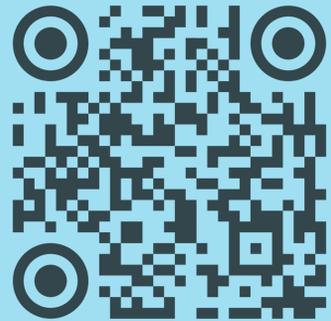


For the full text  
of Volunteer Essentials,  
please visit  
<https://www.gscnc.org/forms>



# Volunteer Quick Guide

2025-2026

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## Chapter 1: Welcome and Who Can Join

Welcome to the great adventure of Girl Scouting. Thanks to volunteers like you, generations of Girl Scouts have learned to be leaders in their own lives and in the world.

For information about our office locations, scan our QR code:

If you're unsure who to contact with questions or inquiries, reach out to our Customer Care department at 202-237-1670, or [customercare@gscnc.org](mailto:customercare@gscnc.org). Our after-hours Emergency Number is 1-888-288-1784.



## Who Can Join Our Girl Scout Council?

Girl Scouts is about sharing the fun, friendship, and the inherent power of girls and women in an inclusive, supportive, girl-led environment. What all members share are the Girl Scout Promise and Law, as well as our extraordinary strengths as go-getters, innovators, risk-takers, and leaders.

Any girl—from kindergarten through 12th grade—can join Girl Scouts. Additionally, if a family with a child of any other gender identity and expression (other than cisgender boys) feels that Girl Scouting is the right community for them, they are welcome. Girl Scout volunteers are a dynamic and diverse group and can be of any gender.

## Chapter 2: Membership Structure and Background Screening

### Service Units

The Council is divided into 25 regional areas called Associations. In order to better support members, each Association is further divided into Service Units. A Service Unit is composed of all troops that meet within its geographical jurisdiction. There are approximately 130 service units in our Council. Service Unit teams appoint, train, and provide programming and conflict management for troops and troop volunteers. They hold required monthly support meetings for troop leaders or their representatives called Service Unit meetings. Service Unit Teams are made up of volunteers to help support troops in their area. Every troop is part of a Service Unit based on where the troop meets.

#### Independently Registered Members (IRMs)

Independently registered Girl Scout youth members (also known as Juliettes) choose how to participate based on their schedule and interests. They are not part of a troop but are members of a Service Unit based on their address. Any adult who works with a IRM can register as a member with the role “IRM Mentor”, which will give them access to training in gsLearn and the full use of the Volunteer Toolkit to get information about badge requirements and activities. IRM Mentors are not required to be the parents or caregiver of the Girl Scout.

### Troop Basics

#### Troop Size, Capacity, and Open Spaces

All troops started after December 2015 must have at least 12 spaces for youth members. New troops are not assigned a troop number until they have a minimum of 3 unrelated (by birth, marriage, or address) adults volunteering and completing a background screening in the roles of troop leaders, and a money managers. Troops are considered fully formed once they have 6 Girl Scouts registered in addition to the 3 adult volunteers.

Spaces are available online and are first-registered, first-in-the-troop; spaces cannot be ‘held’ for non- registered youth.

As of August 1, 2027 all troops will be required to have 12 spaces for youth members.

### Holding Troop Meetings

Troops meet regularly, generally at least twice a month. Troops often meet in a school, community center, or house of worship. The location must be safe, easily accessible to youth and volunteers, and within a reasonable commute. Our Council’s liability insurance carrier does not cover troop meetings or other Girl Scout events hosted in a private home. The Site Safety Checklist can be used to help ensure a location meets general safety requirements. The Site Safety Checklist can be found at [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms).

### Your Troop Committee

Generally, families are expected to volunteer in some capacity with troops; however, we ask that all Troop Leaders are flexible and understanding of situations where a family may not be able to participate. Youth members must never be removed from a troop due to a family’s inability to volunteer.

### Troop committee member qualifications:

- Be a registered member of Girl Scouts by registering annually and selecting your role in your troop.
- Complete an eligible background screening (unless selecting the “Friends and Family” role).
- Troop committee members must complete required training within three months of selecting their role.

### Troop Volunteer Roles:

Troops must have at least 3 unrelated (by blood, marriage, or address) adults willing to volunteer within a troop: 2 troop leaders and a troop money manager.

Troop Leaders (2)

Troop Money Manager

Troop Cookie Manager

Troop Fall Product Chair

Troop First Aider

Troop Cookout & Campout Qualified Volunteer

Troop SHARE Chair

Troop Driver/Chaperone

The “Friends and Family” role does not require a background screening and cannot drive youth members, chaperone field trips, encampments, campouts, etc., or handle Girl Scout money.

## Volunteer Background Screening

### Background Screenings

- Must be completed before meeting with youth in any capacity.
- Is required for any adult who will drive or supervise youth members, handle Girl Scout money, or participate in an overnight activity.
- In addition, anyone who attends three or more activities within the Girl Scout year of August 1 – July 31 should have a role with a background check.
- The information submitted to Sterling Volunteers must utilize the same information (name, birth date, and email address) as member registration. A Social Security number is not required but there may be delayed results when not provided.

Background screenings are initiated when you select a role that requires a background check in MyGS. You must select and register for your role in MyGS to activate the background check.

### Registered Sex Offenders

Registered sex offenders are expressly prohibited from serving as Girl Scout volunteers in any capacity. Those living in households with registered sex offenders are prohibited from hosting youth members or Girl Scout-related activities in their household and must uphold restrictions barring sex offenders from locations where children may gather. Caregivers who are registered sex offenders may not participate in Girl Scout gatherings.

### Child Abuse and Other Serious Accusations

If a Girl Scout volunteer is formally accused of, charged with, or under investigation by authorities for the crime of child abuse after becoming approved as a volunteer, they must suspend all Girl Scout activities and turn over all monies, materials, and records to a designated representative of the Council until the matter is resolved.

The Council at its sole discretion may immediately suspend or revoke a volunteer's membership and participation at any time, including if information regarding accusations or charges of criminal conduct is brought to the Council after the background screening is complete. Behavior does not need to rise to the level of a legal violation to be removed from a volunteer role.

## Chapter 3:

## Safety and Health Guidelines

Girl Scout volunteers must follow these guidelines at all times.

1. Be registered, approved, appointed and appropriately trained for the position(s) that you hold.
2. Follow the Safety Activity Checkpoints. Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the online resource Safety Activity Checkpoints, which can be found on our website at [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms). Read them, follow them, and share

- them with other volunteers, caregivers and Girl Scouts before engaging in activities.
3. Arrange for proper adult supervision of Girl Scouts. Your troop must have at least two trained, background screened, unrelated adult volunteers, one of whom is cisgender female, present at all times. Additional adult volunteers or specifically trained adults may be necessary depending on the size of the group, the ages and abilities of Girl Scouts, and the particular activity (see Youth-to-Adult ratio chart and safety & roles of adults in Ch. 4). Volunteers must be registered adult members with an eligible background check.
  4. Acquire caregiver/guardian permission. When an activity takes place outside of the normal troop meeting time and/ or place, or includes high adventure or discussion of a topic that could be considered sensitive, advise each caregiver of the details of the activity and obtain permission for Girl Scouts to participate.
  5. Report abuse. Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with youth members are forbidden. Physical, verbal and emotional abuse of youth is also forbidden. Guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting are listed later in this chapter (see page 26).
  6. Be prepared for emergencies. Work with youth and other volunteers to establish and practice an Emergency Action Plan (EAP) for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost child/adult, and site security. Keep handy a well-stocked first aid kit. Always have at least one Field Trip and Travel Packet that includes your EAP, the Girl Scout Health History and Medical Authorization forms (including food allergies and contact information for families) as well as Emergency Procedures information (see inside of back cover. Forms can be found at [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms)).
  7. Travel safely. When transporting Girl Scouts to planned field trips and other activities that are outside the normal time and place, every driver must be a registered and background-screened adult volunteer over the age of 21, and have a good driving record, a valid license and a registered/insured vehicle. All passengers are required to be in a legal seat and wear their seat belt at all times, adhering to state laws regarding booster seats and children in rear seats. When using chartered transportation, you must use a Council-approved vendor.
  8. Ensure safe overnight outings. Prepare Girl Scouts to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect. During family or caregiver-youth overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters in event areas. When caregivers are supporting events, youth will ideally remain in quarters with other Girl Scout youth rather than with adults.
  9. Role-model the correct behavior. Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, vape, or use foul language in the presence of youth. Do not carry ammunition or firearms at any Girl Scout event or activity unless required as a law enforcement official.
  10. Create an emotionally safe space. Volunteers are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where Girl Scouts - youth and adult members - are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of all members by creating a team agreement and coaching the troop to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions; resolving conflicts constructively; and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination. Cyber-bullying, such as aggressive language on social media, is not permitted. See Ch. 6 for more information.

11. Ensure no Girl Scout is treated differently. Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race; ethnicity; national origin; culture; gender identity and expression; sexual orientation; socio-economic status; age; physical, intellectual, and emotional abilities; and religious and political beliefs. When scheduling, planning, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all Girl Scouts involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places. (see Chapter 6, p. 49)
12. Promote online safety. Instruct Girl Scouts to never provide their full names or contact information online, engage in virtual conversation with strangers or arrange in-person meetings with online contacts. For group websites, publish Girl Scouts' first names only and never divulge their contact information. Review the Girl Scout Online Safety Pledge, <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/footer/help/internet-safety-pledge.html> and ensure Girl Scout youth and adults commit to it.
13. Be fiscally responsible. All finances for troops and groups must be managed through a Girl Scout checking account set up by the Service Unit Money Manager or the Association Money Manager. Troops will not mix troop funds with personal funds and will submit bank statements and receipts to the SU Money Manager monthly. Troops must have a debit card. Troop money-earning activities beyond the Girl Scout product program must be approved by the SU Manager or SU Money Manager. Additional money-earning events must be Girl Scout program-based and must not involve the sale of a commercial product or games of chance or lottery. Restaurant nights or other commercial partnerships are not permitted. When representing Girl Scouts, youth members cannot participate in money-earning activities representing partisan politics (see Chapter 5: "Finances.")
14. Communication directly from an adult to a youth member should only contain Girl Scout related conversation. Personal conversation via phone or text are not appropriate. Parents/caregivers should always be made aware if volunteers are communicating directly with youth members via electronic methods.

## **Planning for Emergencies**

Even with careful planning, emergencies can happen. Girl Scouts need to receive proper instruction in how to care for themselves and others in emergencies. They also need to learn the importance of reporting to adults any accidents, illnesses, or unusual behaviors during Girl Scout activities. To this end, your troop should:

- Know what to report. See "Procedures for Accidents and Emergencies" on the inside back cover.
- Establish Emergency Action Plans (EAPs) that will address procedures for such circumstances as weather emergencies, evacuations, hazards at location, first aid, safety gear, and lost participants. Every Girl Scout youth and adult volunteer must know how to act in these situations. For example, you and the Girl Scouts should design and review an evacuation plan for meeting places used by the group. There is a template for an EAP on our website [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms).

## Girl Scout Health History Forms

At the beginning of each membership year, the troop leader will collect a copy of each Girl Scout Health History and Emergency Medical Authorization Form ([www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms)). This form is completed by caregivers. It is important to be aware of any medications a youth member may take or allergies they may have. Please always keep in mind that information on any type of health form is confidential and must be shared only with people who must know this information. These forms should be on hand at every Girl Scout meeting or event in case of an emergency.

- Some youth members may need to carry and administer their own emergency medications, such as bronchial inhalers, an EpiPen, or diabetes medication, and that must be indicated on the form.
- Medication, including over-the-counter products, must never be dispensed without prior written permission from a custodial parent or guardian.
- All Girl Scout youth and adult medications, except for approved self-carry emergency medications, should be secured in the Troop First Aid Kit (or other secure location) when it is not medication time.
- Be aware of any allergies in your troop. These might include dairy products, eggs, soy, wheat, peanuts, tree nuts, sesame, and seafood. Some non-food allergies include latex, insect stings, or ingredients in sunscreen.

## Field Trip and Travel Packets

Whenever a troop leaves its meeting space, a leader is responsible for gaining parental permission and assembling a Field Trip and Travel Packet. At least one packet must be assembled, although duplicate packets should be provided for additional drivers.

This chart below specifies items to be included:

	What It Does	Where to Find It
Girl Scout Health History and Medical Authorization form for each youth member	Girl Scout Health History and Medical Authorization form for each youth member Provides emergency contact information, allergies, and medical history; authorizes medical treatment in the event of an emergency.	
Procedure for Accidents and Emergencies	Tells you what to do in the event of an emergency.	
Emergency Action Plan (EAP)	Ensures that leaders have considered and made a plan for potential emergencies. For simple activities, the EAP may be verbally conveyed to the participating adults. For other activities, a written plan is advised.	

## First Aiders

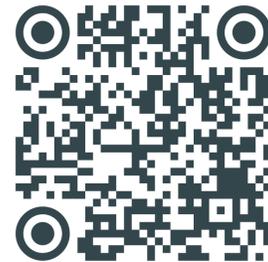
A troop first aider is an adult volunteer who selects the role of First Aider, has an eligible a background check, and is a currently certified in a medical profession listed in Volunteer Essentials or has current certification that meets our criteria. A First Aider and first aid kit is required for:

1. Overnights
  2. Physically demanding activities, and
  3. Events with potential for injuries such as cookouts, camping or high adventure activities.
- Be sure to review the Safety Activity Checkpoints for your particular activity to see if a first aider is required.

## Transporting Girl Scouts Safely

Follow the requirements for transporting Girl Scouts found in Volunteer Essentials. Obtain caregiver permission for any use of transportation outside of the meeting place. When transported using private vehicles or private transportation, every driver must be a registered member with an eligible background screening.

When using chartered transportation, adult chaperones are required in addition to the driver. Drivers must adhere to the child restraint requirements of the jurisdiction(s) where they are traveling. That information can be found by scanning the QR Code here:



## Buddy System

The buddy system is when pairs of Girl Scout youth are assigned to stay together during a field trip or activity. Volunteers should assign buddies (or “truddies” when there is a group of 3) in advance. Buddies can help their partners or seek assistance from an adult when the situation warrants. The buddy system empowers Girl Scout youth members to take an active role in their own safety and the safety of their friends and should be used for all program levels.

## Chapter 4:

## Council Policies

The Council has sole authority to interpret and construe its policies, including the specific policies set forth below. All interpretations, constructions, and any determinations contemplated to be made regarding these policies shall be final, binding and conclusive. Specifically with regard to issues involving alleged child abuse or alleged sexual misconduct, conduct can be determined to be violative of Council policies regardless of any corresponding civil or criminal determinations.

## Youth-to-Adult Ratios

Girl Scouts’ youth-to-adult ratios show the minimum number of adult volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of Girl Scouts. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old, have an active membership, and an eligible background screening.

TROOP MEETING			EVENTS, TRAVEL, & CAMPING	
Girl Scouts Youth-to-Adult Ratio	Two unrelated registered, background screened, trained volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of youth:	Plus one additional registered, background screened, trained volunteer for each additional number of youth:	Two unrelated registered, background screened, trained volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of youth:	Plus one additional registered, background screened, trained volunteer for each additional number of youth:
Girl Scout Daisies (Grades K-1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (Grades 2-3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (Grades 4-5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
Girl Scout Cadettes (Grades 6-8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Girl Scout Seniors (Grades 9-10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (Grades 11-12)	30	1-15	24	1-12

## Multi-Level Troops

A multi-level troop must have a youth-to-leader ratio appropriate for the youngest program level, including at least one trained troop leader for each program level in the troop. Multi-level troops that meet in multiple rooms must provide the minimum youth-to-adult ratio in each room because no adult can be alone with youth members at any time. Multi-level troops must earn and spend money as a group and are prohibited from using individual accounting if there are any Daisies, Brownies, or Juniors in the troop. Multi-level troops with any Daisies or Brownies are not allowed to opt out of product program incentives.

## Caregiver Permission

When an activity takes place outside of the normal troop meeting time and/or place, leaders or drivers/chaperones are responsible for providing detailed information about activities in advance and gaining caregiver permission.

- For most activities, this can include verbal permission, a written form or email, or the guardian bringing the Girl Scout to the event.
- The following activities require written permission, either through an email, form or release statement:
  - Product Program activities (specific forms are required)
  - High adventure activities
  - Sensitive issues

## **Sensitive Issue Guidelines**

Some Girl Scout activities could focus on subjects that may be considered sensitive, and there are guidelines for those activities that can be found in Volunteer Essentials online in Chapter 4. Written caregiver permission is required when sensitive issues are discussed as part of a formal program.

## **Anti-Child Abuse Policy**

If you have knowledge of or reason to believe that child abuse or neglect has occurred, you are required to report it to your local social service agency or police authority. Persons making “good faith” or “reasonable cause” reports can be anonymous and are protected from legal liability based on the report. To report child abuse or neglect, call the social service agency in the jurisdiction in which the alleged abuse occurred, not where it was made known to you. In order for the Council to fulfill its obligations, all instances of suspected child or sexual abuse must be reported immediately to Customer Care and make them aware that you have made an official report with an appropriate government agency. Council staff will contact you to follow up. **202-237-1670, or [customercare@gscnc.org](mailto:customercare@gscnc.org)**

Consistent with this policy, the Council does not tolerate:

- Physically abusive behavior or infliction of bodily injury upon children;
- Physical neglect of children, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care, and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities; or
- Emotional mistreatment of children, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks.

Violation of the Council’s policy will result in disciplinary action which may include termination from the Council with or without notice. Subject to applicable law, the Council reserves the right to refuse membership, to dismiss, or to exclude from affiliation with the Council any employee or volunteer who is found guilty of child abuse or neglect or has been convicted of child abuse or neglect. Behavior does not have to rise to the level of a legal violation in order for it to be a violation of this policy.

## **Safety and Role of Adult Leaders of All Genders in Girl Scouting**

There must be at least two registered, trained volunteers with eligible background checks, who are not related by blood, marriage, or address, at least one of whom is female, supervising every Girl Scout-related activity.

### **Sleeping Accommodation Guidelines for Youth and Adult Girl Scouts**

It is not mandatory that an adult sleep in the sleeping area (tent, cabin, or designated area) with the youth. In keeping with Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, youth members will ideally remain in quarters with other Girl Scout youth rather than with adults. While it is encouraged that adults sleep in a separate area from youth members, if adults do share the sleeping area, there must always be at least two unrelated adults present, one of whom is cisgender female.

For male (cisgender and transgender men) participation during overnight events, follow these guidelines:

- Men (cisgender and transgender men) will have a separate, designated sleeping area, which can be a separate tent, room, or corner of a lodge Girl Scouts will not need to access.
- If it is a father/child or family camping event, males and their children may share sleeping quarters with other caregiver-camper pairs as long as ALL are in agreement. All Girl Scouts MUST be accompanied by a caregiver.
- Men (cisgender and transgender men) should have privacy to manage personal care matters, such as changing, bathing or using restroom facilities.
- When accounting for the Girl Scout-volunteer ratio, consider the proximity of designated sleeping areas.

Keep in mind any adult participating in an overnight activity with Girl Scouts must have a membership and an eligible background check.

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital has transgender and non-binary youth and adult members. We recognize the need for additional guidance on providing inclusive overnight sleeping accommodations for our members. We encourage troop leaders and camp directors to provide youth and adult members the opportunity to select their preferred accommodations in advance. In order to do this, add a sleeping accommodations question to registration forms or permission slips for all overnight Girl Scout activities. Ask participants to select "all that apply" in order to provide multiple options for sleeping accommodation assignments:

- Gender Inclusive for cisgender females, non-binary, and transgender members
- Female only for cisgender female members
- No Preference
- Male only for cisgender and transgender adult male members

When possible, pre-assign members to a specific room, shelter, tent, etc. Never refer to a sleeping accommodation as "girl-only" or "gender inclusive." Use a number, color, animals, etc. to describe assigned accommodations. Never call out or isolate a youth member based on their accommodation request. When needed, work with individuals and families to understand concerns and develop resolutions prior to the event.

## **Conflict Resolution**

### **Preventing Issues**

There are steps that can be taken to prevent issues from arising.

- See Chapter 6 of Volunteer Essentials online for strategies to address behavioral and relational differences that can sometimes contribute to issues with groups of Girl Scout youth.
- Use a "Girl Scout Readiness and Behavioral Agreement" form and consider creating one for adults as well to set clear expectations from the very beginning, which avoids misunderstandings. For sample forms, please see <https://www.gscnc.org/forms>.

### *Behavioral Consequences for Youth Members*

When Girl Scout youth display concerning behavior, the leader's first step is to reach out to the caregivers to discuss issues and solutions. If problematic behaviors continue, caregivers may be asked to attend each meeting and/or outing to monitor and correct their child's behavior so that troop leaders can focus on the troop as a whole. Please note: Girl Scouts are not removed from troops.

## **Volunteer Conflict**

Council Conflict Resolution Guidelines:

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital staff and volunteers strive to provide the highest quality Girl Scout Leadership Experience to youth members, while ensuring safety and well-being for everyone. Volunteers are instrumental in instilling the values that are clearly conveyed in the Girl Scout Promise, Law, and Mission and are expected to uphold them at all times. One key aspect of leadership is the ability to work with others, effectively communicate and collaborate to achieve the desired goals and outcomes.

- Differences of opinion, disagreements, and conflicts are natural parts of life and inevitably happen in all relationships.
- Not all conflict is bad - it can lead to new ideas and approaches; it can bring important issues to light; and it can provide an opportunity for people to come together to create a solution.
- All adults in our organization should first try to resolve problems by talking directly to one another in brave, respectful conversations.

If you are involved in conflict, and there is no clear breach of a Girl Scout policy or guideline, specifically the fourteen Safety and Health Guidelines published in Chapter 3 of Volunteer Essentials, follow the guidelines below.

If the situation poses a safety concern for any Girl Scout youth or adult, contact **customercare@gscnc.org** or **1- 888-288-1784** immediately.

See Chapter 6 of Volunteer Essentials online for conflict resolution essentials so you can self-resolve conflict between adults.

## **LEVEL 1: Member-Led Conflict Resolution Process**

The Council encourages members to self-resolve conflicts that don't involve Girl Scout policy or guideline violations. When you experience a conflict in Girl Scouts, be it caregiver/volunteer, volunteer/volunteer, or caregiver/caregiver, the parties involved should make an appointment to talk and work out a solution using these three steps:

1. Attempt Self-Resolution
2. Invite an Unbiased Third Party to Join
3. Decide on a Solution

See Chapter 6 of Volunteer Essentials online for more information about conflict resolution so you can self-resolve conflict between adults.

## **LEVEL 2: Staff-Led Conflict Resolution Process**

If all previous steps above have been taken to resolve the situation informally, but the matter is still unresolved, the member or volunteer may escalate the conflict to the Council staff for intervention. Please note that although members are strongly urged to self-resolve conflict that doesn't involve Girl Scout policy violation, a conflict may be escalated to staff at any point in the process, if necessary. Staff also retain discretion to refer the conflict to the Service Unit Manager or appropriate Service Unit or Association Team Member. For more information about the Level 2 process, please see Volunteer Essentials online Chapter 4.

Council staff's primary concern is to ensure the safety and well-being of members. All adults are required to uphold standards of membership. The Council, at its sole discretion, may immediately suspend or revoke a volunteer's membership and participation for any reason, including but not limited to:

- Failure to comply with organizational policies, including but not limited to, our codes of conduct.
- Accusations or charges of criminal conduct.

Please note that behavior does not need to rise to the level of a legal violation to be removed from a volunteer role, and Girl Scouts Nation's Capital retains the right to suspend or revoke volunteer roles at any time.

### **Insurance**

#### *Girl Scout Activity Insurance*

All registered Girl Scout youth and adult members are automatically covered by Activity Accident insurance when participating in Girl Scout approved and supervised activities. Activity Accident insurance is also extended to non-members who are invited to participate in the Girl Scout approved and supervised activity. This coverage works like supplemental medical/health coverage and is intended to help with out-of-pocket medical expenses that may not be covered by personal insurance. Additional coverage to include sickness and insurance for international trips can be purchased for an additional fee. However, starting October 1, 2025, coverage for sickness and international trips will be automatically included. You can find information on Activity Insurance at [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms). If you have any questions, please call the Human Resources department at 202-274-3320.

#### *General Liability Insurance*

Insurance, managed by the Council, provides coverage for volunteers in the event of a lawsuit resulting from the performance of their Girl Scout responsibilities, for example: conducting troop meetings, transporting members to an event, participating in an approved activity, and serving as a troop first aider. This includes liability for bodily injury or property damage. This protection does not cover illegal acts or acts that are not consistent with the purpose of Girl Scouting.

#### *Certificate of Liability Insurance*

Many organizations require that we prove we have liability insurance before they let us use their facility. To obtain a certificate for in-Council events, please contact the Customer Care department at 202-237-1670 or [customer care@gscnc.org](mailto:customer care@gscnc.org) with the complete name and address

of the facility, and the fax, email, or mailing address where the certificate should be sent. We will arrange with our insurance carrier to have the certificate sent directly to the facility.

### *Rental Agreements and Contracts*

Written agreements required when renting or chartering transportation may be signed by an adult who is at least 21, and a registered member of GSUSA. When renting a vehicle, read all rental agreements to be sure you comply with their terms. Note the minimum age of drivers (often 25), as well as the maximum age (often under 70). Make sure the car is adequately insured; consult the driver's auto insurance company. Know who is responsible for damage to, or loss of, the vehicle.

### *Chartered Transportation*

The charter bus company must be on the approved vendor list when a Girl Scout troop/group is leasing the entire bus. If purchasing a ticket to ride on a chartered bus, this is not required. For more information on travel, see Chapter 8.

### *High Adventure Activities and Certificates of Insurance*

The Council considers some activities to be High Adventure. These activities require caregivers to give written permission, either through an email, form, or release. The vendor must be on the Council approved vendor list unless owned and operated by a federal, state, or local government agency. To see the approved vendor list and learn how to add a vendor to the list, go to <https://www.gscnc.org/en/camp/high-adventure.html>

## Chapter 5:

## Finances, Financial Assistance, Money Earning and Fundraising

There are many important policies related to Girl Scout finances. Many of these guidelines are to ensure compliance with federal law and to protect our status as a tax-exempt organization. Please refer to Chapter 5 in Volunteer Essentials, and troop money management training in gsLearn.

### **Important Requirements**

- Money in a Girl Scout bank account belongs to the Girl Scouts for Girl Scout activities.
- Each troop sets up a new bank account through their Service Unit Money Manager.
- Generally, the troop should spend earned money each year to ensure that the Girl Scouts who earn the money benefit from it.
- Troop Leaders or Troop Money Managers must submit bank statements with receipts every month to their Service Unit.
- Girl Scouts cannot engage in any direct solicitation for money except for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors, who may solicit donations for Girl Scout Gold Award projects according to our Council's processes.

These are the allowable ways to fund Girl Scout activities:

- Dues
- Girl Scout Product Programs (the Fall Product sale and the Cookie sale)
- Approved Money-Earning Events: see Chapter 5 in Volunteer Essentials online

**Note:** Money-earning is not fundraising. Money-earning is a program-based activity conducted by Girl Scouts; fundraising is raising money for SHARE.

## Payments for Product Program

Money due for sold products is collected when the products are delivered to the customer (or as directed by Nation's Capital). Girl Scout youth and adults will need to know whether their troop is accepting checks. If so, they should be made out to: "Girl Scouts Nation's Capital Troop [troop number]". For information on electronic payments, see below.

## Electronic Payments

Point of sale (POS) platforms such as Square and Stripe are electronic payment platforms that are intended to collect credit card payments from a person purchasing something. These can be used to collect payments at cookie booths if it meets the criteria listed below. It is prohibited to pass along fees to customers for Girl Scout product programs.

Peer-to-Peer (P2P) platforms like Venmo and CashApp are intended to process small money transfers between people who know each other. These can be used to collect troop dues and other money from caregivers. However, caregivers cannot be required to use an electronic payment platform; troops must accept dues payments by check or cash when requested by a caregiver.

When using a POS or P2P platform, these are requirements:

1. The Girl Scouts in the troop vote to use an electronic payment platform.
2. You must be able to link directly to the Girl Scout bank account in the platform (NOT passing through another bank account, such as a personal bank account).
3. You must be able to set the account up under the Council's tax ID number rather than a personal Social Security number.

If you cannot meet these requirements, you must not use that payment platform. Please see Chapter 5 in Volunteer Essentials for additional guidelines on using electronic payment methods. These guidelines are intended to help troops minimize their risk when using an electronic payment platform but cannot eliminate the risk entirely.



## Teen Troop Finances

Individual record keeping is an option for Cadette, Senior and Ambassador troops. It does not allow for individual bank accounts for each Girl Scout. Please complete the course “204 Teen Troop Finances” in gsLearn for information on this type of troop accounting. Troops that have Daisy, Brownie, or Junior level Girl Scouts may not use this form of accounting within troop accounts. This includes multi-level troops with youth in these age groups. Girl Scouts may not use funds to provide gift cards for themselves, pay for college applications or textbooks, personal property, or any other individual benefit.

For information about money-earning for youth members earning the Highest Awards (Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards) go to Chapter Five of Volunteer Essentials.

## The Girl Scout Promise Fund and Financial Assistance

The Girl Scout Promise Fund ensures that every registered Girl Scout youth and adult member can fully participate in enriching Girl Scout experiences, regardless of financial circumstances. This vital resource is largely powered by the generous contributions of Girl Scout families through our annual SHARE campaign.

### Assistance Available

- **GSUSA annual membership Dues:** Available for youth and adult members. To request this type of assistance, log on to your account at [www.gscnc.org](http://www.gscnc.org) and request financial assistance during the membership purchase checkout.
- **Uniforms, books, and troop dues:** Available to registered youth members and registered troop leaders. The online form can be filled out by the caregiver or the troop leader. Go to [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms) and select “Financial Assistance for Uniforms, Books & Troop Dues.”
- **Background screening fee:** After registering as an adult volunteer for a role that requires a background screening you will receive an email “invitation” from [noreply@sterlingcheck.com](mailto:noreply@sterlingcheck.com) to begin the process. Instructions for completing a background screening with no charge are in the email from Sterling Volunteers.
- **Program Grants** help individuals participate in an approved Girl Scout activity, event, or trip; a Girl Scout Nation’s Capital sponsored event; or an individual activity such as a Girl Scout Destination. Find the Program Grant Application at [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms).
- **Training Grants** are available for fees associated with adult education opportunities to support youth programming sponsored by Girl Scouts Nation’s Capital. Grants are available for: First aider training, high adventure certifications and Cookout & Campout courses. Find the Training Grant Application at [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms).
- **Program Loans** help groups participate in approved Girl Scout activities when funds are not available at the time payment is due. Loans must be repaid within six months to one year from the date of loan disbursement through a scheduled payment plan. Find the Troop, Group and Individual Program Loan application at [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms).
- **Camp Scholarships:** Girl Scouts Nation’s Capital strives to make camp available to all Girl Scouts regardless of their family’s economic situation. Information and links to request scholarships for summer sleep-away camp and day and evening camp can be found under the “Camp” tab on [www.gscnc.org](http://www.gscnc.org)

## Annual Family Giving Campaign

SHARE is our peer-to-peer fundraising spearheaded by amazing SHARE volunteers. All money raised through this program stays in our Council and goes towards maintaining our camps, supports volunteer training, delivers Girl Scouts programming, and funds the Girl Scout Promise Fund. Restaurant nights, business partnerships, fundraising with other organizations, party demonstrations and other events where a percentage of sales are received are NOT permitted.

## Pass-Through Donations and Major Gifts

### Pass-through Donation Guidelines:

Many individuals see the impact of Girl Scouting in their communities, and sometimes we receive requests for individuals to donate directly to a Girl Scout troop, Service Unit, Association, and/or group. The Council has established guidelines to properly acknowledge the donor's gift and track money supporting our organization.

For donations up to \$250, the donation should be payable to GSCNC Troop [troop #] and deposited into the troop's bank account. The Council will not provide a tax receipt for these donations.

For donations over \$250, please see Volunteer Essentials.

**If you would like more information** about SHARE, pass-through donations, making a major gift, or planned giving through the Juliette Low Legacy Society (JLLS), please see Chapter 5 of Volunteer Essentials online, or call the Council office at 202-237-1670 and ask to speak to our Development Department.

## Chapter 6:

## Belonging: DEIA

### Our Council's DEIA Commitment

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) Commitment Revised by the Nation's Capital Board of Directors, June 2022

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital is committed to building and maintaining an inclusive community that respects and supports all our members. We value the diverse backgrounds and qualities of each youth and adult member—including race; ethnicity; national origin; culture; gender identity and expression; sexual orientation; socioeconomic status; age; physical, intellectual, and emotional abilities; and religious and political beliefs—so that all members feel they belong. We strive to provide everyone with the opportunity to fully participate in the Girl Scout program and contribute to the Girl Scout community.

We do not have all the answers but pledge to work toward these goals as advocates and allies. We seek to address barriers that impede our members from reaching their highest potential.

Our mission is to help Girl Scouts become leaders with the courage, compassion, and confidence needed to build a more just community. We continue to commit ourselves to the values put forth in the Girl Scout Promise and Law. This is who we are, and this is our promise to you.

## **Creating an Atmosphere of Acceptance and Inclusion**

All volunteers have a responsibility to provide an inclusive and welcoming environment for all youth and are never permitted to remove a youth member from a troop. Developing inclusive strategies from the start can help address negative communication and encourage growth and learning. There are several ways to achieve this:

- Use a “Girl Scout Readiness and Behavior Agreement” and an “Adult Behavior Agreement” to set expectations.
- Start the Girl Scout year with youth creating “All About Me” cards/presentations
- Girl Scout programming is designed to be flexible! Adapt badge requirements to meet the needs and abilities of the troop and each individual youth while maintaining the spirit of the activity.
- Collaborate with caregivers to find meaningful alternatives for activities or to adapt activities that may be challenging.
- Focus on celebrating the efforts and progress of each individual youth.

Our DEIA staff are ready to support you. Our partnership with Kids Included Together (KIT) allows us to provide resources and consulting to volunteers and youth. Please reach out for assistance by contacting [DEIA@gscnc.org](mailto:DEIA@gscnc.org) or [Customercare@gscnc.org](mailto:Customercare@gscnc.org).

## **Registering Girl Scouts with Cognitive Diversity**

Girl Scouts with cognitive diversity or intellectual disabilities can be registered as closely as possible to their grade level in school and wear the uniform of that program level. Make any adaptations for the Girl Scout to participate in ongoing activities of the program level to which the group belongs. Girl Scouts with diverse intellectual abilities may choose to retain their youth membership through their 21st year, and then move into an adult membership category.

## **The Gold Award and Inclusion**

Girl Scouts Nation’s Capital is committed to ensuring that youth members of all abilities are able to achieve the Gold Award - A Girl Scout’s highest honor. When a Girl Scout indicates they need accommodations, the Council staff will contact the family to get clarity on the types of accommodations needed. We will decide on reasonable accommodations. Please email [HigherAward@gscnc.org](mailto:HigherAward@gscnc.org) to request reasonable accommodations.

## **Language Resources**

### **Language/American Sign Language interpretation:**

On-demand phone interpretation is available for over 250 languages to assist volunteers and staff communicate more effectively with Girl Scout caregivers. American Sign Language interpretation services are available in-person and virtually. These can be used to talk with prospective families, assist in filling out forms, and communicate details of an event. Contact [customercare@gscnc.org](mailto:customercare@gscnc.org) for more information.

Contact Customer Care at 202-237-1670, or [customercare@gscnc.org](mailto:customercare@gscnc.org) with questions about how to ensure the inclusion of youth or adults with disabilities within the Girl Scout community.

## Chapter 7: Programs and Entrepreneurship

### **The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)**

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) draws on three unique processes: **Girl-led, learning-by-doing, and cooperative learning**. For more information on the GSLE, please visit <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/discover/about-us/what-girl-scouts-do/leadership-experience.html>.

### **Progression**

Girl Scout programming is designed to be progressive and it's what makes Girl Scouting fun and effective! By building on the knowledge and skills they gain year after year, your Girl Scouts' confidence will grow exponentially, and they'll be eager to try new things and take on new challenges. Keep in mind that progression drives success for your troop. It is important that as your Girl Scout troop progresses, your role as troop leader will shift from leader to advisor. You will find charts illustrating the Girl Scout progression in areas such as outdoor activities and travel in Chapter 8 of Volunteer Essentials.

### **Badges, Patches and Emblems**

National Proficiency badges and other earned awards are worn on the front of a Girl Scout uniform. Girl Scout Daisies earn Petals and Leaves (which form a flower) in addition to badges. Participation patches (or "fun patches") represent activities Girl Scouts have tried and are a way for Girl Scouts to remember special events they have attended. Because these patches are not tied to skill-building activities, they are worn on the back of a Girl Scout's sash or vest. Emblems show membership in Girl Scouts, a particular Council, a particular troop, or in some other Girl Scout group. These are worn on the front of a sash or vest. For information on uniform placement, see here: <https://www.gscnc.org/en/shop/insignia-list-and-placement.html>

### **Girl Scout Highest Awards**

**The Girl Scout Gold Award** is the standout achievement of individual Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors who develop meaningful, sustainable solutions to challenges in their communities and the world. **The Girl Scout Silver Award** can be earned by Cadettes and can be earned by an individual Girl Scout or by a small group. **The Girl Scout Bronze Award** can be earned by Juniors. See Volunteer Essentials Chapter 5 for information about money-earning and using troop funds for the highest awards. **The Silver Trefoil Award** is a Girl Scouts Nation's Capital award that focuses on community service. A Girl Scout may receive this award by providing 100 hours of service to the Girl Scout community, local and national organizations (including government), and global efforts. Information on the awards and guidelines can be found on our website at [www.gscnc.org/awards](http://www.gscnc.org/awards).

## **Nation's Capital Programs and Events**

### **Program Partners**

Program Partners are programs and events advertised as a service to aid in troop planning. Program Partners range from museums to commercial establishments to individual entrepreneurs. Some programs are designed specifically for Girl Scouts, while others are open to the public as well. Registration and information are handled by the vendor. Vendors have provided our Council with a certificate of insurance where necessary, but there is no Nation's Capital staff at or directly associated with the program. Troop leaders must ensure Safety Activity Checkpoints and Volunteer Essentials standards are adhered to.

Premier Program Partners are program partners that offer high-quality programs aligned with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and have a proven track record of success working with Girl Scouts. Look for the Premier Program Partner designation on listings in the Girl Scout Insider publication or at [www.gscnc.org/programpartners](http://www.gscnc.org/programpartners)

### **Council Patch Programs**

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital has developed additional recognitions which supplement those offered by GSUSA. These patch programs offer Girl Scouts the opportunity to learn about subjects as an extension of badges, subjects of local interest, or those that support Council goals. These recognitions were created by Girl Scouts Nation's Capital, but Girl Scouts from any Council can earn them. We have more than a dozen patch programs; read more at [www.gscnc.org/patches](http://www.gscnc.org/patches).

### **Entrepreneurial Program**

The Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program teach youth members valuable skills while giving them money-earning opportunities for their Troop activities. Whether they're selling magazines and chocolate or making decorations for their cookie booths, our youth members are learning to “dream, earn, do” with the product programs.

### **Fall Product Program**

The Fall Product Program is directed toward family, friends, and community connections - those closest to Girl Scouting. It enables troops to earn startup money by selling magazine subscriptions as well as nuts and candy. Find more information at [www.gscnc.org/en/cookies/fall-product-sales.html](http://www.gscnc.org/en/cookies/fall-product-sales.html) Those Girl Scouts who create their digital storefront during the Fall Product Program find a quick and easy transition to their Cookie Program digital storefront. They will use the same login and their email contacts will already be established, so they are able to send emails right away.

### **Cookie Program**

The Girl Scout Cookie Program has been the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world since 1917, when Girl Scouts in Muskogee, Oklahoma, sold homemade cookies to raise funds. By participating in the program Girl Scouts learn how to make financial decisions, manage money, and develop customer service skills. They can sell cookies through various

methods like pre-order cards, direct sales, booths, and the online Digital Cookie platform. Proceeds from the cookie program directly benefit local Girl Scout troops, helping them to fund program activities, camping trips, and service projects.

### **How to Participate**

Girl Scouts get the information and materials they need for the Fall Product Program and the Cookie Program through their troop. Troops must have a Fall Product Chair and Troop Cookie Manager to participate. Training and ongoing information is provided to those volunteers so they can support their troop. Individually Registered Members (Juliettes) participate through their Service Unit.

### **Selling at Girl Scout Cookie Booths**

At Girl Scouts Nation's Capital, the cookie booth locations are developed by the Service Unit Booth Coordinators. Troops or individuals should not approach businesses to set up booths. If you have a contact that may allow booths, please share that with your Service Unit Booth Coordinator. Booths will not be established or approved at locations that Girl Scouts cannot legally patronize, such as liquor stores or marijuana dispensaries.

More cookie sale and booth guidance can be found in Booth Essentials and the Troop Cookie Manager Manual.

### **Outdoor Facilitator Led Programs**

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital hosts a variety of outdoor activities that are open for troops and individual Girl Scouts. Our team of trained facilitators lead all the programs. Troops and groups are only required to make sure they have enough adults to meet their group's youth-to-adult ratios. Programs are offered in: high adventure (including archery, canoe, kayak, slingshot and tomahawk), environmental education, outdoor skills, and arts and crafts! Look for these opportunities on the Event Calendar. <https://www.gscnc.org/en/members/events.html>

## **Chapter 8: Camping, Field Trips, and Travel**

### **Camping Opportunities**

#### **Troop Camping**

An overnight camping experience is planned and carried out by a troop and its trained volunteers. Troops may camp on Nation's Capital camp properties by reserving a campsite through our online system. Find information about our council's camp properties at [www.gscnc.org/camp](http://www.gscnc.org/camp). (For instructions on how to reserve a campsite, refer to Ch. 9) Camping on non-Council camps is also a great opportunity to explore our local parks and campsites. Remember that you need a Cookout & Campout certified volunteer as well as a First Aider present.

## **Encampments**

Service Units, Associations, or teen groups sometimes sponsor large group camping experiences. Information and applications for Service Unit encampments on Council sites are posted on the “SU Encampment Coordinators - GS Nation’s Capital” rally and the Council- Wide Service Unit Teams rally on Rallyhood. Information about spring encampments is shared in the fall, information about summer encampments is shared in the winter, and information about fall encampments is shared in the spring. Spring Service Unit encampments are earned through the spring early renewal incentive program and awarded by Membership.

## **Core Camps**

Core camps are weekend camping events in which the programming and meals are provided by a teen troop. Activities are designed to acquaint leaders and Girl Scouts with program resources and the opportunity to explore the out-of-doors in a more structured setting. When Core Camps are open for registration, information can be found on the Council’s Event Calendar. <https://www.gscnc.org/en/members/events.html>

## **Summer Sleep-Away Camp**

Summer sleep-away camp is a camping experience ranging from three days to two weeks, based on the age of the Girl Scouts. For more information, see:

<https://www.gscnc.org/en/members/for-girl-scouts/camp-and-outdoors/summer-camp.html>

## **Summer Day and Evening Programs**

Summer Day and Evening Programs are 100% run by Girl Scouts Nation’s Capital volunteers at various locations across the region. Participation is by individuals. Programs are designed to introduce or better establish outdoor leadership skills for all ages. Information on these programs is available on the Council website beginning in January of every year.

<https://www.gscnc.org/en/members/for-girl-scouts/camp-and-outdoors/summer-camp.html>

## **Explore Camp Patch Program**

A great way to introduce your troop to the outdoors is by completing the Girl Scouts Nation’s Capital Explore Camp Patch Program. The Explore Camp Patch Program encourages troops to explore the outdoors and take part in Girl Scout traditions. Girl Scouts first earn the main patch of the program, which is focused on the eight basic outdoor skills. Then, they take their skills to the next level by earning an individual camp patch during their visit to a Nation’s Capital camp. Each individual camp patch is focused on specific camp property and a specific basic outdoor skill. For more information, visit [www.gscnc.org/patches](http://www.gscnc.org/patches)

## **Field Trips and Travel**

Girl Scouts encourages youth to try new things and see the world with fresh eyes, both inside and outside of their usual troop meetings. As with all Girl Scout activities, there is a progression to follow. Whenever an activity takes place outside of the normal troop meeting place, it is a field trip (for instance, leaving school grounds). Whenever a troop leaves its meeting space, a leader is responsible for gaining parental permission (see Chapter 3) and assembling a Field Trip and Travel Packet (Chapter 4).

## Use “Safety Activity Checkpoints”

Volunteers must review Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC) which can be found at [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms) to understand the Girl Scout safety requirements before planning any activity. Many activities listed in Safety Activity Checkpoints specify that vendors must be on the approved vendor list. Field trips do not require approval from the Council or service unit - however, certain kinds of travel must be approved.

## Approved Vendor List

All approved vendors must have a current certificate of insurance on file with the Council. The approved vendor list can be found by scanning the QR code here:

Check the “Insurance Expiration” column of the vendor list to ensure their certificate does not expire before your event. Vendors are removed from the list when the certificate of insurance on file expires – so in some cases, volunteers will need to reach out to the vendor to obtain the updated information to submit to the Council. Most vendors are used to such requests and are happy to provide this information. Contact the vendor at least 4 weeks before your event to allow enough time. Vendor insurance information can be submitted to [highadventure@gscnc.org](mailto:highadventure@gscnc.org).



Vendors are required to meet the following insurance requirements to be added to the vendor list:

- \$3 million dollars in general or umbrella insurance
- List Girl Scouts Nation’s Capital as a Certificate Holder

If they lack the \$3 million dollar insurance amount, they must list Girl Scouts Nation’s Capital as “Additionally Insured”.

## Automatically Approved Vendors

The following types of vendors are automatically approved and do not require a certificate of insurance to be submitted. (Vendors that fall into these categories may not appear on our approved vendor lists):

- Large amusement parks such as Disney World, Kings Dominion, Six Flags, and Hershey Park (Smaller-scale amusement parks/water parks still require a certificate of insurance.)
- Vendors owned and operated by a federal, state, or local government agency.
- Commercial and public transportation vendors such as a commercial airline or Metro. (Chartered bus transportation where a group rents out an entire bus does require a certificate of insurance.)
- Major cruise lines do not require a certificate of insurance. A certificate of insurance may be required for domestic shore excursions.

Note: If traveling internationally and unable to obtain a certificate of insurance, you must ensure the vendor adheres to all Safety Activity Checkpoints pertaining to the activity and inform parents of increased risk.

For information about planning high adventure activities at our camps, see Chapter 9. For a list of prohibited activities, see Chapter 3.

## **Required Chaperones/Adult Volunteers**

There must be at least two registered, trained volunteers with eligible background checks, who are not related by blood, marriage, or address, at least one of whom is female supervising every Girl Scout-related activity – but depending on the number of youth attending, there will be additional registered, background checked, trained adults required. Volunteers must adhere to the Youth-to-Adult ratios for every Girl Scout-related activity. Safety Activity Checkpoints specifies the Youth-to-Instructor ratios for certain high adventure activities. See Chapter 3 for information about when a First Aider is required.

## **Approval for Girl Scout Travel and Required Training**

Planning should begin at least 6 months in advance for domestic travel and 1-3 years before for international travel.

There is a required process for obtaining approval for travel of:

- 4 or more nights; OR
- A destination further than 200 miles or a 3.5 hour drive from your regular meeting place.
- This includes all international destinations and cruises.

## **Travel Approval Forms**

The travel Pre-Approval Form must be completed at least 3 months in advance of the trip. The travel Final Approval Form must be completed two weeks prior to departure. Both forms can be found at [www.gscnc.org/forms](http://www.gscnc.org/forms).

All attending adults must be registered members with an eligible background check. In addition, any eligible youth over the age of five attending the trip must be registered members.

## **Age Restrictions**

Daisies and Brownies are prohibited from taking troop trips of three or more nights, even if they have previous experience. For regional travel, Girl Scouts must be Juniors or older. For international travel, Girl Scouts must be Cadettes or older.

## **Travel Insurance**

All registered Girl Scout members receive activity accident insurance, which is supplemental health insurance that protects members while participating in Girl Scout activities. Troops should be thoughtful about what the basic insurance plan covers and whether they wish to purchase additional insurance for higher coverage. Extended Activity Insurance is suggested for domestic travel. International travel requires troops to purchase additional insurance. See Chapter 4 for information about obtaining additional insurance.

## **Travel for Single Girl Scouts and Individually Registered Members**

Family travel is not Girl Scout travel, and Girl Scout money can only be spent on Girl Scout activities. As a result, individual Girl Scouts including Individually Registered Members (Juliettes) or single members from a troop can only travel as part of a Girl Scout travel group, when they are part of the GSUSA Destinations program, or as part of an approved Gold Award project.

## **Training is the Key to Safe and Successful Travel**

Training is required for Girl Scout travel and is available at any time by logging into MyGS to complete the course “204 Travel Training.”

# Chapter 9: Training, Resources and Making Reservations

## **Training**

All volunteers must be adequately prepared for their position.

Troop Committee members must complete the required training within three months of selecting their role. For information on required training, please see Volunteer Essentials online.

## **Training for Teens**

For information about training opportunities for teens, see Volunteer Essentials online.

## **Volunteer Resources**

### **Volunteer Toolkit**

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) can help you create a year plan; set your meeting calendar to include locations, dates and times; and provide meeting plans to earn all Girl Scout badges. Leaders can customize meetings, view material lists, print meeting aids, and choose from several activities for each badge requirement. Scripts are a great resource, but volunteers can feel free to adapt the plans and swap different activities that also meet the spirit of the badge requirements. To access the Volunteer Toolkit and make changes to the troop’s VTK Year Plan, a volunteer must be a currently registered adult and an approved troop leader for the troop or registered as an Independently Registered Member Mentor. Go to [www.gscnc.org](http://www.gscnc.org), and click on “MYGS” to enter your login information, then select Volunteer Toolkit.

### **Rallyhood**

Girl Scouts Nation’s Capital staff and volunteers share information, collaborate and communicate on many topics using an online tool called “Rallyhood.” Some rallies are focused on specific topics of interest or volunteer role. Volunteers should join their service unit rally and consider joining other rallies as well. See our website for more information at

[www.gscnc.org/rallyhood](http://www.gscnc.org/rallyhood).

## **Online Troop Catalog**

The online troop catalog is the troop's "profile" in Volunteer Systems. Part of the information is public and is used by caregivers and youth to decide if the troop is right for them. This information includes the grades accepted into the troop, the number of spaces available in the troop, the interests/focus of the troop, the day of troop meetings, and the frequency of the meetings. Some of the information is private and available ONLY to members of the troop and their caregivers, such as the troop's exact meeting location.

A troop catalog update should be submitted to make changes to the troop's online profile:

- An update **MUST** be submitted once per year for every troop during spring renewal (April-June) to prepare for the upcoming school year.
- The spring renewal updates are held until late July when MyGS is "turned over" for the new school year
- An update may also be submitted as needed between August and March for the current school year.
- These optional/as needed updates are processed within a week of receipt.
- Submissions are made online **ONLY** by a troop leader at:

<https://gscnc.jotform.com/membership/troop-catalog-update>

## **Reserving Program Kits, Equipment, Campsites and High Adventure**

### **Doubleknot Reservation System**

All reservations for program kits, equipment, campsites and high adventure sites at our camp properties are made through the Doubleknot system. This system is not connected to your MyGS login. If you have not used the system before, you will need to set up a new login. If your address, email or phone number changes, you will need to update it in both systems because they are not synchronized.

### **Council Program Kits**

Nation's Capital program kits contain activity directions along with resources and the non-consumable items needed to complete the activities. Kits are available on a wide variety of subjects. Some kits are specifically designed to help Girl Scouts earn badges or patches, while others are more general in nature. Scan the QR Code here to find a list of available Program Kits.



Kit requests should be submitted at least three weeks before your desired pick-up date from this link: <https://gscnc.doubleknot.com/facilitysearch/3245>. Most kits are free of charge and can be kept for up to four weeks at a time. Some specialty kits have a rental fee and specific time limits for use. They can be picked up and dropped off at one of our Girl Scout offices or the Equipment Center in Chantilly, VA.

## **Reserving Campsites Online**

Our Council owns eight camp properties that are available for rental by troops, groups, service units, and associations. Reservations for these sites can be made no more than three calendar months before your trip at this link: <https://gscnc.doubleknot.com/facilitysearch/3246>. When you make a reservation, you will receive a confirmation email from [noreply@doubleknot.com](mailto:noreply@doubleknot.com). The confirmation email will include a link to the Site Details Document. Click the link to the Site Details Document and be sure to print it to bring with you to camp. It contains very important information about your campsite reservation. For information on Fees for Nation's Capital Campsites, and use of the commercial kitchens at these sites, please see Chapter 9.

## **Other Camp Reservation Requests**

For all other requests including association events, large-scale events, out-of-council requests, and adult educator requests, please fill out the following survey.

<https://form.jotform.com/220685724944060>

Please remember that SU Encampments are scheduled through the SU Encampment Application which is posted seasonally on the Outdoor and High Adventure and SU Encampment rallies.

## **Equipment Rentals**

Troops may rent outdoor equipment, flags, outdoor games, or program kits from our Equipment Center located in Chantilly, VA. All equipment is loaned on a first-come, first-served basis via the reservation system at <https://gscnc.doubleknot.com/facilitysearch/3246>. Our Equipment Center operates for Nation's Capital Girl Scout members only. Equipment cannot be rented by non-Nation's Capital Girl Scout groups or individuals, even if they are accompanying your troop.

Contact our Equipment Center staff with questions: Phone: 703-560-5072 Email: [rmeidlinger@gscnc.org](mailto:rmeidlinger@gscnc.org)

## **High Adventure Activities**

High adventure activities are those that require specialized equipment, skills, and training. High adventure activities require written permission from caregivers.

### **High Adventure Activities at Our Camps**

The high adventure activities available for reservation at each of our camp properties can be found in the table below. To make a high adventure reservation, visit <https://gscnc.doubleknot.com/facilitysearch/3246>. High adventure areas are not available for overnight camping. If you do not have a trained facilitator, check our Outdoor Facilitator Led Programs!

Camp	HA Activities Available
Aquasco	Slingshots^, Tomahawks^
Brighton Woods	Archery, Slingshots, Tomahawks
Coles Trip	Archery, Canoes, Kayaks, Slingshots^, Tomahawks^
Crowell	Archery, Slingshots, Tomahawks, Low and High Challenge Course*
May Flather	Archery, Slingshots, Tomahawks, Low Challenge Course*, Climbing Tower*
Potomac Woods	Archery, Slingshots, Tomahawks
White Rock	Archery, Canoes, Kayaks, Slingshots, Kayaks, Low Challenge Course, Aerial Challenge Course*
Winona	Archery, Canoe, Kayaks, Slingshots, Tomahawks
Boat Trailers	Available for rent, complete boat trailer request to reserve.
*Only available during special events (large group events, etc) or on certain weekends--see website for more details. ^Ranges located on both sides of the camp	

\*Bathrooms are not included with High Adventure reservations. Be aware that you will not be permitted to use the restroom of any unit that is reserved by another troop during your high adventure reservation. You may not access any lodge unless it has been reserved by your troop/group. See the Camp FAQs for which camps have all-camp latrines and where they are located.

† Ranges located on both sides (AQ, CT) or two ranges present (MF)

♥ Available only on select weekends – see website for details

Large group event use only

^Trailer available for rental, not all camps have on-site paddling opportunities

### Trailer Rentals

Trailers are available for off-site paddling. To reserve a trailer, fill out this form: <https://form.jotform.com/GSCNCCamping/trailerrentals>. Trailer rental requests cannot be submitted less than three weeks prior to your preferred date.

### High Adventure Vendors

If a troop would like to participate in a high adventure activity outside of a Girl Scout property or use an outside business, that vendor must be on the approved vendor list found here: <https://www.gscnc.org/en/members/for-girl-scouts/camp-and-outdoors/high-adventure.html>

### Camp Properties

Girl Scouts Nation's Capital owns eight camp properties that are open for camping and other outdoor activities. Camp Aquasco in Prince George's County, MD; Camp Brighton Woods in Montgomery County, MD; Camp Coles Trip in Stafford County, VA; Camp Crowell in Fairfax County, VA; Camp May Flather in Augusta County, VA; Camp Potomac Woods in Loudoun County, VA; Camp Winona in Charles County, MD; and Camp White Rock in Hampshire County, WV. For camp maps and charts of facilities available, see <https://www.gscnc.org/en/members/for-girl-scouts/camp-and-outdoors.html>.

**Scan to learn more** about Girl Scouts Nation's Capital's eight camp properties **or visit** <https://www.gscnc.org/en/members/for-girl-scouts/camp-and-outdoors.html>



# Quick Scans



## Accessibility and Our Equipment Center

Our members can rent camping equipment, flags, bridges for ceremonies, or program kits. The Equipment Center currently offers wheelchair rickshaws and wheelchair tents to accommodate mobility aid users. Please do not hesitate to reach out if you have requests or recommendations regarding other equipment that will enable all of our Girl Scouts to participate in our programs.



**Scan here for more Info**

[Accessibility and Our Equipment Center](#)



## Supporting Girl Scouts with Diverse Intellectual and Physical Abilities

Girl Scouts is committed to making reasonable accommodations for any physical or cognitive limitations a Girl Scout may have. Communicate with young people of all abilities and/or their caregivers to assess special needs and accommodations.



**Scan here for more Info**

[Supporting Girl Scouts with Diverse Intellectual & Physical Abilities](#)



# Procedures for Accidents and Emergencies

## In Case of Minor Illness

Call a caregiver to come for the child. If no one is available to pick up the child, an adult should take the child home. Ensure that someone is home to care for the child.

**DO NOT LEAVE A CHILD UNATTENDED.**

## In Case of a Minor Accident

1. Immediately give first aid or find a first aider; transport the injured person to an emergency room, if necessary, and contact the caregiver.
2. Ask the caregiver to come to the site or meet at the emergency room, if appropriate. (If a caregiver cannot be reached, call the person designated to act in an emergency. Continue trying to reach the caregivers so they can assume responsibility for medical decisions.)
3. Record in writing:
  - a. Conditions existing at time of accident  
Order of events following the accident  
Names and addresses of witnesses
  - b. Medical attention, opinion or instructions received from caregivers
4. Notify the Council office as soon as possible (within 48 hours) by emailing [customercare@gscnc.org](mailto:customercare@gscnc.org).
5. Submit completed insurance forms and a copy of the record of the accident within five days.

## In Case of a Serious Accident, Emergency or Fatality

1. Give priority attention to providing all possible care for the injured person(s). Secure doctor, ambulance, and police as appropriate. Secure and/or retain a responsible adult at the scene of the accident. Contact the caregiver and ask them to come to the site or meet at the emergency room. If caregivers cannot be reached, call emergency contact. Continue trying to reach the caregiver or emergency contact.
2. In the event of fatality, always notify the police. Retain a responsible adult at the scene of the accident. See that no disturbance of the victim or surroundings is permitted until police have assumed authority.
3. Refer all media (newspaper, radio, TV) inquiries to the Girl Scouts Nation's Capital Marketing and Communications department.
4. During office hours (Monday through Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.), contact the Council office as soon as possible: 202-237-1670 or 1-800-523-7898. Reverse the charges if necessary, stating that it is an emergency. After office hours and on weekends, call the EMERGENCY ANSWERING SERVICE AT: 1-888-288-1784.

# Please donate to SHARE today

## SHARE

impacts every Girl Scout and volunteer in our council.



## What SHARE Funds

### Girl Scout Promise Fund

The Girl Scout Promise Fund is our commitment to ensuring that everyone who wants to be a Girl Scout can.

The program is available to help support members with things like the annual GSUSA Membership, Uniforms, Program Participation, and more!

### Camp

Maintains our eight camps, high adventure activities and ensures every girl has the chance to enjoy the outdoors. \$1000 helps get Girl Scouts to sleep away camp.

### Program

Supports troop and camp programs, STEM, life skills, entrepreneurship and leadership training. \$250 helps a girl travel on a Girl Scout destination.



Scan here for more Info

