



## TROOP FINANCES

With your guidance, your Girl Scouts will learn money skills that will serve them throughout their lives.

Your Girl Scout troop will plan and finance its own activities, and you'll coach your girls as they earn and manage troop funds. Troop activities are powered by proceeds earned through council-sponsored product program activities (such as the Girl Scout Cookie Program), group money-earning activities (council approved, of course), and any dues your troop may charge.

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

### Establishing a Troop Account

No matter how much your troop plans to save or spend, you'll need a safe place to deposit your troop dues, product program proceeds, and other funds. If you've stepped up to lead an existing troop, you may inherit a checking account, but with a new troop, you'll want to open a new bank account. At GSGLA, all troops that have more than \$50 and/or plan to participate in council-sponsored money earning activities must have a troop bank account.

#### **Here are a few helpful tips you can take to the bank:**

- Be sure to find a bank that has free checking and low fees.
- Designate a "troop treasurer," that is, one person who is responsible for troop funds and for keeping a daily account of expenditures.
- Ensure your account comes with a debit card that you can use during activities or trips. These transactions are easier to track at the end of the year.
- Be prepared and make sure another troop volunteer has a debit card for the troop account in case the main card is lost.
- Handle a lost troop debit card the same way you would a personal debit card: cancel it immediately.
- Keep troop funds in the bank before an activity or trip and pay for as many items as possible in advance of your departure.

Accounts must be held in the name of "Girl Scouts of Greater LA, Troop #\_\_\_\_"(or) "Girl Scouts of Greater LA, Service Unit #\_\_\_\_". All bank accounts are opened as a non-profit business checking account, using **GSGLA's Tax ID number** to open the account.

Approved Pathway group accounts must be held in the name of "Girl Scouts of Greater LA, (name of group)" and follow the same guidelines as troops and service units.

Please do not use your personal social security number to open your Girl Scout account. Although a Social Security number will not affect tax status for the individual, the use of personal information can complicate identification of troop and GSGLA accounts.

Some banks may request to run a ChexSystem or credit report on signers for the account using the signer's Social Security number. This is a standard procedure for most banks and credit unions when opening a business account and is for their purposes only. GSGLA does not have access to any information from the ChexSystem or credit reports.

As a reminder, GSGLA REQUIRES a troop/SU bank account to have two authorized signers to open a bank account and the third authorized signer should be added within 120 days of opening the account. **All accounts must have the protection of two signatures when writing a check.**

GSGLA now has a preferred bank for new troop/SU bank accounts which can be found in the [Bank Letter Request eForm](#). After selecting a bank branch, the troop leader should complete the [Bank Letter Request eForm](#). The leader will then receive the Bank Authorization letter containing GSGLA's tax ID # and other documents needed to take to the bank to open the account. Please read the following requirements for opening a bank account:

Follow our council's financial policies and procedures for setting up an account. [Troop/Group Financials - Quick Reference](#) information. Most council-sponsored product program activities have specific banking and tracking procedures.

## Disbanding Troops and Unused Troop Funds

When a troop disbands, any unused Girl Scout money left in the account becomes the property of the GSGLA. Troop funds are not the property of any individual member. Before disbanding, ask your girls 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 Girl Scout activities. Activities can also include purchasing materials to support another organization through Take Action projects. Consult your membership specialist for details.

## Closing the Troop Account

When closing a troop account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it. Remember, you may have to close the account in person. Turn remaining funds over to a council staff member.

## Year-End Financial Report

Each year, by June 30th, troops are required to complete the [Troop/Service Unit Year-End Financial Report](#). This report provides GSGLA with an overview of the troop over the past year.

Within the report, troops will be asked for information regarding:

- Basic troop details
- Information about what your troop accomplished over the year (troop activities).
- What the troop leader has experienced & observed (through a survey).
- Annual troop financials (financial summary with some clarifying questions when applicable and uploading of two bank statements).

Troops that do not complete the [Troop/Service Unit Year-End Financial Report](#) will not be able to participate in troop money earning activities including the Fall Product and Cookie Product Programs. Troops that wish to participate in troop money earning activities should reach out to their assigned staff membership specialist to get the annual cut-off date for submission to participate.

## Money-Earning Basics for Troops

### Money-Earning Options

- **The Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Sales** — All girl members are eligible to participate in council-sponsored product program activities each year with volunteer supervision—the Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Fall Product Program. Please remember, volunteers and Girl Scout council staff don't sell products—girls do.
- **Group Money-Earning Activities** — organized by the troop (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with volunteers) and that earn money for the group.

### Participation Guidance

Girls' participation in both council-sponsored product program activities and group money-earning projects is based on the following:

- Voluntary participation.
- Written permission of each girl's parent or guardian.
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed.
- An understanding that money earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its program activities.
- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money-earning activities as well as health and safety laws.
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl.
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money.

## **Additional Guidelines**

- Keep these specific guidelines—some of which are required by the Internal Revenue Service—in mind to ensure that sales are conducted with legal and financial integrity.
- All rewards earned by girls through the product program activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel, and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).
- Rewards are based on sales ranges set by councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
- Troops are encouraged to participate in council product programs as their primary money-earning activity; any group money earning shouldn't compete with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or Fall Product Program.
- Obtain written approval from your council before a group money-earning event; most councils ask that you submit a request for approval.
- Girl Scouts discourages the use of games of chance. Any activity which could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo) must be approved by GSGLA and be conducted in compliance with all local and state laws.
- Girl Scouts' Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash. Girls can collect partial payment toward the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and other Girl Scout-authorized products through participation in council-approved product program donation programs.
- Girl Scouts forbids product demonstration parties where the use of the Girl Scout trademark increases revenue for another business, such as in-home product parties. Any business using the Girl Scout trademark or other Girl Scout intellectual property must seek authorization from GSUSA.
- Group money-earning activities need to be suited to the ages and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product programs. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group according to council procedures.

## **Sample Money-Earning Activities**

- **Collections/Drives**
  - Cell phones for refurbishment
  - Used ink cartridges turned in for money
  - Christmas tree recycling
- **Food/M Meal Events**
  - Lunch box auction (prepared lunch or meal auctioned off)
  - Themed meals, like a high tea or a build-your-own-taco bar, related to activities girls are planning; for instance, if girls are earning money for travel, they could tie the meal to their destination.

- **Restaurant Fundraisers**
  - Restaurants offer local troops the opportunity to fundraise by donating a percentage of the restaurant sales on a particular day. Girl Scout troops and service units may:
    - Organize fundraising events at restaurants and keep 100% of the money raised.
    - Wear their uniforms when promoting their fundraiser and during the event itself.
- **Service(s)**
  - Service-a-thon (people sponsor a girl doing service and funds go to support a trip or other activity).
  - Babysitting for holiday (New Year's Eve) or council events.
  - Raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, shoveling snow, walking pets
  - Cooking class or other specialty class

The Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program are designed to unleash the entrepreneurial potential in your girls. From there, your troop may decide to earn additional funds on its own.

## Help Your Troop Reach its Financial Goals

We get it—there's something exciting about opening that first case of Girl Scout Cookies. However, before your girls take part in all the cookie program fun, it's important they have a clear plan and purpose for their product program activities.

As a volunteer, you have the opportunity to facilitate girl-led financial planning, which may include the following steps for the girls:

1. **Set goals for money-earning activities** — What do girls hope to accomplish through this activity? In addition to earning money, what skills do they hope to build? What leadership opportunities present themselves?
2. **Create a budget** — Use a [budget worksheet](#) that includes both expenses (the cost of supplies, admission to events, travel, and so on) and available income (the group's account balance, projected cookie proceeds, and so on).
3. **Determine how much the group needs to earn** — Subtract expenses from available income to determine how much money your group needs to earn.
4. **Make a plan** — The group can brainstorm and make decisions about its financial plans.
  - a. Will cookie and other product programs—if approached proactively and energetically—earn enough money to meet the group's goals? If not, which group money-earning activities might offset the difference?
  - b. Will more than one group money-earning activity be necessary to achieve the group's financial goals?
  - c. In this planning stage, engage the girls through the Girl Scout processes (girl-led, learning by doing, and cooperative learning) and consider the value of any potential activity. Have them weigh feasibility, implementation, and safety factors.

5. **Write it out** — Once the group has decided on its financial plan, describe it in writing. If the plan involves a group money-earning activity, fill out an application for approval from your council and submit it along with the budget worksheet the girls created.

**Remember:** It's great for girls to have opportunities like the Girl Scout Cookie Program to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals. As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and spending money. Take Action projects, for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money!

### **Financial Management and Product Program Abilities by Grade Level**

As with other Girl Scout activities, girls build their financial and sales savvy as they get older. Every girl will be different, but here you'll find some examples of the abilities and opportunities for progression of girls at each grade level.

#### **Girl Scout Daisies**

- The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and does all group budgeting.
- Parents/caregivers may decide they will contribute to the cost of activities.
- Girls can participate in Girl Scout Cookie Program activities and other council-sponsored product programs.
- Daisies are always paired with a volunteer when selling anything. Girls do the asking and deliver the product, but volunteers handle the money and keep the girls safe.
- Girls should be given the opportunity to practice identifying money and counting back change with an adult during each transaction.

#### **Girl Scout Brownies**

- The group volunteer handles money, keeps financial records, and shares some of the group budgeting responsibilities.
- Girls discuss the cost of activities (supplies, fees, transportation, rentals, and so on) with guidance from their volunteer(s).
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.
- Girls may decide to pay dues to contribute to the cost of activities.

### Girl Scout Juniors

- The group volunteer retains overall responsibility for long-term budgeting and record keeping, but shares or delegates all other financial responsibilities.
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.
- Girls decide on group dues, if any. Dues are collected by girls and recorded by a group treasurer selected by the girls.
- Girls budget for the short-term needs of the group based on their plans and income from the group dues.
- Girls budget for more long-term activities, such as overnight trips, group camping, and special events.
- Girls budget for Take Action projects including the Girl Scout Bronze Award if they are pursuing it.

### Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors

- Girls estimate costs based on plans.
- Girls determine the amount of group dues, if any, and the scope of money-earning projects.
- Girls set goals for and participate in council-sponsored product programs.
- Girls carry out budgeting, planning, and group money-earning programs.
- Girls budget for extended travel, Take Action projects, and leadership projects.
- Girls may be involved in seeking donations for Take Action projects with council approval.
- Girls keep their own financial records and give reports to parents and group volunteers.
- Girls budget for Take Action projects, including the Girl Scout Silver or Girl Scout Gold Awards, if they are pursuing them.

## Working with Sponsors and Other Organizations

Local sponsors can help councils power innovative programs for Girl Scouts. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations, and individuals may be sponsors and may provide group meeting places, volunteer their time, offer in-kind donations, provide activity materials, or loan equipment. Encourage your girls to celebrate a sponsor's contribution to the troop by sending thank-you cards, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or ceremony, or working together on a Take Action project.

When collaborating with any other organization, keep these additional guidelines in mind:

- **Avoid fundraising for other organizations.** Girl Scouts are not allowed to solicit money on behalf of another organization when identifying themselves as Girl Scouts by wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. However, you and your group can support another organization through Take Action projects. Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose as long as they are not wearing anything that officially identifies them as Girl Scouts.

- **Steer clear of political fundraisers.** When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your group may not participate, directly or indirectly, in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Letter-writing campaigns are not allowed, nor is participating in a political rally, circulating a petition, or carrying a political banner.
- **Be respectful when collaborating with religious organizations.** Girl Scout groups must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice of the sponsoring group.
- **Avoid selling or endorsing commercial products.** A commercial product is any product sold at a retail location. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell such products.

### **Donations to a Troop/Group/SU/Gold Award Project**

All Troops/Groups (Daisy, Brownie, Junior, Cadette, Senior, Ambassador, Multi-Level/Rainbow) and Service Units may receive a gift from any one source during one Girl Scout year of up to \$1,000. Gold Award Girls working towards their Gold Award may individually receive a maximum of \$1,000 from any one source. For gifts in excess of \$1,000, the balance remains with GSGLA.

If the direct gift is larger than the maximum limit or if the donor wants a tax receipt, the gift must be sent directly to GSGLA. A troop leader or a SUM must complete the process by submitting an [eForm](#). Once this form and donation are received, GSGLA will distribute payment to the Troop/Group/Service Unit.

For questions, please review the [eForm](#) or contact [Fund Development](#), or call (213) 213-0123.