intent at the time the donation is made. Gifts without this documentation will be considered a general gift to GSHH.
  - Troops/service units may accept donations of less than \$250. These should be listed in your annual Financial Report.
- In accordance with IRS regulations, GSHH will provide an official letter of acknowledgement for tax purposes for gift received by Council. Donors are not eligible to receive a tax deduction for money given directly to individual girls/troops/service units that are not recorded at the Council level. Troops/service units are encouraged to provide a thank you note from the troop/service unit in addition to the official acknowledgement letter. Acknowledgement letters

provided by troops/service units do not serve as tax receipts. If the donor requests a letter for tax purposes, contact the Philanthropy office.

- Troops/service units are not authorized to collect and/or maintain accounts where funds are restricted for use/projects at GSHH properties.

## **MONEY EARNING ACTIVITIES (MEAs)**

### **Troop Money Earning Activities**

Girl Scout groups (troops, service units, etc.) are responsible for planning and financing their own activities. This puts Girl Scouts in charge (with support from troop leaders and GSHH registered volunteers), giving them the opportunity to cooperatively set goals, earn money, manage a budget and spend responsibly.

Helping Girl Scout earn and manage money is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. When girls participate in money earning activities such as selling cookies, they learn important entrepreneurial skills such as goal setting, decision making, budgeting, money management, marketing techniques, people skills, and business ethics.

- Participation in the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program should be the primary way for Girl Scouts to earn troop funds.
- Girl Scout girl members may not directly solicit charitable donations of money; therefore, no direct 'fundraising' may be done by troops as per the GSUSA Blue Book page. 20.

However, if the budget goal for a specific troop activity or project has not been met through product sales revenue, girls may apply to GSHH for approval to do additional money earning activities.

Money Earning Activities are revenue producing activities that provide customers with a product or service in exchange for the money received. Troop money earning activities should be girl-led with assistance and guidance from troop leaders.

- Troop money-earning activities must be approved by both the Service Unit Manager and council.
- Troops may hold a maximum of four (4) MEAs annually.
- There are black-out dates when no MEA may be held.
- Girl Scout Daisies are not permitted to do additional money earning activities.

**Black-Out Dates** – To ensure focus and full support of the Product Sale Programs, there are annual black-out dates when no troop MEAs are permitted. Generally, these will be during the initial order taking window of each product sale program but may extend longer. GSHH will communicate black-out dates by October 1 via *Headlines & Happenings* and other council communications.

## Service Unit Money Earning Activities

GSHH recognizes the important role service units have in recruiting and providing outstanding girl and family experiences and the need for funding those activities through money earning activities since no product sales revenue is received by the service unit.

- Service units may hold a maximum of four MEAs annually.
  - Recruiting activities that are not raising money but ‘covering the cost’ of the event do not require an MEA application or count as one of four MEAs.
- Service unit money earning activities must be approved by GSHH.
- **There are no blackout dates for Service Unit MEAs.**

## A Special Note about Funding Projects at GSHH Properties

For those service units with Girl Scout Program Centers (houses) within their service area, no changes to any GSHH property or grounds are permitted without prior written approval of GSHH. This includes special service unit projects or troop projects. Proposals for potential changes must be submitted to the Chief Operating Officer and approved in writing before any action may be taken.

If this project is approved, Girl Scouts must follow the policies and procedures for raising money, holding money-earning activities and accepting and recording charitable donations as outlined above.

Additionally, since the property is maintained by the Council, all project funds will be held by the Council as restricted funds. The service unit or troop is not authorized to hold such funds.

## Funding Gold Award Projects

There are special GSUSA *Blue Book* policies related to funding Gold Award projects. Please reach out to your Gold Award project mentor or [philanthropy@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:philanthropy@girlscoutshh.org) for assistance with Gold Award project funding and money earning activity guidelines.

- No changes to any GSHH property or grounds are permitted without prior written approval of the Council. This includes Highest Award projects, special service unit projects or troop projects. Proposals for potential changes must be submitted to their Chief Operating Officer and approved in writing before any action or efforts to fund the project may be taken.

## Money Earning Activity Requirements

When planning money earning activities, troops, service units, and girls working towards Highest Awards must follow all GSHH policies and procedures as well as GSUSA *Blue Book* policies related to money earning activities and fundraising. Additionally, all GSHH Volunteer Policies & Procedures,

[Volunteer Essentials](#), and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) must be followed, including appropriate ratios of approved Girl Scout volunteers to youth members.

**Appropriate MEAs** – The proposed troop MEA should be girl-led and age-appropriate. Troop, service unit, and Gold Award project MEAs should be lawful (including local ordinances), follow GSHH safety guidelines, Girl Scout brand-consistent, and comply with GSUSA Blue Book policies. Suggestions for approved MEAs can be viewed [here](#).

**Local MEAs** – MEAs should be held in the troop’s local area. If the proposed MEA is outside a troop’s service unit area, Service Unit Managers from both service units may be consulted before an MEA is approved. Service unit MEAs should remain within the service unit area. All MEAs must take place with the Council’s jurisdiction.

**No Competitive MEAs** – MEAs that are in direct competition with the Product Sale Programs will not be approved (e.g. selling another food product during Product Sale Programs, holding a bake sale rather than a Cookie Booth, etc.)

**Internet/online MEAs** - According to the GSUSA *Blue Book* policy: “For safety and security reasons, sales and marketing on the Internet for any Girl Scout troop/group money-earning activities may not be conducted by individual girls, parents, or other adults except as provided for in the Girl Scouts of the USA Product Program Guidelines and with appropriate parental permission.” *Blue Book, page 19*

### **Required Pre-requisites to Submitting an MEA Application**

**Troops must participate in BOTH the Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program before GSHH will consider additional money earning activities.** (Special consideration will be given to troops with extenuating circumstances, e.g. formed after these opportunities have passed.)

**Annual Financial Report** – The Annual Financial Report must be submitted to the Finance Department on time.

**Encouraging Philanthropy** – Teaching girls the importance of philanthropy helps build girls of character. Service units and troops must inform their families about the Annual Friends & Family Partnership Campaign by distributing materials provided by GSHH to every family in the service unit/troop and explain the importance of the campaign. Service units and troops are encouraged to support the campaign with a donation, but a donation is not required for approval.

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS DUE TO TROOP CHANGES

### Graduating Girl Scout Ambassador Troops

When all members of a troop graduate, care must be taken with the final expenditure of troop funds. All troop funds are the property of the troop, not the individual members, and the troop should decide how to spend the money prior to dissolving the troop and closing the bank account. All decisions concerning the disposition of troop funds should be made by the troop, not by the leaders.

Options to consider depending on the remaining amount of troop funds:

- Purchase discounted Lifetime Girl Scout memberships for each graduating member.
- Leave a legacy to Girl Scouts by donating to a fund or program in honor of the troop.
- Take advantage of the last year of youth membership to participate in GSHH planned activities and events.

### New Troop Leadership

If new troop leadership has been appointed, turn all supplies and financial records over to the new troop leader. New troop leadership must complete their required training. This includes the submission of a request to Member Care for a change of signer bank letter and new ACH Agreement form. This should be done before making an appointment with the bank to make changes. The signatures on the bank account must be changed with the bank and GSHH within a month of completing the first two weeks of GSHH's onboarding process for new volunteers. There is no need to close the account and open a new one if this process is followed.

### Troop Merges or Splits

If a troop merges with another troop, the funds and supplies will be combined for use by all members in the newly formed troop. If a troop splits, equal portions of the troop funds and supplies will follow members to their new troop. This will be done with guidance and direction from your Community Engagement Specialist. Troops funds are not the property of any individual member.

### Troop Disbands

When a troop disbands, any unused Girl Scout funds left in the account become the property of the council. Troop funds are not the property of any individual Girl Scout. Before disbanding, ask members how they want to pay it forward. They may decide to donate any unused funds to their service unit, to another troop, or to pay for activities. Activities can include purchasing materials to support another organization through Take Action projects.

### How to Handle Changes Within a Troop/Group

- If a member leaves, transfers to another troop/group, or registers as an Individually Registered Girl Scout (IRG/Juliette)
  - All money remains with the original troop/group and is neither given to the member nor transferred to another troop/group.
  - If a member leaves during the Girl Scout Cookie Program, the decision about cookie proceeds will be processed on a case-by-case basis by GSHH staff. It is NOT recommended for a member to transfer into another troop during the Girl Scout Cookie Program.
- When an entire troop/group moves from one program level to another:
  - All money moves with the troop/group (i.e., from Girl Scout Brownies to Juniors).
- In an ongoing troop/group, where only some of the members are bridging to a new program age level troop/group.
  - All money will remain with the original troop/group and is neither given to the members nor transferred to another troop/group.
- If the troop/group divides:
  - An annual financial report is completed and turned into the Community Engagement Specialist.
  - All assets are apportioned between the two treasurers on a pro-rata basis according to troop/group membership at the time of division.
- If a troop/group disbands, is no longer functioning:
  - The leader must complete and submit a Troop Annual Finance Report and a Disbanded Troop/Group Form.
  - The troop/group bank account must be closed and a cashier's check for the ending balance, payable to GSHH Council Finance, is submitted to the council. The funds may be designated as a final donation from the troop and to a specific project or program.
  - All assets, together with disbandment and financial reports, unused checks, and debit cards must also be turned into the council.
  - The distribution of gift cards/retail merchandise/cash or check to each troop member/adult is not permitted when closing a troop/group bank account upon disbandment.
  - Renewal of membership dues for members who would like to continue in Girl Scouts is permitted.
- If some of the members from the disbanded troop/group continue in a new troop/group:
  - All assets are divided on a pro-rated basis. Assets for members continuing in Girl Scouts are given to the new troop/group.

- All remaining assets are returned to the council for the best interest of members within the council. These assets may be provided as a donation from the troop.
- If there is a change of leadership:
  - Outgoing leaders must submit a financial report and debit cards to the Community Engagement Specialist at the time of leadership change.
  - A copy of the financial report with all assets, funds, bank statements, and unused checks will be given to the new leader.
  - The new troop leadership volunteers must complete required training through the onboarding process and coordinate with the Community Engagement Specialist and outgoing leaders to make necessary changes to the troop/group account.
  - The new troop leadership volunteers must submit the completed and signed ACH Agreement and a bank document that shows the account number and the routing number (such as a voided check, a screenshot of online banking, or another bank document).
  - The new troop leadership volunteers must submit a copy (picture) of new debit cards to the Community Engagement Specialist.

## INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS) COMPLIANCE AND TROOP ACCOUNTS

GSHH has no ability to control, change, or influence IRS requirements. Non-compliance with IRS requirements is a risk management issue that may affect the tax-exempt status of this council and the tax-exempt status of other Girl Scout councils nationwide.

- Once money is received into the troop treasury (bank account), it no longer belongs to individual members.
- Cash-based accounts may not be kept for or distributed to individual members.
- All benefits provided should relate back to supporting the Girl Scout Mission; decisions should be based on our tax-supported philosophy regarding what is Mission-related. For example, camp, travel, and Girl Scout events are Mission-related as are philanthropic gifts to registered not-for -profits organizations. (Girl Scouts may not raise money for other organizations, but they can choose to make donations.)
- Troop monies cannot follow a member if they leave the GSHH council.
- If a member leaves, transfers to another troop/group, or registers as an Individually Registered Girl Scout (IRG/Juliette): All money remains with the original troop/group and is neither given to the member nor transferred to another troop/group. The IRS prohibits funds from following an individual member dollar-for-dollar. We understand that this could cause concern if troops split up or for members who participate in troop money-earning activities.

- Troops and service units should contact the GSHH Philanthropy department at [philanthropy@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:philanthropy@girlscoutshh.org) prior to accepting donations as there are specific IRS laws and regulations that must be followed when accepting donations.
  - As a chartered GSUSA council, GSHH is the legal nonprofit entity issued federal tax-exempt status and NYS Charities registration and is authorized to accept charitable contributions. All Girl Scout troops and service units in all the communities within the council territory operate under the council's jurisdiction, federal id and NYS registration and are not separately considered charitable organizations eligible to accept tax-deductible contributions. As such, GSHH, all its service units and troops must follow all GSUSA, IRS, and NYS guidelines regarding soliciting and recording charitable contributions.
- Donations may be made to GSHH and be restricted for a specific troop or service unit when specific documentation of such donor restriction is provided at the time the donation is made. GSHH retains authority to accept or decline such donations. GSHH will ACH these funds to the appropriate troop/group/service unit account.
- Any gift of \$250 or greater received by GSHH and restricted to a troop/service unit/Highest Award project will be received and acknowledged by GSHH so that the business or individual may receive a tax deduction.

## THIRD PARTY PAYMENT PROCESSING SOFTWARE APPLICATIONS

For collecting payment from Girl Scout families in your troop or service unit, GSHH strongly recommends using Zelle, rather than Venmo, PayPal, CheddarUp, or other third-party payment processors. Zelle is the most secure and private platform to transfer between individuals. Zelle can also be used on business accounts, so funds can be deposited right into your troop account. Zelle should be used for troop dues, event fees, or anything related to troop operations. **Zelle should not** be used for Fall Product or Girl Scout Cookie Program transactions, which should be done through Digital Cookie or the M2 storefront website to ensure proper order processing.

## TRAVEL/TROOP TRIPS

TRAVEL (TRIPS & ACTIVITIES)

TRIP/ACTIVITY CRITERIA:

A Girl Scout trip/activity must:

1. Be a valuable program activity for girls.
2. Be suited to ages/abilities of the girls and consistent with goals/principles of the Girl Scout Program.

3. Be a girl-led activity – planned, generated, produced, and performed by girls – with supervision from leaders.

### **TRIP/ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY:**

To be considered a Girl Scout troop/activity, the troop/group leaders must:

- Make sure there are a minimum of TWO registered, background checked, Volunteer Essentials trained leaders attending the trip/activity.
- Make sure all participants (girls and adults) are registered members of GSHH. See the [Girl Scout Guide to Travel](#) for more information.
- Provide parents/caregivers with written details (date, time, locations, and brief description) of the trip/activity prior to its occurrence.
- Ensure the trip/activity meets all requirements in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Receive from parents/caregivers a signed [Annual Permission](#) and [Health History Form](#).
- GSHH requires sharing all trip information with your Service Unit Manager.
- A completed Trip/Activity Form must be turned into GSHH and approved by GSHH for all high-risk activities that require council approval as outlined in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- A completed [Trip/Activity Form](#) must be turned into GSHH and approved by GSHH for all overnight activities. Extended trips (three or more nights) and international trips require advanced trip training.
- If the trip is not approved by GSHH, it no longer constitutes as a ‘Girl Scout Trip/Activity.’ Therefore, use of Girl Scout funds is prohibited and would be considered a misuse of funds.

### **TRIP/ACTIVITY TRANSPORTATION**

It is both leaders’ responsibility to ensure that each troop driver has/is:

- Is a registered GSHH member.
- A valid GSHH background check on file.
- At least 21 years of age.
- A valid driver’s license and a car with adequate insurance.

### **TYPES OF GIRL SCOUT TRIPS/ACTIVITIES**

**Field Trips/Activities: A trip/activity within your community/service unit**

- Travel Distance: Often short walking distance or car ride.
- Trip/Activity Length: Two or Three hours
- Examples: Firehouse, local parks, ice cream shops, etc.
- Approval: Service Unit Manager

- Trip/Activity Form Submission: No, unless considered high-risk activities as outlined in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) in which GSHH council approval is needed.

**Day Trip/Activities:** A trip/activity within or outside your Service Unit, but within the seven GSHH council jurisdiction.

- Travel Distance: Most day trips will require travel in a car, bus, or train.
- Trip Length: Six to eight hours
- Examples: Waterparks, amusement parks, museums, zoos, aquariums, etc.
- Approval: Service Unit Manager
- Trip/Activity Form Submission: **No, unless considered high-risk activities as outlined in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) in which GSHH council approval is needed.**

**Overnight Trips/Activities:** A trip/activity that may be within or outside your Service Unit and the GSHH seven county jurisdiction.

- Travel Length: Most overnight trips will require travel in a car, bus, or train.
- Trip Length: 1-2 nights
- Examples: Camping, council-sponsored sleepovers, waterparks, hotels, etc.
- Approval: **Service Unit Manager and GSHH Council approval is required.**
- Trip/Activity Form Submission: **Yes**
- Requirements: All adults attending an overnight trip need to be GSHH members and background checked.

**Extended Trips/Activities:** A domestic trip/activity that may be within or outside your Service Unit. This trip may occur outside of the GSHH seven-county jurisdiction and/or New York state.

- Travel Distance: Most extended trips will require travel in a car, bus, train, or airplane.
- Trip Length: 3+ Nights
- Examples: Disney World, Washington D.C., Savannah, GA, etc.
- Approval: **Service Unit Manager and GSHH Council approval is needed.**
- Trip/Activity: Form Submission: Yes
- Requirements: All adults attending an overnight trip need to be GSHH members and background check.

**International Trips/Activities:** An international trip/activity that is outside of the GSHH seven county jurisdiction and the USA.

- **Travel Distance:** Most international trips will require travel in a car, bus, train, airplane, or cruise ship.
- **Trip Length:** 3+ nights
- **Examples:** Mexico, Brazil, Italy, Japan, cruises, etc.
- Approval: **Service Unit Manager and GSHH Council approval is required.**
- Trip/Activity Form Submission: **Yes**
- Requirements: All adults attending an overnight trip need to be GSHH members and background checked.

### TRIP/ACTIVITY FORM REQUIREMENTS/PROCESS:

1. Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. reserves the right to deny any trip/activity if it is deemed not in compliance with Safety Activity Checkpoints and Council policies and guidelines.
2. A completed Trip/Activity form must be submitted within the deadlines to allow for processing time. Forms submitted after the deadline may be DENIED.
3. Trip/Activity Forms must be completed in FULL. Forms that are submitted incompletely will not be processed.
4. Submitting a Trip/Activity form does not constitute a trip/activity approval. An approval email will be sent to both leaders and the Service Unit Manager.
5. Providing misinformation could result in the trip not being covered by Girl Scout Heart of the Hudson Insurance and could increase personal liability.

### TRIP/ACTIVITY REQUIRED TRAININGS/CERTIFICATIONS:

- Day/Field Trips: Volunteer Essentials, First Aid/CPR Certification
- Overnight: Volunteer Essentials, Sleep In, First Aid/CPR Certification
- Extended/International Trips/Activities: Volunteer Essentials, Sleep In
- Camping Trips: Volunteer Essentials, Sleep In, Cookout Out, Camp Out, First Aid/CPR Certification
- Fire Building/Outdoor Cooking: Cookout Out, Camp Out, First Aid/CPR Certification
- Swimming trips/Activities Lifeguard Certification, First Aid/CPR Certification
- Archery: Archery Certified Instructor
- Low Ropes: Low Ropes Certified Instructor
- Boating: Lifeguard/Boating Instructor

### TRIP/ACTIVITY Q&A:

**Q. What does the new trip policy say?**

**A. A Trip and Activity Form is no longer required** for field or day trips and low-risk activities. A form is only required if the trip or activity is one of the following:

- Listed as **high-risk and requires council approval** in *Safety Activity Checkpoints (SACs)*
- An **overnight trip** (any length of stay away from home, including campouts)
- An **extended trip** (three nights or more, domestic)
- An **international trip**

**Q. Why was the trip policy changed?**

A. The policy was updated to better serve volunteers and girls. The changes were made to:

- Streamline the trip and activity process.
- Make things easier for volunteers, allowing leaders to focus on creating fun, meaningful experiences.
- Ensure council staff can focus attention on higher-risk activities where safety oversight is most critical.
- Reduce paperwork for leaders and empower troops to enjoy more local adventures while maintaining safety as the top priority.
- Enhance the overall Girl Scout experience by reducing barriers and making troop outings easier and more accessible.

**Q. What counts as a “trip” under Girl Scouts?**

A. A trip is defined as any activity that takes place **outside of the troop’s regular meeting time and space**.

**Examples of trips include (but are not limited to):**

- Going to a local playground or library
- A service project at a food pantry
- Visiting a community business or museum
- Camping overnight

**Q. What is considered a “high-risk activity”?**

A. High-risk activities are outlined in *Safety Activity Checkpoints (SACs)* because they require **special planning, permissions, or certified instructors** to keep participants safe.

**Examples include (but are not limited to):**

- Horseback riding
- Canoeing, kayaking, or paddleboarding
- Zip-lining, climbing walls, or rock climbing.
- Archery or target sports
- Boating/Water activities
- Activities requiring protective gear or specialized instruction.

**Important:** Always review [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). If the activity is marked as high-risk, a Trip and Activity Form is required—even for short day trips.

**Q. What are examples of trips/activities that do *not* require a form anymore?**

A. Examples include:

- A walk to a nearby park for badge work
- A visit to the police or fire department
- A troop day at the zoo or aquarium
- Attending a community cultural event or festival
- **ALL trips NOT outlined in Safety Activity Checkpoints as high risk.**

**Reminder:** Even if a form isn't needed, all Girl Scout safety guidelines (SACs, Volunteer Essentials, and council rules) must still be followed.

**Q. Do overnight trips still require a form?**

**A.** Yes. Any overnight activity, whether it's a **backyard campout, one-night sleepover at a museum, or multi-day camping trip**—requires a Trip and Activity Form.

**Why?** Overnight trips involve additional considerations such as sleeping arrangements, emergency procedures, and adult-to-girl supervision ratios. Council approval ensures the plans meet Girl Scout safety standards.

**Q. If a form isn't required, what do leaders still need to do?**

**A.** Even without trip & activity form submission, leaders are responsible for:

- Notifying Service Unit Manager (if applicable) or Community Engagement Specialist
- Following **Safety Activity Checkpoints** for every activity
- Maintaining appropriate **adult-to-girl ratios**
- Ensuring all **drivers are registered, approved volunteers, and have completed required checks** (if applicable)
- Collecting **parent/guardian permission slips** for activities outside the normal meeting place
- Having an **emergency plan** in place
- Ensuring all adults have access to **first aid kits and emergency contacts.**

**Q. What if I'm not sure whether my activity requires a form?**

**A.**

- **Step 1:** Check [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#). If the activity is listed as high-risk, submit a form.
- **Step 2:** Consider the length of the trip. If it's overnight, extended, or international, submit a form.
- **Step 3:** If still unsure, contact your **Service Unit Manager** or **Community Engagement Specialist** or council staff for clarification.

**Q. Do parent/guardian permission slips still need to be collected?**

A. Yes. Regardless of whether a form is required, **written parent/guardian permission is required for all activities outside the regular meeting place.** This ensures families are informed and approve of their child's participation.

**Q. Where can I find the Trip and Activity Form and Safety Activity Checkpoints?**

A.

- The [Trip and Activity Form](#) is available on the council website under Forms and Documents.
- The [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) can also be found online and should be reviewed before planning any activity.
- [Volunteer Essentials](#) provides additional guidance on planning safe and fun experiences.

**Q. Who can I contact with questions about the new trip policy?**

A.

- Your **Community Engagement Specialist** is the first point of contact for questions.
- You may also reach out to a Community Engagement Specialist at [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org) with the subject line: Trip & Activity Question, Troop XXXX

## FIRST AID/CPR TRAINING

It is best practice to have at least one adult volunteer who is trained in First Aid/CPR accompany the troop any time they leave their regular meeting place. For many activities, GSHH requires that at least one adult volunteer be First Aid/CPR certified. More information on which activities require an adult volunteer to be First Aid/CPR certified can be found in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

Volunteers can take advantage of First Aid/CPR training offered by GSHH and chapters of the American Red Cross, National Safety Council, EMP America, American Heart Association, Medic or other organizations approved by GSHH. First Aid/CPR training opportunities are offered by GSHH. More information about First Aid requirements can be found in the [First Aid Safety Activity Checkpoint](#).

First Aid/CPR training that is available entirely online does not satisfy GSUSA and GSHH requirements. Such courses do not offer enough opportunities to practice and receive feedback on your technique. If taking a course not offered by one of the organizations listed in the previous paragraph, or any course that has online components, get approval from GSHH Community Engagement Team prior to enrolling in the course.

## EMERGENCIES

If an emergency occurs during a Girl Scout troop meeting, activity, etc., Girl Scout volunteers must follow the GSHH Emergency Procedures listed below and on the GSHH Emergency Card. These

procedures ensure safety is the number one concern in any emergency. Volunteers are guided to seek help and report the incident, efficiently and effectively.

### GSHH Emergency Procedures

1. Provide all possible care for the injured person.
2. Call for help: 9-1-1 (Police, Fire, EMS).
3. Move non-injured people away from the scene.
4. In the event of a motor vehicle accident, serious accident, or fatality – always notify the police. Unless the victim is in immediate danger, do not allow disturbance to the victim or surroundings until first responders arrive.
5. Call emergency contact(s) of injured person.
6. Speak only to police or other first responders.
7. Report emergency to GSHH:
  - a. Emergency Phone: 845-558-9436
8. GSHH will provide you with additional support on how to handle the emergency.
9. Complete a GSHH [Accident/Incident Report Form](#).
10. Volunteers should not make statements of any kind to the media. Refer requests to [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org) or 855-232-4744. Volunteers must also refrain from posting and/or sharing pictures or comments on social media related to the emergency.
11. Do not discuss the incident with the media/witnesses, release names, place blame, or accept liability.
12. If there is an automobile accident, share insurance information with the other party, do not sign any accident report, except for the police report.
13. Keep a record of the order of events, treatments, calls, etc.

## ACTIVITY INSURANCE

Every registered Girl Scout and registered adult member in the Girl Scout Movement is automatically covered under the Plan 1 basic activity insurance plan upon registration. This insurance provides up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity or trip lasting two nights or less, after the individual's primary insurance pays out.

An approved, supervised Girl Scout activity is an activity carried out by those who are registered members of the Girl Scout Movement under the overall supervision of volunteers, in keeping with GSHH Volunteer Policies & Procedures, [Volunteer Essentials](#), and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

Effective October 1, 2025, Activity Accident Insurance will be completely automatic at no additional cost to members. In addition to accident/injury coverage for day events, the new policy will

automatically include sickness coverage for all overnight stays (including camp) and international travel. This change, effective for all trips occurring on and after 10/1/2025, eliminates the need for manual individual insurance requests entirely.

## MEETING PLACES/CAMPS/SITES

A meeting place needs to provide a safe, clean, and secure environment that allows for the participation of all Girl Scouts and adults. You might consider using meeting rooms at schools, libraries, houses of worship, community buildings, childcare facilities, and local businesses. For teens, you can also rotate meetings at coffee shops, bookstores, and other places young people enjoy spending time.

See [Volunteer Essentials](#) for a few points to keep in mind as you consider meeting locations.

- Meeting Space:
  - Ensure that the space is safe, secure, clean, properly ventilated, heated (or cooled, depending on your location), free from hazards, and has at least two exits that are well-marked and fully functional. Also be sure first-aid equipment, smoke detectors, and fire extinguishers are on hand.
  - The troop needs to be able to focus without disruptions from other groups.
  - Be sure the space is accessible to those with disabilities who may come to the meetings.
- Supervision of Girl Scouts
  - Must meet the appropriate youth/adult ratio.
  - As always, the group must have at least two unrelated (must not be related by blood, marriage, or partnership and at least one female), approved volunteers present at all times, plus additional volunteers, as necessary.
  - Any adult supervising Girl Scouts must be an approved volunteer. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old. One troop leader in every group must be female. (Approved volunteer means an adult who is background checked and registered as a Girl Scout adult member.)
  - Ensure Girl Scouts are never left alone or stray off into areas where they would not be supervised by approved adult volunteers.
- Insurance:
  - Activity accident insurance is a supplemental health insurance that protects registered Girl Scout members. Registered members are automatically covered under activity accident insurance when participating in all Girl Scout events and activities including trips that involve overnight stays and international travel.

Please remember that during all Girl Scout activities, two unrelated, registered, and background checked approved volunteers must be present at all times.

GSHH permits troops to reserve space for troop meetings/events at its camps and program centers. Reservations can be made via [Doubleknot](#).

## Part 3: How-To Guide

### PART 3: HOW-TO GUIDE

#### VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

The Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson (GSHH) website and Rallyhood offer great resources for volunteers. Links to both are below:

- GSHH Website: [www.girlscoutshh.org](http://www.girlscoutshh.org)
- Rallyhood: [https://rallyhood.com/log\\_in](https://rallyhood.com/log_in)

#### GSHH Website: Online Support for Volunteers

The [Online Support for Volunteers](#) page on GSHH's website is a wealth of volunteer resources. Some of the references include frequently used forms, position descriptions, tax-exempt letter, service unit position descriptions, requesting Certificates of Insurance, etc.

#### Volunteer Essentials

Volunteer Essentials is a guide that explains the fundamental topics for Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson volunteers. When volunteers have questions, [Volunteer Essentials](#) is a great place to start to find answers.

#### Rallyhood

[Rallyhood](#) is an all-in-one solution to integrate the many functions volunteers and families need to communicate, collaborate, share files, organize events, collect money, share photos, and build a strong, connected Girl Scout community. This secure platform eliminates the inefficiency of using many apps and social platforms and creates a consistent way for all of us to stay organized and engaged online. Rallyhood has worked with Girl Scout councils across the country for years with proven success!

Many service units and troops already have a social media connection; however, Rallyhood makes the connection between council, service units, troops, and families more efficient and effective.

How to access Rallyhood:

1. Volunteers will receive an invitation to Rallyhood from either your service unit or Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson. If you do not receive an email, reach out to GSHH's Member Care for assistance.
2. Go to Rallyhood to sign into your account.
3. Explore to find your service unit under the Service Units and Troops Hubs & Rallies.
4. Once you find your service unit, join the hub or page.
5. Select "Groups" to determine if there is a page for your troop.
  - a. If not, reach out to your service unit as they can assist in creating a Rally (page) for the troop.
  - b. Troops can have a Rally (page) even if the service unit is not actively using Rallyhood.
6. Find the GSHH Council-Wide Hub to explore and hubs or rallies of interest.

## SERVICE UNITS

Understanding the support system available to volunteers is key to the success and longevity of the volunteers in their position. The saying "many hands make light work" is extremely true for Girl Scout volunteers. Here is the support system:

- Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson
- Service Unit
- Troops
- Caregivers and families

To best describe the relationships between the support systems we will start with caregivers and families.

Caregivers and Families – Caregivers and families will support their child by encouraging them to participate in Girl Scouts with an open mind and heart and try new adventures throughout the years. They will see their Girl Scouts grow and develop into future leaders. Registered leaders and volunteers should ask the caregivers and families for assistance with meetings and outings.

Troops – Leaders and volunteers teach, lead, encourage, and create new opportunities for the members who are in the troop. They are the support system for Girl Scouts, caregivers, and families. The leaders and volunteers spend countless hours providing the members with an amazing Girl Scout opportunity and they need to be supported as well. Leaders and volunteers' first and significant support is their service unit.

Service Units – Service units are filled with leaders and volunteers who are dedicated to volunteering for Girl Scouts and leading troops and groups in a specific geographic area based on where a troop meets. They have invaluable knowledge to pass along to the new leaders and volunteers. It is best to learn from others who have had first-hand experience. New leaders also bring a fresh perspective and new ways to approach Girl Scouts.

Service units can aid with best practices, discovering ways to sustain the troop, how to handle various situations within their troop, offering additional ways to volunteer within Girl Scouts, assistance with any type of conflict resolution, and much more.

Key Service Unit Roles Are:

- Service Unit Manager
- Service Unit Recruiter
- Service Unit Treasurer
- Service Unit Cookie Chair
- Service Unit Fall Product Chair
- Service Unit Adult Recognitions Chair
- Service Unit Annual Giving Chair
- Service Unit Delegate/Alternate

Service Unit meetings give the leaders an opportunity to network, hear upcoming events and news about the Service unit, and council updates. It is the best way to stay informed about what is going on in Girl Scouts. **Troops should have at least one volunteer representation at every service unit leader meeting throughout the year.**

GSHH – Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson is the support system for service units. GSHH provides support when the service unit is not equipped to do so, or the situation is based on the Girl Scout policies and procedures. Also, GSHH provides any necessary training to the volunteers when they are new to their roles, and provides information about upcoming initiatives, and product programs.

## **CAMPING, OUTINGS, ACTIVITIES, AND ADVENTURES**

Taking girl Scouts on outings and adventures is part of the Girl Scout experience. Before taking the troop anywhere, volunteers must review the appropriate requirements. These requirements are in place to ensure that the troop will be safe while having fun and learning.

The first step in planning is to work with the Girl Scouts in your troop/group to decide which activity they would like to participate in.

### Finding Activities

There are several places to find activities for your troop or group:

- Recommendations from other troops.
- Service Units have events throughout the year, so it is important to stay connected with your service unit. Remember a troop or group's service unit is based on where the troop hosts its meetings.
- GSHH holds events for Girl Scouts or works with local experts to provide programming that supports the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. GSHH staff-led and sponsored events can be found on the [activities page](#) on the GSHH website.
- Trainings for GSHH volunteers and registered adults can also be found on the [activities page](#) on the GSHH website.
- [Doubleknot](#) is used to make camp and program center reservations.
- Program and activity ideas for troops can be found on the [activities page](#) on the GSHH website. This is a listing of local businesses who either have Girl Scout workshops or are open to hosting Girl Scouts at their location. Girl Scout troops and groups contact these locations directly to schedule a visit.

## Camping

Troop camping is a beloved Girl Scout tradition! The troop determines what type of camping experience fits their needs and outdoor knowledge. Several camping options are available on GSHH's [properties page](#).

Indoor and outdoor training is available to Girl Scout volunteers to equip them properly for troop/group camping. Outdoor training is required before starting out on a troop camping excursion. Information on troop camping requirements can be found in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

## Adult Outdoor Training

Some training is required to take a troop camping, even for the most outdoor-experienced adult.

- Cook Out and Camp Out trainings are required before taking Girl Scouts camping.
  - Cook Out training is required prior to leading a troop in fire-building and outdoor cooking activities.
  - Camp Out training is required prior to volunteers leading their troop in tent camping and primitive cabin camping.
- Sleep In training is required prior to taking your troop on an overnight at an indoor facility with running water and electricity.

## Summer Camps

Summer is a great time for Girl Scouts to go off to camp! Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson offers two types of camps throughout the summer.

- Day Camp - Camp Addisone Boyce, Tomkins Cove, NY
  - [Camp Addisone Boyce](#) (CAB) is the perfect place to get back to nature. CAB boasts a large lake which can be used for pond studies, boating, swimming, frog counts, and fishing. This camp also has multiple trails for hiking, a low ropes course, a large game field, and outdoor program spaces.
  - Camp runs for 6 weeks during the summer, Monday-Friday. Older girls (grades 6-12) have the opportunity to stay overnight on Thursdays.
- Resident Camp – Rock Hill Camp, Mahopac, NY
  - [Rock Hill Camp's](#) 190 wooded acres provide the perfect setting for a variety of activities, allowing you and your girls several different ways to enjoy being outdoors! In addition to a lake for boating and swimming, there are hiking trails, an archery range, low, mid, and high ropes courses, a large game field, and plenty of program spaces for troop meetings, badge work, crafts, or games.
  - Camp runs for 6 weeks during summer. Check in is Sunday at 2pm and pickup is Friday at 5pm each week. Girl Scouts all go home over the weekend, even if they are in a multi-week session.

Information on camp sessions is typically published in mid-December each year and registration opens mid-January. Information will be found on the [GSHH Event Calendar](#) and [Camp pages](#) on the GSHH website.

## SAFETY ACTIVITY CHECKPOINTS (SAC)

[Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) is a guide to standard safety guidelines to be followed by the troops. The Safety Activity Checkpoints Guide includes:

- Adult supervision requirements
- Adult-to-girl ratios
- Emergency Action Plans
- Everything leaders need to keep Girl Scouts and adults safe.
- Activities not permitted
- First aid support
- Overall health, well-being, and inclusivity
- Transporting Girl Scouts
- Troop meeting spaces
- Overview for each activity along with the requirements

[Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) includes an Activities At-a-Glance section. This section provides a chart by activity and information on which Girl Scout grade levels can participate in a particular activity, if council approval is required, and what is required for the Girl Scouts to participate, such as leader training, instructor requirements, and any additional notes.

Safety Activity Checkpoints also include charts with GSHH specific Safety Activity Checkpoints and activities frequently participated in by troops. The name of the activity is a link to the activity overview and requirements. The chart also has a link to the Activities At-A-Glance and First Aid requirements.

Activities may have progression. For example, Girl Scouts should visit a camp and participate in an outdoor activity before staying overnight. They would then camp for one night before going on a multiple night camping trip. Also, younger Girl Scouts such as Daisies may not want to be away from home so an alternative may be to have a trusted adult attend the overnight with the child for the first time.

## CERTIFICATES OF INSURANCE (COI)

Depending on the outing the troop is going on, volunteers may need to obtain a Certificate of Insurance from GSHH or from the business where the outing is taking place. In both situations, volunteers will begin their process with [Member Care](#).

### Requesting Certificates of Insurance for Outside Vendors

Outside vendors' certificates of insurance should be submitted to GSHH at least 2 weeks prior to the outing. Certificates are generally valid for a year, so if another troop or service unit has previously been on the same outing, then the certificate of insurance may already be on file with GSHH. If so, then the volunteer would not need to request another certificate. When a certificate of insurance is needed for an outside vendor, the first step is to check if the certificate is on file.

If the vendor is not on the spreadsheet, then the certificate needs to be requested. The volunteer will call the vendor to request a current Certificate of Insurance with GSHH listed as a Certificate Holder. The certificate needs to include:

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc.  
119 Highland Avenue  
Eastchester, NY 10709

The certificate can be emailed with the subject line Certificate of Insurance to [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org).

## Requesting Certificate of Insurance from GSHH

If an outside vendor or business\* requests a certificate of insurance from GSHH, the volunteer would email [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org). It can take up to 2 weeks to process the request.

The certificate will be sent directly to the vendor. Whoever submits the request will not receive a copy of the certificate.

In a situation where the volunteer needs to receive the certificate to submit on the vendor's platform, please email Member Care at [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org) to request the certificate and explain why the certificate needs to go directly to the volunteer instead of the vendor.

\*If for your regular troop meeting location, include troop number and address with the request.

## BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER: SAMPLE PLANNING ACTIVITY – TROOP CAMPING

1. Introduce the topic of camping to the troop. Gauge interest and experience to determine the type of camping the troop is prepared to do.
2. Access the [Safety Activity Checkpoints \(SAC\)](#).
3. Review the Camping Safety Activity Checkpoint document in its entirety. The box in the upper right corner of the document will list the details needed to know the requirements. See camping box below:

<p><b>Council Approval:</b> May be required- <a href="#">Troop Trip Travel Form</a> may need to be completed.</p> <p><b>Training is required for this activity.</b> One Adult Volunteer present at this activity must have completed Beyond the Troop Meeting, Lodge Camping Training or Outdoor Overnight Training as applicable.</p> <p><b>Activity Permitted For:</b> D B J C S A</p>
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4. The first step after reviewing the SAC is to ensure required training is completed by appropriate volunteers in the troop. If training requirements are not met, register for the appropriate trainings on the [GSHH Website](#).
5. Reserve the campsite for the camping trip.
  - a. For a GSHH camp property, reservations are made through [Doubleknot](#).
  - b. Information about GSHH's camps can be found on [GSHH's website](#).
6. After the training requirements are completed, then the volunteer will complete the [Trip Activity Notification Form](#) if applicable. This form is also completed when an activity states GSHH approval is required. The Troop Activity Notification Form can be completed

electronically and is submitted to [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org). The lead time to submit a TAN is three weeks prior to the day of the event.

7. Plan for the trip accordingly. The volunteers should communicate with families on what each Girl Scout needs to bring to the trip. The volunteer should ensure family contact and emergency contact information is brought along to camp, and that families are able to contact the troop if an emergency arises.

## TROOP FUNDS

Girl Scouts will have the opportunity to participate in the Fall Product Program and Girl Scout Cookie Program. Participating in these activities earns funds for the troop. All funds earned by the Girl Scouts are troop funds. All funds need to be deposited into the troop account for the Girl Scouts to use equally. Girl Scouts can be recognized for their individual accomplishments in these programs, but not in any monetary way.

In some cases, troops may want to fundraise in addition to the Fall Product and Girl Scout Cookie Programs and they can do so if they have [met the requirements](#).

Funds earned by the troop can be spent on Girl Scout related items and activities. All Girl Scouts should have the same opportunities to spend the funds. For instance, if the troop is going to pay for summer camp fees, then all families should know the troop is paying for the fees and the same amount needs to be paid for each Girl Scout. There are situations when every Girl Scout is not available for the same outing, field trip, activity, etc. and it is okay as long as they receive the same opportunity to participate.

Some options or spending troop funds include:

- ✓ Patches
- ✓ Meeting space
- ✓ Meeting supplies and printing of materials
- ✓ Meeting snacks
- ✓ Field trips
- ✓ Camping
- ✓ Activities
- ✓ Renewal Fees
- ✓ Bridging Supplies
- ✓ Vests/sashes and starter patches for next level
- ✓ Community Service
- ✓ Take-action projects.
- ✓ Summer camp fees

- ✓ Highest Awards: Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards
- ✓ Leader training such as First Aid/CPR, Lodge & Outdoor Overnight Training, and any training to benefit the troop and girls.
- ✓ Leader renewal fees
- ✓ Lifetime Memberships (after completing the 2nd year of Ambassadors)

Funds cannot be spent on:

- ✗ Gift cards
- ✗ Personal expenses
- ✗ Savings for college
- ✗ Tuition reimbursement

**Remember: Girl Scouts work extremely hard to earn the funds and it is important they have a voice in how the funds are spent. It is critical that they see the funds spent in positive and beneficial ways.**

## PRODUCT PROGRAM READY

To be able to participate in Girl Scout Product Programs ([Girl Scout Fall Product Program](#) and [Girl Scout Cookie Program](#)) troops must be considered “Product Program Ready.”

A troop must meet the following requirements to be considered a Product Program Ready troop:

- Two (2) registered, background checked, and trained adults (not related and at least one identifies as female)
- Minimum five (5) registered Girl Scouts
- An open bank account with ACH form on file on GSHH
- **Returning Troops** must have also submitted the troops’ previous year’s financial paperwork to GSHH, including signed report with two (2) signatures, ledger and bank statements.

### **Product Program Eligibility:**

Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior, Ambassador, and Multi-Level troops that meet all Product Program requirements except the minimum of five (5) registered Girl Scouts may participate with at least two (2) registered Girl Scouts and will receive troop proceeds. Troops with fewer than two (2) registered Girl Scouts will be treated as Juliettes/Individually Registered Members (IRMs) and will not receive troop proceeds; funds earned will be deposited in Juliette/IRM accounts.

## FUNDRAISING/MONEY EARNING APPLICATION

### Application Process

The Money Earning Activities Application can be completed online [here](#).

- Fully completed applications must be submitted to Council via the online application no less than six weeks before the MEA is scheduled to occur.
- The MEA is not approved until the troop or service unit receives official notification from GSHH.
- Approval of an MEA in one year does not automatically ensure/provide approval in a subsequent year.

### **Additional MEA Notes**

- Recruitment events or troop/service unit activities that require a fee but are not intended as a money earning activity do not require an MEA application.
- Girl Scout Daisies are not permitted to do Money Earning Activities.
- The Council is not responsible for any loss incurred by a troop/service unit MEA.
- The income from the MEA never becomes the property of individual girls but is part of the troop/service unit treasury.
- As troops/service units operate under the GSHH nonprofit legal entity, only the GSHH COO is responsible for signing and entering into contracts. Forward all contracts to her attention at Member Care. [Membercare@girlschoutshh.org](mailto:Membercare@girlschoutshh.org)
- Promotional materials for approved MEAs must follow GSUSA branding guidelines and be approved by the GSHH Director of Marketing & Communications.
- Girls and adults hosting the MEA should be dressed appropriately and should wear the Girl Scout pin, sash/vest, or uniform (if the activity permits) during the MEA.
- Following the MEA, a Final Report must be filed with Council within three (3) weeks of completing the MEA. If the report is not received by the Council within three (3) weeks, future MEA applications may be declined. The report can be submitted online.

## **HIGHEST AWARDS**

Girl Scouts focus on making the world a better place and Highest Awards take that philosophy to the next level. Girl Scouts can work toward earning their Bronze, Silver, and/or Gold Awards starting as Junior Girl Scouts. Highest Awards ask Girl Scouts to find an issue within their community and then find a long-term solution. Girl Scouts have made improvements at GSHH properties, local parks, schools, libraries, hospitals, park districts, and even across the world. It is an incredible honor to be recognized for these awards.

### **Bronze Award**

It all starts here. Juniors team up with fellow Girl Scouts to explore their community, discover a need or issue they care about, and work together to address it. It's a chance to create a plan and make an impact on the community they live in.

You can become a Bronze Award Girl Scout if you:

- Are in fourth or fifth grade.
- Are a registered Girl Scout Junior
- Have completed a Junior Journey/Leadership Award
- How to earn the Girl Scout Bronze Award
- Build your Girl Scout Junior team.

How to earn the Girl Scout Bronze Award

- Explore your community.
- Decide on a project to work on
- Make a plan of action.
- Put your plan in motion.
- Spread the word.

### [Silver Award:](#)

You have the power to improve your community through action.

Ready to help your community and earn one of the highest awards in Girl Scouting? Cadettes can team up with a small group of fellow Girl Scouts or work on their own. To earn the Silver Award, you will research an issue you care about, make a plan to address it, and then take action to improve your community.

You can become a Silver Award Girl Scout if you:

- Are in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade.
- Are a registered Girl Scout Cadette
- Have completed a Cadette Journey/Leadership Award

### [Gold Award:](#)

Gold Award Girl Scouts are rock stars, role models, and real-life heroes. How do they do it? By using everything they've learned as a Girl Scout to solve a problem in their community or make a lasting change in their world.

Seniors and Ambassadors who want to go for the Gold Award build a team of trusted adults, peers, and leaders in their community to guide them through challenges and support their success.

Plus, nothing beats that feeling of seeing real, lasting, and sustainable change and knowing it was you who made it happen. It changes the way you see your place in the world—and how the world sees you.

You can become a Gold Award Girl Scout if you:

- Are in ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth grade.
- Are a registered Senior or Ambassador
- Have completed two Senior or Ambassador Journeys/Leadership Awards, or have earned the Girl Scout Silver Award and completed one Senior or Ambassador Journey/Leadership Award

Check out these resources for adults and volunteers who want to help Girl Scouts pursue their Gold Award:

- [Gold Award Guide for Leaders](#) (PDF)
- [Gold Award Guide for Adults](#) (PDF)
- [Guide for Leadership Experience](#) (PDF)

### Gold Award Scholarship

The GSUSA Gold Award Scholarship is awarded annually to one Girl Scout from each council. Applications are accepted for Girl Scouts who have earned their Gold Award between the previous April 1 and March 31. Visit [GSUSA's Scholarship webpage](#) for more suggestions.

GSHH offers on demand monthly [highest award training](#) and monthly Q&A sessions.

## BRIDGING TO THE NEXT GIRL SCOUT LEVEL

Bridging to the next level of Girl Scouts is exciting for both the Girl Scouts and the volunteers! Girl Scouts experience substantial emotional, mental, and physical growth in each Girl Scout grade level. A bridging ceremony is a visual representation of their growth and movement to the next grade level. Troops can host a bridging ceremony with only their troops in the late spring, summer, or fall. Service units can host a large bridging ceremony to include all troops within the service unit who are bridging to the next level. Girl Scouts can even participate in planning the troop and service unit ceremonies.

Stop by GSHH's [retail shops](#) to purchase bridging kits and other bridging accessories!

## REPLACEMENT LEADERS

Leaders give their troop countless hours of their time and do amazing things. Without leaders there would be no troops, so we are very grateful for their dedication and generosity when leading the girls. Some leaders may need to take a step back due to various reasons, which are understandable. The hope is to work together to ensure the troops can continue. This is done by finding replacement leaders.

If leader(s) are stepping down, take these steps:

1. Make the families in the troop aware of plans to step down and try to find replacement leaders. Let the families know leaders can be any adult – moms, dads, aunts, uncles, grandparents, friends, college students, etc.
2. Contact your Community Engagement Specialist to make them aware of the leader(s) stepping down and provide any update after your meeting.
3. Any replacement leader will need to register, complete a background check, and complete the required training.
  - a. Replacement leaders will register through their MYGS account.
  - b. After the registration is successfully completed, the new leader(s) will receive an email from Asurint to complete a Background Check. Asurint is the third-part vendor GSHH works with to process the background checks. The new leader(s) will also receive information about the training process.
  - c. The Community Engagement Specialist will assist the new leader(s) with the Change of Bank Signer documents during the training process. This ensures the troop bank account does not need to be closed where there is a change of leadership.
4. The current leaders should work with the replacement leader to make the transition as smooth as possible. Pass off troop supplies, email/social media, etc. usernames and passwords, bank account checks, ledge, etc.

## CONSIDERING DISBANDING THE TROOP

A disbanded troop is one that has become inactive. This may happen when members graduate into adulthood, choose not to continue with Girl Scouts, or when a troop has not met or held activities for three (3) months without communication with the council.

Before a troop is officially disbanded, all girls and families are given the opportunity to continue their Girl Scout experience. Options include welcoming new leaders, transferring to another troop, or continuing as an Individually Registered Girl Scout (IRG) or 'Juliette.' A troop can only be formally disbanded when there are no current or future girl or adult members.

The troop leader or co-leader is responsible for completing the disbanding process within 60 days of the decision to disband. Council staff then finalize the internal process within 30 days of the initial case date.

Throughout this process, the Community Engagement, Member Care, and Finance Teams work together to keep volunteers at the center of the experience. While several steps happen behind the scenes, the process should always feel seamless, unified, and supportive of volunteers.

### **Disbanding Process Overview:**

A **disbanded troop** is a troop that has become inactive. This can include:

- A troop whose members are **bridging to adulthood**.
- A troop whose members have **decided not to continue with Girl Scouts**
- A troop that has **stopped meeting or holding activities for three (3) months** without communicating with the council
- A troop with no current or future girl or adult members interested in continuing.
- The troop leader/co-leader is responsible for completing the disbanding process within 60 days of the decision to disband.

**All troops that are disbanding are required to complete the steps outlined below. Each item must be reviewed and confirmed before submitting the Troop Disbanding Form. Failure to complete all disbanding requirements will result in the form being returned for resubmission.**

### **Steps to Disband your Troop:**

#### **Step 1: Notify Your Support Team**

- Inform your **Service Unit Manager** and **Community Engagement Specialist**
- If there is no Service Unit Manager, contact your Community Engagement Specialist directly
- Then email [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org) with the subject line:

*“Troop Disbanding: Troop XXXXX SU XXX”*

#### **Step 2: Share Membership Options with Families**

- Ask if another adult is interested in becoming the new Troop Leader
- Let each family know that girls may:
  - Transfer to another troop (if available)
  - Continue as an **Individually Registered Girl Scout (IRG/Juliette)**

#### **Step 3: Decide How to Use Remaining Troop Funds**

- Hold a troop vote on how to use funds (money cannot be given to individual Girl Scouts)
- Ensure that all funds are used in a way that benefits the girls collectively

Possible uses include:

- A final celebration, trip, or activity
- Attending a Girl Scout program or camp
- Purchasing memberships for the next year<sup>7</sup> or lifetime memberships for graduating seniors
- Donating to the council's **Council Support (Financial Assistance) Fund**
- Donating to another troop, the Service Unit, or a nonprofit (501(c)(3))

**Cash, gift cards<sup>2</sup>, and checks are not allowed to be disbursed as an option.**

#### **Step 4: Decide What to Do with Troop Supplies**

- Review troop-owned items (outdoor gear, books, craft supplies, etc.)
- Decide where items should go, such as:
  - Younger troops
  - The Service Unit
  - The council

#### **Step 5: Distribute Earned Troop Incentives**

- Fall Product rewards
- Cookie Program rewards
- Early Bird incentives

#### **Step 6: Remove Troop Social Media**

- Delete any troop Facebook pages or groups
- Remove other troop-related social media accounts

#### **Step 7: Close the Troop Bank Account**

- Confirm all checks and payments have cleared
- Submit remaining funds to the council using the **ACH Form**
- Close the troop bank account
- Upload the final bank statement (showing a \$0 balance) when completing the Troop Disbanding Form
- Destroy any unused checks and bank cards<sup>7</sup> *or mail them to the council office for secure destruction:*

#### **Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson**

119 Highland Avenue

Eastchester, NY 10709

Attn: Finance Department

### Step 8: Submit the Troop Disbanding Form

Complete and submit the [online form](#)

## RENEWAL

The Girl Scout membership year is from October 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>.

[Renewal](#) season begins April 1<sup>st</sup> each year. GSHH will announce any renewal incentives for the year through Headlines and Happenings email newsletter, on social media, the GSHH website, and in Rallyhood. The step-by-step instructions on how to renew become available at this time.

Troop leaders can renew youth members and volunteers assigned to the troop. Primary caregivers can renew themselves and their child(ren). Troop funds can be used for the membership renewal fees if agreed upon by the Girl Scouts. Renewals are completed through MYGS accounts by selecting the household or troop from the menu on the left side of the MYGS homepage. Should leaders or caregivers experience issues with renewing they should contact Member Care.

Girl Scouts' Dough-si-Dough (DSD) from the Fall Product Program and/or Girl Scout Cookie Program can be used for their membership renewal fee.

- Members must ensure their DSD card has an active balance and provide the card number to GSHH Member Care after completing registration through the Salesforce system in MYGS, selecting "Program Credits" as the payment method.
- GSHH will verify the balance and apply the appropriate amount to the membership fee. If credits do not cover the full fee, members will be notified to complete payment.
- **DSD credits are non-transferable and may only be used for Girl Scout-related expenses at GSHH; they cannot be applied to GSUSA online orders.**
- For assistance, contact GSHH Member Care by email [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org) or phone (855-232-4744).

Early Renewal is from April 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup>.

On-time renewal is from July 1<sup>st</sup> – September 30<sup>th</sup>.

Extended Year Membership – New youth or adults starting after April 1<sup>st</sup> have the option to register for the extended year membership.

Many troops will run concurrently with the school year – starting in August and stopping their activities in May/June to give the families a break and account for families taking vacation throughout

the summer. However, troops are welcome to run year-round as there is no requirement to stop over the summer.

## STARTING THE NEW YEAR

Leaders should take the Girl Scout level training if the troop bridged to the next level. In gsLearn, volunteers can take the GSUSA (Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador) Grade Level Essentials course, which introduces leaders to the next level of Girl Scouts. Log into your gsLearn account, click on Content Library, type in the level of the youth member will be for the upcoming year in the search box, and the training needed will populate.

It would be best for the leaders to meet prior to the first troop meeting to organize for the upcoming year. Girl Scouting is girl-led, but the troop needs to know what is available for them to experience. Consider using the [troop year plan](#) to help ensure a well-rounded Girl Scout experience. At the meeting, volunteers can review what patches, activities, and experiences are available for their troop so they can present the options.

### Annual Forms

Annual forms should be completed by the families at the beginning of each membership year, and leaders should maintain them in a safe place where they can easily access them when needed.

- Permission Slips – There are a few ways to obtain permission slips for the Girl Scouts.
  - [Girl Scout Single Activity Permission Slip](#) – needs to be completed by the families for each outing troop members attend.
  - [Girl Scout Annual Activity Permission Slip](#) – completed once for the year by the families.
    - Girl Scout Annual Activity Sign-Up Sheet – used with the annual permission slip. Leaders list the information about the activity, the primary caregiver writes down their Girl Scout's name, and signs to confirm they give permission and acknowledge they have an annual permission slip on file with the leaders. The annual permission slip and sign-up sheet can make it easier and less time-consuming for leaders prior to each activity.

Troop and troop meeting details should be confirmed at the beginning of each year to ensure everything is accurate. It is important for GSHH to have the most updated information about each troop and their meetings. You can confirm troop and meeting information under the troop on your MYGS account.

## INCIDENT AND ACCIDENT REPORTS

Unfortunately, incidents such as accidents and inappropriate behavior happen. When these situations do occur, it is crucial incident reports are submitted to GSHH.

- [Incident/Accident Report](#) (Form A – Accident/Injury)
- [Incident Form B](#) – Use to report behavioral incidents and concerns.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Conflicts arise from time to time, and it is best to have a process to handle them as it can be difficult in the midst of a conflict when emotions are heightened.

When an issue occurs with a youth member:

- Review two topics in [Volunteer Essentials](#):
  - Manage Conflicts
  - Communicate effectively with Girls of Any Age

When conflict arises between adults, it is a challenging situation for everyone involved. Remember to assume positive intent, which means everyone involved is acting in good will and did not intend on causing harm. Also, avoid gossip and only discuss the issue with the necessary people. Then follow these steps:

1. Individuals talk one-on-one. If the conflict becomes heated, the conversation should take place when cooler heads prevail.

If unable to resolve:

2. The Service Unit Manager would intervene and speak with all parties individually.

If unable to resolve:

3. The Service Unit Manager would include the Community Engagement Specialist in a meeting of all parties.

If unable to resolve:

4. The Community Engagement Specialist will take the conflict to their supervisor.

When conflict arises between a volunteer and a staff member, the steps are:

1. Individuals talk one-on-one.

If unable to resolve:

2. Either of the individuals involved can reach out to the staff member's direct supervisor.

If the conflict remains unresolved:

3. The conflict will be elevated to the direct supervisor's supervisor.

All adults have an equal obligation to maintain confidentiality, dignity, and respect for others and this is particularly important during a process of conflict resolution.

## FIRST AID/CPR TRAINING

Volunteers can take Adult, Child, and Infant First Aid, CPR, and AED courses through GSHH or with an outside vendor. Any questions regarding the Adult, Child, and Infant First Aid, CPR, and AED courses and/or requirements should be directed to the Volunteer Engagement Department by emailing [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org).

### Courses with outside vendors:

Reference the policies section on Adult, Child, and Infant First Aid, CPR, and AED courses to ensure the course meets the necessary requirements should you take the course outside of GSHH.

### GSHH Courses:

To find out when Adult, Child, and Infant First Aid, CPR, and AED courses are scheduled, follow these steps:

1. Check out GSHH's [Activities Calendar](#) on its website.
2. Register for the course that works with your schedule.
3. Red Cross courses have an online portion along with an in-person portion. Online requirements must be completed prior to the in-person portion.
4. Make sure to send your certification along with a Trip Activity Notification Form when required for a Girl Scout trip or activity.