



Girl Scout Family Passport

2023—2024



Welcome!

Thank you for picking up this year's edition of the Girl Scout Family Passport. This passport will walk you through the need-to-know information about your Girl Scout's experience: from the outcomes of our amazing program, to the nitty-gritty details of cost & safety. Along the way, you'll learn about all the ways you can support her Girl Scout troop, and have room to customize and add your troop details—so you have one place that's your guide to Girl Scouts.

She belongs in Girl Scouts.

Girl Scouts is a research-backed program that provides girls with opportunities to grow and become her best self. Our data shows that Girl Scouts achieve more academically, have more optimism about their futures, and ultimately are more successful in life than non-Girl Scouts, across a variety of factors. But it's more than just building a bright future. It's about a place she *belongs*—and she belongs in Girl Scouts.

When girls participate in Girl Scouts, they benefit in 5 important ways:



STRONG SENSE OF SELF

Girls have confidence in themselves and their abilities, and form positive identities.



POSITIVE VALUES

Girls act ethically, honestly, and responsibly, and show concern for others.



CHALLENGE SEEKING

Girls take appropriate risks, try things even if they might fail, and learn from mistakes.



HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

Girls develop and maintain healthy relationships by communicating their feelings directly and resolving conflicts constructively.



COMMUNITY PROBLEM SOLVING

Girls desire to contribute to the world in purposeful and meaningful ways, learn how to identify problems in the community, and create “action plans” to solve them.



For **110 years**,
Girl Scouts has been building girls of courage,
confidence, and character, who make the
world a better place.

Our Values: The Girl Scout Promise & Law

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.*

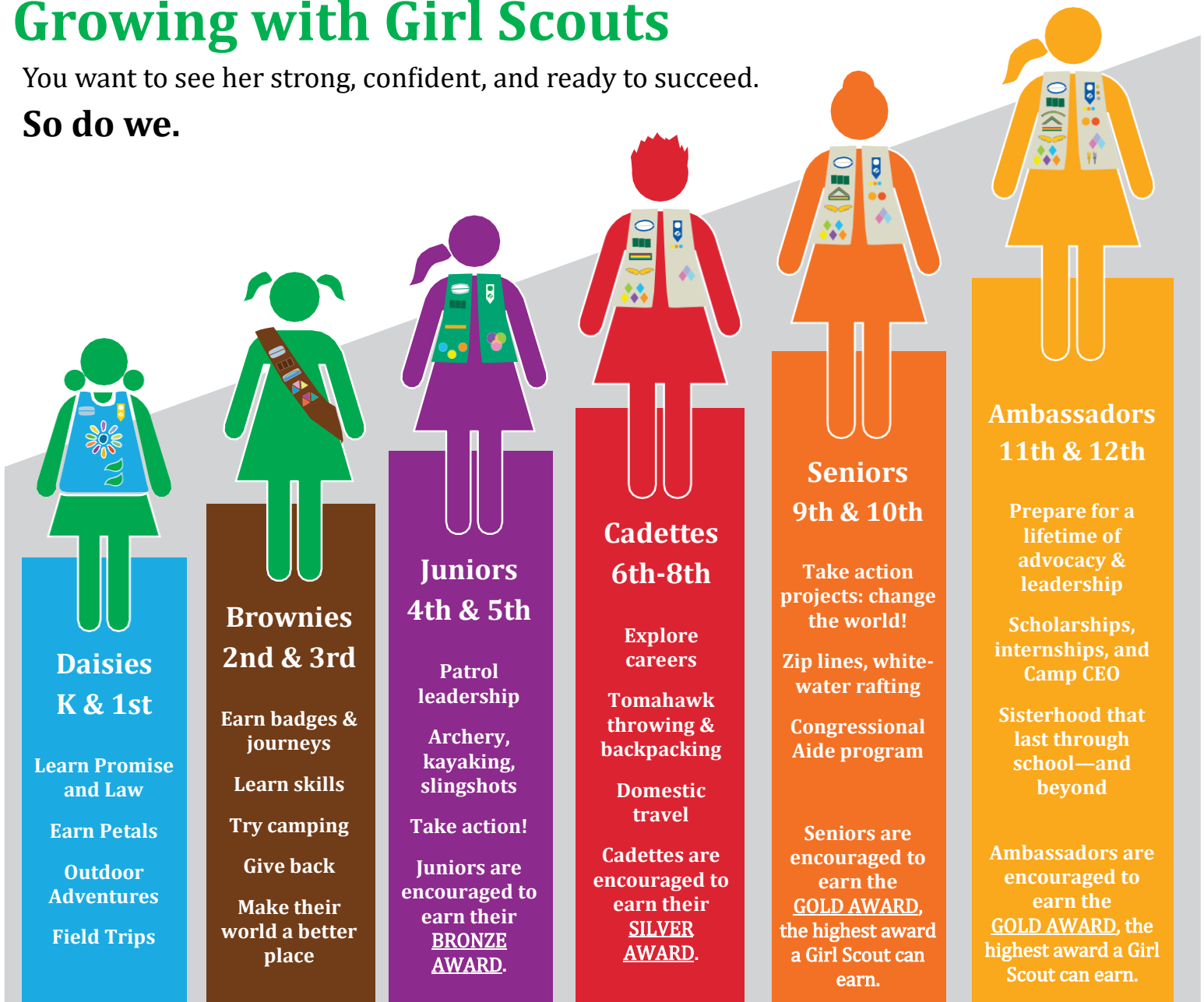
**When making the Girl Scout Promise, individual members may substitute wording appropriate to their own spiritual beliefs for the word "God."*

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.*

Growing with Girl Scouts

You want to see her strong, confident, and ready to succeed.
So do we.



Girl Scouting in Action: Troops & Meetings



Girl Scout Troops are where the magic of Girl Scouting begins. In a troop setting, Girl Scouts work together to solve problems, learn new skills, dream of new adventures, and so much more.

Troops are:

- Groups of youth (usually around 10-12 girls) and the adults that support them.
- Typically organized by a specific community, but not restricted to that community—join any troop that has space, is the right grade level, and meets your families needs!
- Organized by grade level—so they grow through Girl Scouts together.

Troops meet **at least twice per month for about an hour** (longer for older girls) at a time and place determined by troop leadership.

Troops are run by **Troop Committees**—a group of parent volunteers who support the troop and their experiences. Every family is expected to volunteer in some capacity to support the troop!

Girl Scout & Family Responsibility to the Troop

Like a team sport, Girl Scout troops take girls, families, and volunteers **working together** to make it happen. Here's what you should expect to be responsible for when you join a Girl Scout troop:

Girl Scout's Responsibility to the Troop:

- **Follow** the Girl Scout Promise & Law
- **Be willing** to try new things, **be open** to new experiences, and **be supportive** towards troop peers
- **Attend & participate** in meetings and events
- **Be prepared** and conduct yourself in a safe manner
- **Respect** troop leaders and other volunteers

Parent or Guardian's Responsibility to the Troop:

- **Volunteer:** there are 9 troop committee roles that make each troop run. Every family can and should volunteer in some capacity.
- **Register:** Ensure your Girl Scout (and any family volunteers) are registered members, and renew your membership annually in the spring. Registration is online and only takes a few minutes.
- **Be on time:** Ensure your child is dropped off and picked up from meetings and events on time.
- **Stay connected:** talk with your Troop Leaders, turn in permission slips on time, and understand that Troop Leaders are volunteers as well.
- **Help locally:** attend monthly Service Unit meetings for your troop to help plan local programs, outdoor campouts, and administrative tasks for your troop and troops in your area.
- **Be engaged:** encourage your Girl Scout's experience by asking what she does at troop meetings, helping her be prepared, and keeping up to date on troop plans by viewing the Volunteer Toolkit.

The Foundational Girl Experience—What Should Troops Do?

Girls:

Badges and Earned Awards:

- Earn at least 4 badges or two badges and a Journey – try something new!
- Have troop select at least 3 field trips to try new experiences
- Do at least two Service Projects
- Set a budget at the beginning of the year

Entrepreneurship:

- Earn fall money through Fall Product: setting goals to earn for what they want to do
- Set goals to participate in the Cookie program to build troop funds for spring and summer

Outdoors:

- Participate in the outdoors at least twice in a year –
- Examples: Outdoor badge, hike, field trip, service project, backyard campout, troop camping, encampment – Remember progression!

Traditions:

- Celebrate Girl Scout traditions by honoring events such as Thinking day, Juliette Low's Birthday, Girl Scout Birthday, Investiture, Rededication, Court of Awards, and more!

Troop Committee (family volunteers!):

The Basics

- Have at least 6 Girl Scouts to start with space for 12
- Add leaders to go higher if the troop wants!
- Meet a minimum of twice a month
- Create a safe space where the troop works together

Volunteering

- Have every family volunteer in some capacity with the troop to form a robust Troop Committee—it takes a team to operate a troop!
- Hold 2 parent meetings per year to ensure troop volunteers and celebrate girls' accomplishments

Finances

- Turn in bank statements to Service Unit Money Manager monthly with receipts

Be an active participant in your Service Unit:

- Have troop representation at every monthly Service Unit meeting
- Volunteer to support local programming or administrative tasks
- Ask questions and get support as needed!

Her Outdoor Adventures

Getting outdoors has been part of Girl Scouts' DNA for 110 years. We have plenty of opportunities to get outside, whether through camping, high adventure, water sports, backpacking, or more. Here are some common outdoor opportunities for your Girl Scout:

Day Use at Camp Properties—Easy, Free, and Around the Corner

The outdoors is closer than you think! Girl Scouts Nation's Capital owns EIGHT (8) beautiful camp properties – maps and high adventure at each camp, found in Volunteer Essentials on Volunteer Tool Kit! Each property is just used by Girl Scouts. Take your troop for a day and check out the lodges, high adventure, and hiking trails.

Troops & Service Unit Camping (Encampments)

Troops plan weekend campouts to any of our camp properties throughout the school year for Girl Scouts of all ages. Service Units also offer camping experiences called encampments. Troop and Service Unit Encampments do need trained Camp out / Cookout Qualified adults and participation by adults may be limited to ensure maximum numbers are able to attend.

Summer Resident Camp & Day/Evening Camp

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital manages eight camp properties designed for overnight camping. Summer sleep away camp programs are held at four of those properties, and day/evening camps are held across our region. Programs vary in length and experience with registration opening each year in January. From outdoor adventures, art and STEM, to camp songs, kayaking, and more, there is something for every girl at camp. Explore our camps at gscnc.org/camp.

Accessible, Affordable, and Valuable

Membership

\$25

Per member—each family should register at least 1 adult with their Girl Scout

Uniforms & Books

\$60

Starter kits available

Troop Dues

\$25

Troops earn beyond to fund their dreams!

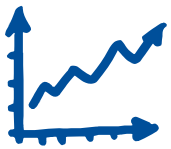
New members might pay some of this up front, but from there, troops plan to earn the funds to cover their Girl Scout expenses.

Dream, Earn, Do

All Girl Scouts are encouraged to earn their Girl Scout funds instead of having a check written. Why? Imagine a Kindergartener who knows she earned the funds to go on that amazing field trip—or imagine an 11th grader travelling to Switzerland on the money she's earned. Entrepreneurship creates life-changing experiences for Girl Scouts and builds financial literacy in a way no other program can.

Dream it, earn it, do it. That's the Girl Scout difference.

The Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program are ready-made opportunities for girls to dream, earn, do, and are designed to help her develop **five critical skills**:



GOAL SETTING

how to develop a business plan



DECISION MAKING

think critically and solve problems



MONEY MANAGEMENT

directly handle customer money



PEOPLE SKILLS

engage with members of the community and develop confidence



BUSINESS ETHICS

develop positive values like honesty and integrity

FALL PRODUCT takes place in September through November to earn funds for the beginning & middle of the year.

The **COOKIE PROGRAM** takes place in December through March to earn funds for the end of the year and into the next.

Both programs have opportunities for in-person and virtual participation!

100% of proceeds stay local to support troops and Girl Scouts!

Troop proceeds are used together as a team—no one is entitled to more funds based on amount sold.

Financial Assistance

Including all girls has been at the heart of Girl Scouts since 1912. Our council is proud to provide the following types of financial assistance to those in need so that everyone can become a Girl Scout.

Annual GSUSA Membership Dues

Assistance for the GSUSA annual membership dues is available for girls and adult volunteers.

To request: log into your account at www.gscnc.org, register your Girl Scout or adult volunteer, and when the system asks you for payment, select 'Financial Assistance'.

Financial assistance requests are reviewed each business day. Parents receive an email when the request is approved.

Only caregivers can request financial assistance for membership on behalf of their Girl Scouts. Troop leaders cannot request financial assistance on behalf of parents or other adults.

Uniforms, Books, and Troop Dues

Assistance for uniforms, books, and troop dues is available to registered Girl Scout youth and registered Troop Leaders.

To request: submit an online request between August 15th and April 15th by going to gscnc.org, clicking 'Forms', and selecting 'Financial Assistance for Uniforms, Books & Troop Dues'

Troop dues checks must be sent to the Troop Money Manager.

Uniforms and books can be sent directly the individual requesting the supplies.

Background Screening Fee

Assistance is available for the background screening fee.

To request: after registering as an adult volunteer in a role that requires a background check, look for the invitation from 'The Advocates' at Sterling Volunteers. There are two links—one to complete the form and pay the fee; one link that allows you to request assistance for the fee.

Training Grant Application

Adult volunteers can request financial assistance support for fees associated with adult education to support programming.

This is available to one volunteer per troop per year for each course.

To request: submit an online request by going to gscnc.org, clicking 'Forms', and selecting 'Training Grant Application'

Program Grants

Program grants are available for registered Girl Scouts (youth or adults) to participate in a specific activity.

To request: submit the form (found at gscnc.org, clicking 'Forms', and selecting 'All Level Program Grant Application')

This form requires detailed budgets and/or itineraries, and generally need to be submitted 6-8 weeks in advance.

Troop, Group, or Individual Program Loans

Program loans are available when funds for an approved Girl Scout expense are not available at the time that payment is due.

To request: submit the form (found at gscnc.org, clicking 'Forms', and selecting 'Troop, Group, and Individual Program Loan')

Girl Scout Nation's Capital's family giving campaign, **SHARE**, supports financial assistance for our members. Consider supporting this campaign at gscnc.org/donate

Your Family and Girl Scouts

Girl Scouts is volunteer-led, volunteer-run: from our volunteer Board of Directors to our Driver/Chaperones.

All families volunteer in some way to help make their experience great!

Troops with high levels of parent involvement are more likely to stay together—meaning your Girl Scout gets the maximum leadership benefit of Girl Scouts!

Volunteering with her troop is your opportunity to spend quality time with your Girl Scout, get to know her friends and community, and experience new adventures alongside her for years to come!

“[Caregiver] involvement is what makes the troop.”

Caregiver of a Girl Scout Cadette
2023 GS Voices Count Survey

“Girl Scouts is fun because my mommy is the Troop Leader.”

*Girl Scout Daisy, 2023
Voices Count*



Troop Committees

Each family volunteers to take one role on the **Troop Committee**. Together, the troop committee plans and implements different portions of the troop experience, so no one person or family is overwhelmed or overburdened. The point person of the troop committee are the Troop Leaders, who then delegate additional responsibilities as needed to the troop committee.

Training and mentorship is available and required for every role and together, families ensure that the troop receives the best possible leadership experience to dream, earn and do!

All troops start with at least four adults who are not related by blood, marriage, or household, including two Troop Leaders and a Troop Money Manager. **Every family is expected to volunteer in some capacity with their Girl Scout's troop.**

Adults who are helping with the troop but are not in a named committee role can register as a **Friends & Family volunteer**. This is the only role that does not require a background screening.

All other roles require a background screening for the safety of youth and adults in the troop.

Our family has selected this troop committee role:

Troop Committee Roles

Troop Leaders

Help Girl Scouts make decisions and decide what badges, activities, and service projects they want to do.

Lead meeting programming using the Volunteer Toolkit, which includes meeting plans, material lists, and more!

Serve as administrative point of contact for the troop and delegate remaining responsibilities to Troop Committee.

Take training—1 part asynchronous and 1 part synchronous (virtual or in-person).

All troops must have at least two unrelated adult troop leaders, one of whom is female present at all Girl Scout troop meetings. No adult is alone with girls at any time.

Troop Money Manager

Help troop develop a budget and plan to earn money according to Girl Scout guidelines.

Communicate income and expenses regularly to all troop families.

Be a signatory on troop bank account and submit monthly documentation to Service Unit Money Manager.

Take annual online training.

Troop Cookie Manager & Troop Fall Product Manager

Help troop set goals and participate in Fall Product & Cookie Program to ensure troop earns money for girl-planned activities.

Manage administrative aspects of the program including submitting and distributing orders and selecting booth sites.

Take annual online training.

Campout/Cookout Qualified Adult

Help troop plan progressive outdoor experiences.

Ensure girls are safe when participating in outdoor activities, including cooking and sleeping outside.

Take one-time training: in-person training for cooking, or combined overnight training for camping & cooking.

First Aider

Accompany troop on camping trips and other outings where First Aid may need to be administered.

Take training through approved council vendor, or have existing medical certification (doctor, nurse, EMT, etc)

Driver/Chaperone

Help girls plan and lead field trips.

Ensure safety paperwork such as health forms and permission slips are completed.

Troop SHARE Chair

Ensures all families have an opportunity to support SHARE, our family giving campaign that supports Girl Scouting across our region.

Girl Scout Volunteer & Parent Resources

There's a lot to explore in Girl Scouts, but don't worry—we have plenty of resources for parents and volunteers to help answer questions, streamline your volunteer time, and enrich your troop's experience. Below are some resources available to troop committee members:

Publications:

Girl Scout Insider: list of Girl Scout programs to sign up to attend—mailed home twice a year!

Volunteer Essentials: *the* guide to volunteering, camps, troop finances, and more—available online and hard copies given to Troop Leaders yearly

Safety Activity Checkpoints: safety requirements for all activities—available electronically at gscnc.org

Online Tools

Volunteer Toolkit (VTK): meeting guides with scripts & shopping lists, attendance trackers, badge & recognition trackers—editable by Troop Leaders and viewable by all parents!

gsLearn: online training system for virtual training as well as registration for in-person training. Take required training plus any desired enrichment training!

The image displays two screenshots of the Girl Scouts Nation's Capital website. The left screenshot shows the homepage with a navigation menu (ABOUT, EVENTS, CAMP, COOKIES +, VOLUNTEER, COUNCIL, DONATE, MY GS SIGN IN) and a banner for COVID-19 updates. A mouse cursor points to the 'EVENTS' link. The right screenshot shows the 'Events List' page for July 2021, featuring a 'Council Program Event' for a Nature Day Badge Workshop for Brownies & Juniors on July 17, 2021. The event details include the date (Sat Jul 17, 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM EDT), registration information, and a description of the activities.

Program Events:

Enrich your troop experience with program events! From our signature events (like Girl Scout Day at the Air & Space Museum or Camp CEO) to amazing programs run by Program Partners, there's something for everybody!

Explore upcoming program events in the Girl Scout Insider, or find events near you by visiting gscnc.org and clicking 'Events'. You're sure to find something you love!

No Girl Scout Goes Alone: Your Local Support

Your Girl Scout won't be the only person who finds belonging in Girl Scouts—your *troop* will find a home it belongs to as well. That home is called a **Service Unit**: a local collection of troops that works together to provide an amazing experience for your Girl Scout troop. Service Units:

- Help welcome new families and troops into Girl Scouts
- Provide oversight to ensure troops are operating within guidelines
- Plan local programs to enrich the troop experience—camping, traditions, badge days, or more!
- Host a monthly meeting for networking and volunteer support

Your Service Unit is led by a team of local volunteers, just like you, who help keep the Service Unit running. Some examples of these key volunteers are:

- **Service Unit Managers:** hold monthly meetings for Service Unit, attend council-level meetings to receive updates to share, resolve conflict, and recruit a strong Service Unit team
- **Service Unit Registrar:** guides families through registration & background screening process and supports annual renewal process each spring
- **Service Unit Money Manager:** assists new troops in setting up bank accounts, collects monthly bank statements & receipts from troops, and follows up to ensure money procedures are followed
- **Service Unit Welcome Specialist:** welcomes all new troop volunteers and connects them with training and support
- **Service Unit Troop Organizers:** connected with a school or house of worship & assists to form and reform troops, place new members in troops as needed

Your Service Unit Manager is your first place to go with questions or concerns. You can keep their contact information on **page 12**.

Safety in Girl Scouting

Nothing is more important to Girl Scouts Nation's Capital than the safety of girl and adult members. Here are a few safety pieces you should know right from the beginning:

- **Safety ratios:** Girl Scouts always have 2 adults, one of whom is female, at a minimum when Girl Scouts are gathered to ensure the safety of our youth. No adult is ever permitted to be alone with a child. Larger troops or gatherings require additional volunteers present to ensure adequate supervision.
- **Background screening:** any adult volunteer working directly with children or with money within Girl Scouts is required to complete a background online through our trusted vendor, Sterling Volunteers.
- **Liability insurance:** all members who participate in Girl Scout events, whether a troop meeting, campout, or field trip, should register as members to be covered under our liability insurance.
- **Training:** all volunteers receive training either from our Adult Educators, Service Unit-level volunteers, or in some cases, certified vendors.
- **COVID-19:** Girl Scouts has been able to provide a robust and safe experience during COVID. Our guidelines are regularly updated to match current health guidance—you can find the most recent set of updates on gscnc.org.

You can find full safety guidelines in *Volunteer Essentials* and on our website, gscnc.org.

Keeping Up with Girl Scout Goings-On

Troop Communication

Having effective troop communication ensures that all families are in the know about upcoming meetings and events and that Troop Leaders receive the support they need.

Each troop may choose the method of communication that works best for them. At Girl Scouts Nation's Capital, we suggest setting up a troop 'rally' for your troop (see Rallyhood below). Troop Leaders can also send meeting reminders and plans through the Volunteer Toolkit (see page 8 for more information).

Remember, one family responsibility is to communicate with Troop Leaders! Be sure to know how your troop communicates and check that platform regularly.

Service Unit Events & Happenings

Your local Service Unit hosts monthly meetings to share updates, upcoming local & council-level events, and allow for networking between troops. Service Unit meetings are one of the best ways to get an overview of all things going on in Girl Scouts, and ask questions of volunteers just like you.

Each Service Unit has their own communication method and sets their own meeting date & time. To be connected with your SU's communication tool and learn when the next meeting occurs, contact your Service Unit Manager (see page 9 for more information about your Service Unit Manager).

Service Units work together to plan local events. Interested in a specific event, like World Thinking Day or a VIP & Me Dance? Contact your Service Unit Manager and offer to serve on a committee to plan!

Rallyhood

Rallyhood is Girl Scouts Nation's Capital's online social media tool. Rallyhood provides private groups where troops can share information, post photos, solicit sign-ups, and keep a shared calendar.

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital also offers topic-based rallies to share information to certain groups, such as:

- Daisy, Brownie, Junior Rally: for information and events for K-5 Girl Scouts
- Teen Program Rally: for information and events for 6th-12th graders
- Outdoor & High Adventure Rally: to get Girl Scouts outdoors
- Community Service: to share ideas and opportunities for service projects



Showing You're a Girl Scout: Uniforms, Books, and More

What's required for a Girl Scout uniform?

To be in uniform, all a Girl Scout needs are her **official Girl Scout pins**. Pins are awarded at an investiture ceremony a few weeks after starting troop meetings.

Earned recognitions (**badges**) show your Girl Scout's progress and what she is learning. **Vests** and **sashes** are great to record and show what they have earned.

Girl Guide and Journey books are available to help her earn these important recognitions and record her achievements.

Looking for one-stop shopping? Purchase a **My Girl Scout Kit** with all items girls need for the start of the Girl Scout year.

The Girl Scout shop has all the items you need: go in-person, or order online or over the phone. Check out the Girl Scout shop at www.gscnc.org/shop for more information.



Badges and Patches: What's the Difference?



BADGES

are official Girl Scout awards that indicate an increase in knowledge or skill in a particular subject. They are worn on the front of the vest or sash.



PATCHES

are emblems signifying participation in an activity. Patches are placed on the back of the vest or sash.

Girl Scout Shops:

Main Shop (DC): 4301 Connecticut Ave
NW, Washington DC 20008

VA: 5946 Centreville Crest Lane,
Centreville, VA 20121

MD: 20201 Century Blvd,
Germantown, MD 20874

WV: 153 McMillan Court,
Martinsburg, WV 25404

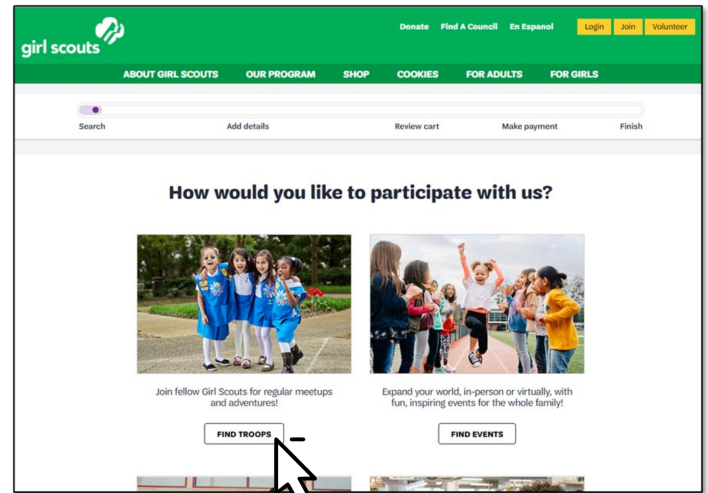
Germantown, Centreville, and Martinsburg shops are seasonal—check operating hours at gscnc.org before you go!

READY, SET, REGISTER

Ready to get started? The first step is to officially register as a member of Girl Scouts. Once you're registered, you'll be contacted by volunteers in your area and the fun can begin!

1. Go to gscnc.org and click 'Join' in the upper right
2. Click "Find Troops". Enter the zip code, search for the troop number (optional), and choose the grade of your girl
3. Find the troop that best fits and click the plus sign to add girl and adult volunteer(s).
4. Enter adult parent/guardian information
4. Enter information about your girl. Choose Troop Member from drop down list.
6. Add additional girls and adults who are joining!
7. Proceed through payment or requesting financial assistance – you'll get a confirmation email and will be ready to go!

Please note that membership registration is non-refundable.



NOTES

ABOUT MY TROOP

Keep your Girl Scout's vital troop information here for reference!

TROOP BASICS

Troop number:

Level:

Meeting day & time:

Service Unit:

Meeting location:

Procedure in case of late pick-up:

TROOP LEADER CONTACT INFO

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

Name:

Phone:

Email:

SERVICE UNIT MANAGER(S) CONTACT INFO

Name(s):

Phone:

Email:

OTHER DETAILS/NOTES

Our family's volunteer role:

MyGS Username
(primary email):

Password:



The Girl Scout Promise

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

The Girl Scout Law

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

