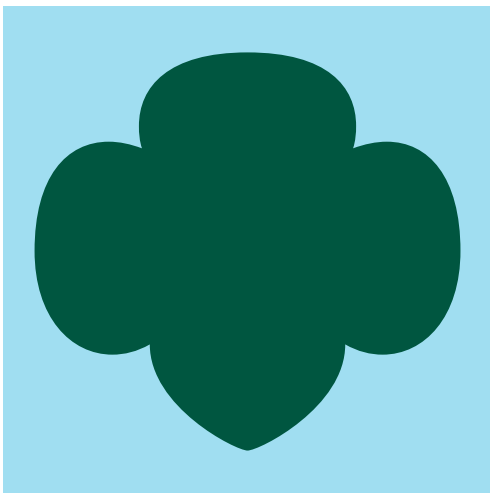




New Troop Leader's

Guide to Success!



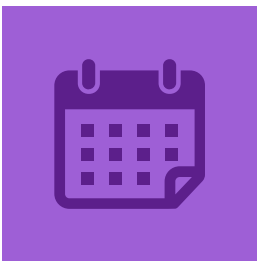
Everything a new leader needs to know for the best year ever!

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 of 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 on 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 onboarding and check-in to make sure you are on track.



Day 1: Register as an adult member of Girl Scouts

Your first step is to register as a Girl Scout Troop Leader. You probably already completed this step... look at you go!



Day 2: Complete your background check.

Be on the lookout for an email from our trusted vendor, Sterling Volunteers, about completing your background check.



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 on the gsLearn training platform. More info on gsLearn can be found on page 6.

[Start New Leader Training](#)



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 parents and 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 9.



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 its own bank account to collect their funds, with two adults, who are registered and background checked, listed as account signers. More about troop bank account guidance can be found on page 11.



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.

Troop Basics

Girl Scouts typically complete activities as part of a troop (a group of Girl Scouts led by volunteers) who meet regularly to have fun, learn new skills, and improve their community. Troops can either be single-level or multi-level, with more than one program level included.

- A single-level troop allows activities and experiences to be tailored to the group's age.
- A multi-level troop lets older Girl Scouts mentor younger ones, supports diverse learning, and balances shared activities with age-specific needs.

Both troop types offer unique benefits! The choice depends on leader preferences, community needs, and available resources.



Daisy
K-1 Grade



Brownie
2-3 Grade



Junior
4-5 Grade



**Cadette, Senior &
Ambassador**
6-12 Grade

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

**Explore
Girl Scout
Uniforms**



Learn more about Girl Scout uniforms, including a helpful badge placement guide for all levels.

**Explore the
Girl Scout Shops**



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

Girl Scout Basics

All programs are designed with a research-backed curriculum that centers around fun and friendship. With you as their troop leader, the members in your troop 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!

Variety of Activities

- National Program
 - Outdoor Program
 - Cookie Program
- Community Service
- Field Trips and Events

Supportive Relationships

This means their troop leaders

- Care about them
- Enable possibility thinking
- Provide a safe space

And they have positive peer relationships

Three Girl Scout Processes

- Girl Led
- Cooperative Learning
- Learning by doing

When Girl Scouts experience a variety of activities, supportive relationships and the three Girl Scout Process, they achieve Five Essential GSLE Outcomes:



A Strong Sense of Self

Develop confidence in themselves & their abilities



Positive Values

Act ethically, honestly & responsibly



Confidence to Seek Challenges

Try things even if they might fail & learn from mistakes



Healthy Relationships

Communicate their feelings & resolve conflicts constructively



Community Problem Solver

Contribute to the world in purposeful & meaningful ways

Volunteer Training

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 [“New Leader Training”](#) 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 programing) to troop finances, volunteer expectations, and safety requirements.



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.



Check out the [events calendar](#) on our website for other types of training like First Aid and Outdoor Skills!

Planning your troop year

A Parent/Caregiver Meeting is an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other. At this meeting, the troop can also begin planning its year. This is a great time to get support with meeting logistics, like choosing days, times, and location of troop meetings with support of families. 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.

These are the activities that make up a well-rounded Girl Scout year. Research shows troops that complete the recommended range of activities report higher levels of satisfaction.

- Earning 3–5 badges or one higher award
- Community service or Take Action project
- Outdoor activity or overnight camping
- Girl Scout Cookie Program participation
- Field trips and council events
- Celebrations and traditions
 - Girl Scout holidays
 - Bridging ceremony

Troop planning tools



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.



Girl Scout Experience Box for New Daisy or Brownie Troops

Qualifying leaders for new Daisy or Brownie troops receive complimentary monthly Girl Scout Experience Boxes delivered right to their door. With thoughtful script suggestions, step-by-step instructions, and ready-to-go supplies, planning troop meetings has never been easier! Contact the council to find out if your troop qualifies.



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, 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 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 membership year.

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

Successful troop meetings

Most troop meetings are 60 or 90 minutes in length, and contain a variety of activities to keep Girl Scouts engaged.

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 of 7 parts that looks something like this:

1. Startup Activity - As girls arrive (10 Minutes)

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

2. Opening (5-15 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.

3. Troop Planning (5-15 Minutes)

Use this as a time for announcements, girl-led discussion and planning or voting on upcoming activities. This is also a great time to introduce the activities they are working on and begin brainstorming!

4. Main Activities (30-45 Minutes)

This is the bulk of your meeting time and usually is made up of badge work, service projects, or fun activities. 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! Larger troops might find success by splitting up into smaller groups and using rotating “stations” for some activities.

5. Clean-Up (5 Minutes)

Troop members work together to clean up after the activity. Make it fun with music or a game. Remember, Girl Scouts always leave a place better than they found it!

6. Closing (5-10 Minutes)

Use the closing as an opportunity to reflect. Discuss what they learned, their favorite parts of the meeting, or things they are looking forward to in future meetings. Many troops do a Friendship Circle and sing Make New Friends, but you can adapt this to your troop's preferences.

7. Parent/Caregiver Updates (5 Minutes)

At pick-up time, gather parents and caregivers to share what Girl Scouts accomplished during the meeting, share any announcements, updates or reminders. This is also a great opportunity to ask for help with tasks from families.

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!

Volunteers must be registered and background checked, and need to complete position specific training to supervise or drive youth members, attend overnight events, or handle troop funds. Adults routinely attending troop meetings and activities may be required to register, complete a background check, and safety training.

Troop Leaders (2)

- Help Girl Scouts learn, grow, and have fun
- Plan meetings and adventures together
- Encourage teamwork and confidence
- Connect with other local leaders
- Guide the troop experience

Troop Chaperone

- Help make trips safe and fun
- Support outings and adventures
- Assist with travel and supervision

Troop Treasurer

- Keep track of troop money
- Stay organized with receipts and spending
- Share updates so everyone's in the loop

Troop Product Managers

- Help run the cookie or fall product program
- Keep everyone on track with dates
- Organize booths
- Manage products and orders

Troop Volunteer

- Lend a hand when you can
- Share your skills and talents
- Help with meetings or projects
- Jump in where needed most - coordinate snacks, communication, help at meetings or document troop experiences!

Topic Expert/Guest speaker

- Share a hobby, skill, or passion
- Lead a fun activity or badge

**Building your
troop team**



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

Troop Safety

While working with youth 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 youth 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
- Complete safety training

Girl Scout Safety Resources

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

Volunteer-to-Girl Scout Ratio Chart	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, Camping	
	2 unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this # of kids:	Plus 1 additional volunteer for each additional # of this many kids:	2 unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this # of kids:	Plus 1 additional volunteer for each additional # of this many kids:
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:

Troop Bank Account Request

-  **Step 1: Click here to start 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 at your local council office.**

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

Girl Scout funds belong to all Girl Scouts in the troop equally, even if a member was unable to participate in product programs. A report of the troop bank account should be shared with all troop members, including parents and caregivers, at least monthly. Most troop funds are typically earned through entrepreneurship programs shown 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**

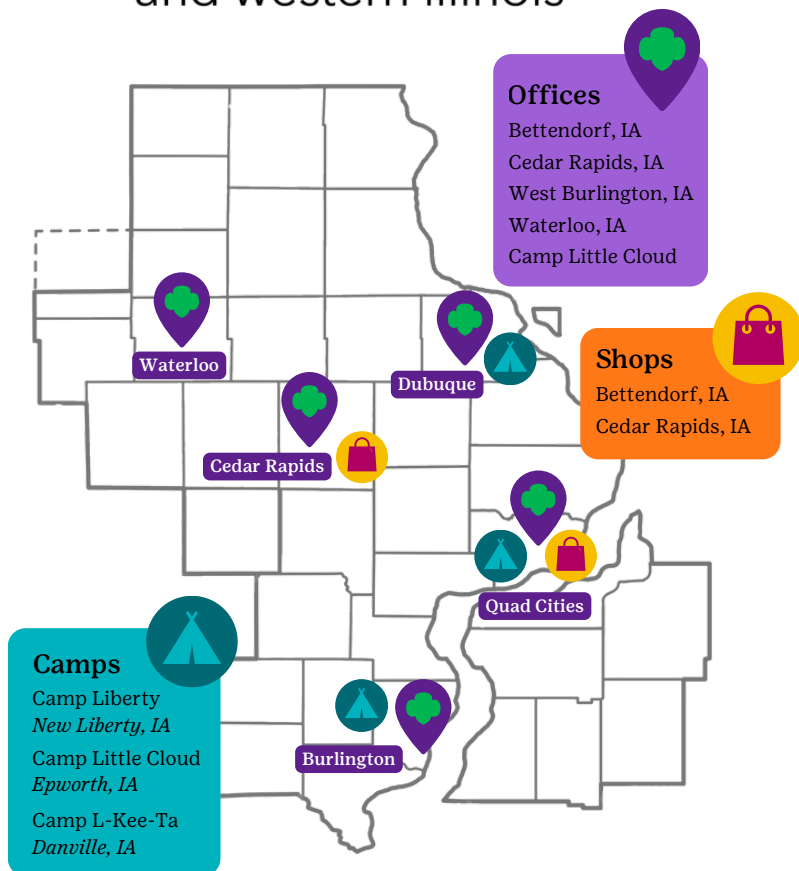
Fall Product Program

Girl Scouts sell nuts, candies, and magazines to earn prizes and funds for troop activities. This program offers simple, online tools for troop leaders, parents and caregivers to manage the sale. 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.

girlscouts
of eastern iowa
and western illinois



**Explore the
Girl Scout Shops**

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

**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.*

Emergency

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

Marketing

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

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