



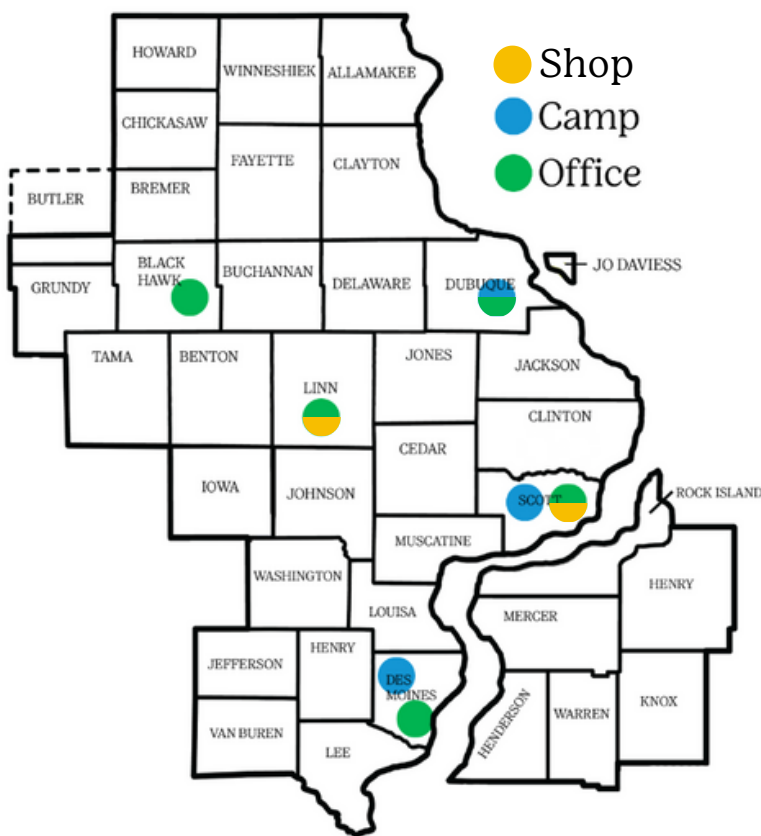
New Troop Leader's

Guide to Success!



Everything a new leader needs to know for the best year ever!

girlscouts
of eastern iowa
and western illinois



**Building girls of courage,
confidence, and character,
who make the world a
better place.**

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.

**Members may substitute for the word God in
accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.*



Visit our council offices,
shops, & camp properties!
Scan here for a full list of
our hours & locations.

Service Unit

Service Unit Director (SUD) Name: _____

Service Unit Director (SUD) Email: _____

Emergency

Call 563-328-4718 to report an emergency after business hours.

Marketing

Share troop photos and refer media inquires to Marcomm@GirlScoutsToday.org

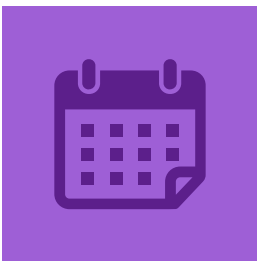
For general information or assistance, contact our offices at Info@GirlScoutsToday.org
or 800-798-0833.

Welcome!

We're so excited for you to join the Girl Scout Movement!

Your talents and experience have the power to change lives. As a Girl Scout volunteer, you'll help craft their experiences—from the way they run their cookie businesses to the way they speak up in meetings. You'll also teach them the skills and give them the confidence they need to bring their unique ideas to life. As Girl Scouts learn, grow, and lead, you're there through it all—shaping the future right along with us. And while you teach them important life lessons and set them up for happy, successful lives, you'll grow too—honing your own leadership and organizational skills. It's a win-win!

Here are a few things to think about as you get started:



- Girl Scout troops usually meet 1-2 times a month, typically for 60-90 minutes each time. You have the flexibility to schedule your troop activities in a way that makes sense for you and your troop members!



- Troops start at all times of year. You don't need to wait for a certain season - there is no time like the present!
- Awesome troops take time, and we don't expect you to do it all alone! You and your co-leader will build a team a parents, caregivers, and other supportive adults to make your Girl Scout troop the best it can be.



- Most troop leaders tell us they spend an average of 4-6 hours each month on planning, leading meetings, and doing Girl Scout activities most times of the year.



- If you are also managing the Cookie Program for your troop, it can add time in February and March. We suggest asking another person in your team to manage cookie logistics so you can focus on leading awesome troop meetings!

Troop Leader Checklist

We created this handy checklist for you to track your progress and keep you moving. If you get stuck, that's ok! You have a whole network of local volunteers (called a service unit) and a team of staff ready to help or answer questions when you need them. Don't be afraid to reach out! You even have a Girl Scout staff member (Community Engagement Manager, a.k.a. CEM) who will help with your training and check-in to make sure you are on track.



Day 1: Register and complete your background check.

Your first step is to register as a Girl Scout Troop Leader, and complete your background check. You probably already completed this step... look at you go!



By Day 7: Complete your online training.

New leader training will help you learn all the basics of the Girl Scout Program and how to manage your troop. This training can be found in the gsLearn training platform. More info on gsLearn can be found on page 5.



By Day 10: Connect with your Community Engagement Manager.

Schedule a call or meeting to go over any questions you have, and review the Volunteer Toolkit.



By Day 14: Connect with your troop members and their families.

Reach out to other troop volunteers, schedule a meeting with caregivers, and build your troop team. Get input on when and where the troop should meet, and get support from other adults. Find more on how you can work collaboratively to make your troop the best it can be on page 8.



By Day 21: Plan your first troop meeting.

Most troops are ready for their first meeting around day 30. It's ok if you don't know where to start just yet! There are tools like the Volunteer Toolkit and Troop Year Planner that make planning easy. Find more on these resources on page 7.



By Day 30: Start your troop bank account.

From managing troop profit from product sales, to paying for events and buying supplies, all troops need to manage their money. Each troop sets up their own bank account to collect their funds, with two adults, who are registered and background checked, listed as account signers. Learn more on page 10.



Get ready for an awesome year of Girl Scouts!

Pssst... don't forget to tell us how we can improve onboarding for future leaders. Keep an eye out for surveys so you can share your thoughts.

Girl Scout Basics

With you as their troop leader, the members in your troop will learn to be true to themselves, make strides towards their dreams, and share in fun-filled activities they'll remember. Our program centers around the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to achieve essential outcomes for girls:



A Strong Sense of Self

Confidence in herself & her abilities



Positive Values

She acts responsibly & honestly



Confidence to Seek Challenges

She tries new things and learns from mistakes



Healthy Relationships

She maintains healthy relationships



Community Problem Solver

She works to make the world a better place

All programs are designed with a research-backed curriculum that centers around fun and friendship. To create engaging experiences, we focus on four core program areas to spark girls' interests.



Outdoors



Entrepreneurship



STEM



Life Skills

As girls participate in STEM, the outdoors, life skills, and entrepreneurship, they will...

- ✓ Discover who they are, what they care about, and how they can use their talents.
- ✓ Connect with other people locally and globally, to make a difference in the world.
- ✓ Take Action to do something to make the world a better place – our mission!



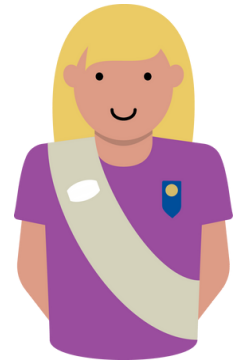
Daisy
K-1



Brownie
2-3



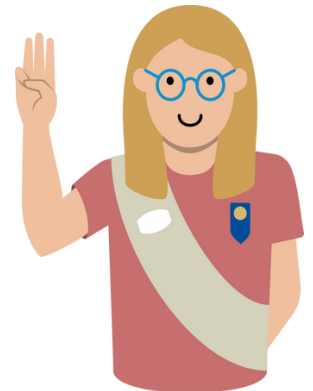
Junior
4-5



Cadette
6-8



Senior
9-10



Ambassador
11-12

Honor Troops

Becoming an Honor Troop is easier than you think—these eight simple things are the mark of a successful troop.

-  **Set & keep a regular meeting time & location**
Meet at least monthly and involve parents for support.
-  **Participate in Girl Scout traditions**
Learn and say the Promise and Law, sing Girl Scout songs, take part in simple ceremonies, and wear Girl Scout pins and uniforms.
-  **Complete a service project**
Identify a need in your community and take action! Girl Scouts in grades 4-12 can even earn High Awards for their service.
-  **Take part in an outdoor activity**
Go to your community park, take a hike, or go to camp.
-  **Go on a field trip or attend a Girl Scout event**
Take a field trip with your troop or visit the events calendar to find events for families and troops.
-  **Choose a few badges to work on as a troop**
Choose badges from a wide range of options that interest girls.
-  **Participate in Girl Scout Product Programs**
Fall Product Program and the Cookie Program are essential to join and raise funds for your troop and our Movement.
-  **Most importantly, have fun!**
Make memories with your troop that will last a lifetime!

gsLearn

We want to make sure you have all the knowledge you need to face your new adventure as a troop leader with confidence! We have a full training course on our training platform, gsLearn. Make sure you complete the “514 New Troop Leader” learning path before you start meeting with your troop. It will cover everything from the basics of what Girl Scouts do (like badges, patches and girl-led programming) to troop finances, volunteer expectations, and safety requirements. You can find this in the content library. If you need more information on how to access your account, see page 6.



Scan here to receive recognition for earning Honor Troop status and submit your troop to be featured on our social media pages.



The learning doesn't stop after your new leader onboarding is complete! Check back for cookie training, troop travel training, and more in the future.

Planning your troop year



Troop Year Plans

Our age-appropriate troop year plans are the best tool for first-year troop leaders to get started with Girl Scouts without getting overwhelmed. The entire year is mapped out—just follow along to help your Girl Scouts complete badge activities, improve their communities, and explore the world around them.

The best part about the Troop Year Planner is that the meetings are pre-planned for you through our planning tool called the Volunteer Toolkit.



Volunteer Toolkit

Use the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) to access instructions to lead troop meetings. This is your free online resource for meeting overviews, materials lists, and managing your troop, and more.

The VTK is your official online source for Girl Scout program content, helpful resources, and troop finance reporting. This fully customizable planning tool helps you set up and track meetings and achievements for your Girl Scout year.



With the VTK, troop leaders and co-leaders can:

- Explore pre-built tracks of the most popular journeys and badges (including all of the plans in the Troop Year Planner) or build your own!
- Mix and Match awards from all grade levels and even find specific multi-level troop content. This means that you can add badges for any age level (ex. Daisies and Brownies).
- Preview year plans and badge requirements before you add them to your year plan to make selections easier.
- Manage troop rosters and email families.
- Report troop finances at the end of the year.

The VTK has the time-saving tools you need so you can spend more time creating an unforgettable Girl Scout experience.

Your first troop meeting

Most troop meetings are 60 or 90 minutes in length. Troops usually meet in schools, community rooms in places like libraries, City Hall, businesses, or churches. What's most important is to make sure the space is free to use, and is welcoming and accessible to all members. If you aren't sure where to start, ask families of troop members if they have ideas or connections.

When you are at the meeting space, make sure you know where the nearest bathrooms are, the location of a First Aid kit (or bring your own), and closest exit in the event of an emergency. Find out if the space has an AED on site, and it's location.

If you use the Volunteer Toolkit, your meetings will start with a pre-planned outline to earn a badge or patch, usually in 1-2 meetings. While not every meeting has to be a badge-earning meeting, most troops follow a loose agenda that looks something like this:

As girls arrive (10 Minutes)

Have a simple activity that Girl Scouts can do as other participants are still arriving in the theme of the badge or patch they are working on.

Opening (10-20 Minutes)

Most troops do something to mark the start of every meeting—that could be simple like saying the Promise & Law. (Girl Scouts can repeat line by line, if they don't know it yet!) Create a consistent tradition that works for your troop. This is also a good time to introduce the activities they are working on and begin brainstorming!

2-3 Activities (20-45 Minutes)

This is the bulk of your meeting time. Depending on the length of your meeting and the specific badge requirements this may be more or less. Try to make a combination of different types of activities to make sure Girl Scouts stay engaged. Even moving to different parts of the meeting space can help with this!

Closing Ceremony (5-10 Minutes)

Do a recap of what Girl Scouts learned or accomplished, and do a closing ceremony. Many troops do a Friendship Circle and sing Make New Friends, but you can adapt this to your troop's preferences.

Building your troop team

Troops are at their best when volunteers, parents, and caregivers work as a team. Set up time to bring everyone together, in person or online, to discuss the troop and get to know each other. Talk about the needs of the troop, and divide up responsibilities according to each person's talents and preferences. Each troop requires at least two adult volunteers to ensure that all skill sets are covered to lead a troop, but the more the merrier!

Troop Leaders* (2)

- Plan meetings
- Help girls have fun with purpose
- Keep people safe
- Manage troop business

Cookie Manager*

- Help the troop have a great cookie sale
- Manage troop cookie funds
 - Gather cookie permission forms
 - Help girls set and achieve goals

Drivers & Chaperones

- Drive to field trips
- Keep girls focused on fun, learning, and safety during trips and other activities

Additional Roles

- Troop Treasurer*
- Communications Liaison
- Snack Coordinator
- Troop Meeting Helper



A supportive troop team is important for a successful year of Girl Scouts. Scan here to read more about building your troop team.

*Volunteers in these roles must have a background check and be registered members of Girl Scouts

Troop Safety

While working with girls and learning new skills is fun and rewarding, assuming responsibility for other children means that some level of risk management and due diligence are involved.

Your group must have at least two approved, volunteers present at all times. These volunteers cannot be related to each other, and at least one must be female.

You may need additional volunteers, depending on the size of the group, the ages and abilities of troop members, and for travel or certain types of activities. See the chart below for examples. Any adult that is supervising girls must:

- Be 18 years or older (or over 21 to drive youth Girl Scouts)
- Have a current background check (renewed every 3 years)
- Be approved as a volunteer



Scan here for safety resources like Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints and information on CPR/First Aid/AED training in your area.

Volunteer-to-Girl Ratio Chart	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, Camping	
	2 unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this # of girls:	Plus 1 additional volunteer for each additional # of this many girls:	2 unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this # of girls:	Plus 1 additional volunteer for each additional # of this many girls:
Daisies (Grades K-1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Brownies (Grades 2-3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Juniors (Grades 4-5)	25	1-10	16	1-8
Cadettes (Grades 6-8)	25	1-12	20	1-10
Seniors (Grades 9-10)	30	1-15	24	1-12
Ambassadors (Grades 11-12)	30	1-15	24	1-12



Call 800-798-0833 during business hours or call 563-328-4718 after business hours to report an emergency.

Troop Finances

When you are ready to open your troop bank account and have decided which bank you want to use (let us know if you would like bank suggestions), you will need to:

- **Step 1: Contact Info@GirlScoutsToday.org or use the QR code to get the required paperwork.**
- **Step 2: Call the bank or credit union to find out the next steps to set up your account.**
- **Step 3: Return the ACH form from the bank or credit union to the office to complete your account setup. You can email the form to Info@GirlScoutsToday.org or drop it off.**

You will know you are done when your troop receives start-up funds from the council.

Girl Scout funds are girl-earned and girl-spent and belong to all girls in the troop equally, even if a girl was unable to participate in product programs. A report of the troop bank account should be shared with all troop members, including parents, at least monthly. Most troop funds are typically earned through entrepreneurship programs below. You can also request troop dues from families to help get the troop started. Troop dues are typically a one-time fee anywhere from \$5-\$20. Troop dues cover just enough for basic supplies and are not a requirement. Learn more about managing troop finances in your gsLearn New Leader Training learning path.

Not only do entrepreneurship programs fund opportunities for Girl Scouts, they also teach them five essential business skills:

- **Goal Setting**
- **Decision Making**
- **Money Management**
- **Business Ethics**
- **People Skills**

Fall Product Program

Girls sell nuts, candies, and magazines to earn prizes and funds for troop activities. This program offers simple, online tools for Troop Leaders and parents to manage the sale and girls to reach out to customers. Learn more at www.GirlScoutsToday.org/FallSale.

Girl Scout Cookie Program

The Cookie Program kicks off in the wintertime every year! This financial literacy program offers special prizes and is the largest fundraiser for troops. Find more info about our entrepreneurship programs at www.GirlScoutsToday.org/SellCookies.

Uniforms & Council Shop



Daisy Uniform



Brownie Uniform



Junior Uniform



Cadette, Senior & Ambassador Uniforms



Scan here to learn more about Girl Scout uniforms, including a helpful badge placement guide for all levels.

Visit our shops!


Girl Scout Shops are located at our offices in Cedar Rapids and Bettendorf. Not nearby a shop? Shop with us online!

Bettendorf Shop

940 Golden Valley Drive, Bettendorf, Iowa
563-823-9940

Cedar Rapids Shop

2345 Blairs Ferry Road NE, Unit G, Cedar Rapids, Iowa
319-363-8335



Scan here to find shop hours, products, schedule a pick up, ship items to your home, or schedule a pop-up shop.