

New Troop Leader Frequently Asked Questions

What's it like to be a troop leader?

Being a troop leader is fun and gives you the satisfaction of making a difference in your community. You help drive our mission of building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

Just like the girls in their troop, troop leaders make new friends and try new things while developing leadership skills. Many troop leaders report finding lifelong friends in Girl Scouts. And Girl Scout meetings can become something for both girls and adults to look forward to, a bright spot in your week or month.

Does a troop include girls of the same age, or is there a certain age range it covers?

This is totally up to you. It helps if all the girls are in the same grade so they are always working on the same badges. However, multi-level troops are very common, and we can provide tips for managing multi-level troops.

Badges are organized by grade level, and you can review them in the [Badge Explorer](#). Badge requirements are available online for troop leaders, or you can purchase badge books. We recommend that girls and leaders decide together which badges to tackle.

How long would a troop leader need to stay with the troop?

The Girl Scout membership year runs October 1 to September 30, and we recommend staying with your troop the whole year. Many troop leaders volunteer for years or even decades, but other leaders in a troop may switch roles every few years so that everyone has a turn.

If a volunteer must leave the troop, ask if another caregiver in the troop is willing to take over or reach out to council for help. Some of our troops use a co-op model, where all or most of the families take turns providing activities for the girls.

There are many ways to volunteer in a troop. Strong troops have many adults assisting with planning and running activities, driving on field trips, managing the cookie sale, managing finances/communications/supplies/snacks, etc.

How old are girls when they finish the Girl Scout program? Is it an elementary school time frame or does it go longer?

Our program is available for girls in kindergarten through 12th grade. Girls can join as early as April 1 of the spring before they start kindergarten.

How often do troops meet?

Troops can decide if they want to meet weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly. This may change over time. Troop leaders decide if their troops meet over the summer and how holidays will affect the meeting schedule. Some troops decide to meet less or more during the summer.

How many girls and adults will be in my troop?

That is also up to you! We ask that you start with at least 8 girls, but you only need 5 to be an official troop. You need to have at least two leaders who aren't related to each other to form a troop, and one of them must be female. You can recruit your own girls and adults, or we can help you.

The number of girls you can add is dependent on how many volunteers you have in your troop and the grade of the youngest girl in your troop as these factors impact the safety ratio. You will need additional adults for field trips.

Beyond troop meetings, are there other time requirements? How much time does selling cookies require? Are there other big events like that throughout the year?

Many troops participate in the Fall Product and Cookie Programs to earn funds for their activities, but participation in a product program is optional. The time commitment depends on many factors, including the number of girls in your troop, how many items/boxes they sell, and if you host booths at local stores.

Your troop may also attend council and service unit events, like a service unit cookie rally, a day camp, or variety of events based in our program pillars. Troops can attend troop camping (offered annually) or Camporee (every three years), or they can plan their own trip.

Visit our website for an activities calendar, ways to camp, and travel information.

What types of trainings or meetings does a troop leader attend outside of their time with the girls in their troop?

Before interacting with girls and within 30 days of registering, volunteers are required to complete Youth Protection Training. Our council also requires leaders take the GSUSA New Leader Onboarding Series and our Intro to GSU course.

For any troop trip away from your regular meeting place, you will need a First Aid/CPR certified adult. Most troops will have one of the leaders be certified.

Numerous other trainings are available in a variety of topics, like managing a multi-level troop, enjoying camp and outdoors, running STEM activities, and managing troop finances. Training is available via Zoom, gsLearn, and in person.

Council staff members and service unit volunteers are here to support you. Leaders are invited to attend monthly service unit meetings, which are run by service unit volunteers. These meetings are very helpful since you can receive training, connect with your Girl Scout community, and get ideas from other troop leaders near you.

What does it cost to join Girl Scouts? Is there a monthly fee? What do uniforms cost? Are there additional expenses?

A Girl Scout membership is \$25 each year; scholarships are available. For volunteers, this includes your background check. Uniforms are optional and run about \$35. Uniform scholarships are available.

Some troops collect dues to help cover supplies and activities, but many troops earn this money by participating in a product program. If troops collect dues, they are usually pretty minimal, but the troop leaders decide what funds are necessary for the activities they are planning. Leaders are asked to take into consideration the impact these costs will have on the families in their troop.

We will help your troop set up a bank account for dues and product program proceeds. You can use this to cover supplies (including the badges), event registration, troop camping, or troop trips. You can also use troop funds to renew memberships or pay for uniforms. The girls in your troop can earn Activity Credits through the Cookie Program to pay for camp, uniforms, membership renewal, events, and Girl Scout merchandise.

Do you have additional questions about starting your troop?
Contact Customer Care at info@gsutah.org.