

Appendix: For Troop Volunteers

Girls and adults participating in troops usually stay together for an entire school year and meet once a week, once a month, or twice a month—how often is up to you and the girls. Troops can meet just about anywhere, as long as the location is safe, easily accessible to girls and adults, and within a reasonable commute (“reasonable” having different definitions in different areas: In rural areas, a two-hour drive may be acceptable; in an urban area, a 30-minute subway ride may be too long). In each meeting, girls participate in fun activities that engage them in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

Troops provide a flexible way for girls to meet for nine to twelve months. Some ideas include:

- Fourteen Girl Scout Brownies who meet twice a month from November through March at a local community center
- Seven girls who are homeschooled and meet weekly as a Girl Scout Cadette troop
- Girls who meet together once a week at their juvenile detention center to participate in Girl Scout activities

Forming a Troop Committee

You’ll want to involve other adults in the troop—there’s no need to go it alone or depend on too few adults! Many hands make light work, and the role is more fun when it’s shared. Think about the people you know whom you admire, who connect with children (especially girls), who are dependable and responsible, and who realistically have time to spend volunteering. (Remember that these adults will need to register as Girl Scout members, fill out volunteer application forms, take online learning sessions, and review written resources.) Consider business associates, neighbors, former classmates, friends, and so on. If you have trouble finding reliable, quality volunteers to assist, talk to your volunteer support team for advice and support.

Remember: Be sure every chaperone reviews and follows the twelve Girl Scout Safety Guidelines, available both in the Quick-Start Guide to this handbook and in the “Safety-Wise” chapter.

Your troop committee members might help by:

- Filling in for you,
- Arranging meeting places,
- Locating adults with special skills to facilitate a specialized troop meeting,
- Assisting with trips and chaperoning,
- Managing troop records.

A troop committee may be made up of general members or may include specific positions, such as

- **Cookie Manager:** A volunteer who would manage all aspects of Girl Scout Cookie sales.
- **Transportation Coordinator:** The volunteer you’d look to whenever you need to transport girls for any reason; this person would have volunteers available to drive and chaperone.
- **Record Keeper:** A treasurer/secretary rolled into one person—someone to keep track of the money and keep the books.

Set up positions that work for you, and draw on other volunteers who possess skill sets that you may lack. When you’re ready to invite parents, neighbors, friends, colleagues, and other respected adults to work with you, send them a letter and invite them to their first troop committee meeting. (**Note:** The adult guides for the Girl Scout Daisy, Brownie, and Junior leadership journeys include a sample welcome letter and a friends/family checklist to assist you in expanding your troop’s adult network.)

Holding Troop Meetings

To plan and hold successful troop meetings, follow the steps in each of the following sections. You'll feel confident and comfortable in no time!

Reviewing the Six Elements of a Troop Meeting

Troop meetings usually include the six following components. (Note that journey sample session plans are also arranged in a similar way!)

Start-up	Start-up activities are planned so that when girls arrive at the meeting they have something to do until the meeting starts. For younger girls, it could be coloring pages; teen girls might jot down a journal entry or just enjoy a little time to talk.
Opening	The opening focuses the meeting and allows girls to start the meeting. Each troop decides how to open their own meeting—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, and then add a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other ceremony designed by the girls. Girl Scout Brownies, for example, might create a new tradition by skipping in a circle while singing a song. Ceremonies, even when brief or humorous, make Girl Scout time special.
Business	Troop business may include taking attendance, collecting dues, making announcements, and planning an upcoming event or trip. This is a good time for girls to lead, especially as they grow up! (Note that some troops move the business portion of the meeting to an earlier slot.)
Activities	<p>Activities will depend on what the girls want to do in their troop and how they want to spend their collective time. Outdoor time is important, so encourage the girls to an activity at a park or forest. If girls are interested in animals, encourage the girls to plan a visit to a zoo or animal shelter. As you engage in one of the two leadership journeys, review the “Sample Sessions at a Glance” in the adult guide for journey activity ideas.</p> <p>Treats are an option some troops decide to include in their meetings and range from a bottle of soap bubbles or a jump rope to or a food snack. If girls choose to include snacks, guide them to consider the health of a potential snack, as well as possible food allergies. Enlist the help of parents or guardians by asking them to sign up and bring a treat. You'll also find plenty of snack ideas and signup forms in the adult guide of most leadership journeys.</p>
Clean-up	Clean-up is a great habit for girls to get their meeting space back to the way it was when they arrived—maybe even cleaner! Girls can also take leadership of the cleaning themselves, deciding who does what. They might even enjoy the tradition of a kaper chart (a chore chart that lists all the chores and assigns girls' names to each), so that everyone takes turns at each responsibility.
Closing	The closing lets the girls know that the troop meeting is ending. Many girls close with the friendship circle, in which each girl stands in a circle, puts her right arm over her left, and holds the hand of the girl standing next to her. The friendship squeeze is started by one girl, and then passed around the circle until it comes back to the girl who started it. When the squeeze is finished, girls twist clockwise out of the circle lifting their arms and turning around and out of the circle.

You help each troop member do her part to ensure the meeting and activities are enriching and fun. Based on their grade levels and abilities, girls may decide and plan opening and closing activities, bring and prepare treats, teach songs or games, and clean up. As girls grow, they can show and teach younger members about Girl Scouts. They can also assist you in preparing materials for activities. For trips, campouts, parent meetings, and multi-troop events, girls may be responsible for shopping, packing equipment, handing out programs, cleaning up, gathering wood, and so on. As long as you pay attention to grade level and maturity, what girls can do is endless!

Letting Girls Lead

Many troops employ a democratic system of governance so that all members have the opportunity to express their interests and feelings and share in the planning and coordination of activities. Girls partner with you and other adults, and you facilitate, act as a sounding board, and ask and answer questions. Girls from Daisies through Ambassadors will gain confidence and leadership skills when given the opportunity to lead their activities, learn cooperatively as a group, and learn by doing instead of by observing.

The following are some traditions troops have used for girl-led governance, but these are just examples. Journeys offer examples of team decision-making, too.

- **Daisy/Brownie Circle:** While sitting in a circle (sometimes called a ring), girls create a formal group decision-making body. The circle is an organized time for girls to express their ideas and talk about activities they enjoy, and you play an active role in facilitating discussion and helping them plan. Girls often vote to finalize decisions. If girls are talking over each other, consider passing an object, such as a talking stick, that entitles one girl to speak at a time.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Patrol or Team System:** In this system, large troops divide into small groups, with every member playing a role. Teams of four to six girls are recommended so that each girl gets a chance to participate and express her opinions. Patrols may be organized by interests or activities that feed into a take-action project, with each team taking responsibility for some part of the total project, and girls may even enjoy coming up with names for their teams.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Executive Board:** In the executive board system (also called a steering committee), one leadership team makes decisions for the entire troop. The board's responsibility is to plan activities and assign jobs based on interests and needs, and the rest of the troop decides how to pass their ideas and suggestions to the executive board throughout the year. The executive board usually has a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer and holds its own meetings to discuss troop matters. Limit the length of time each girl serves on the executive board so all troop members can participate during the year.
- **Junior/Cadette/Senior/Ambassador Town Meeting:** Under the town meeting system, business is discussed and decisions are made at meetings attended by all the girls in the troop. As in the patrol and executive board systems, everyone gets the chance to participate in decision-making and leadership. Your role is to act as a moderator, who makes sure everyone gets a chance to talk and that all ideas are considered.

Transporting Girls

How parents decide to transport girls between their homes and Girl Scout meeting places is each parent's individual decision and responsibility.

For planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities—outside the normal time and place—in which a group will be transported in private vehicles:

- Every driver must be an approved adult* volunteer and have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- Girls never drive other girls.
- If a group is traveling in one vehicle, there must be at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers in the vehicle, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed.
- If a group is traveling in more than one vehicle, the entire group must consist of at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers, one of whom is female, and the girl-volunteer ratios in *Volunteer Essentials* must be followed. Care should be taken so that a single car (with a single adult driver) is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.

*"Adult" is defined by the age of majority in each state.

Looking at a Sample Troop Year

Here is just one example of how you could set up your troop year.

- Hold a parent/guardian meeting.
- Open a checking account, if needed.
- Register all the girls in the troop.
- Meet together for the first time, allowing the girls to decide how they can learn each others' names and find out more about each other.
- Kick off a leadership journey with the opening ceremony recommended in the first sample session, or a trip or special event that fits the theme. Have the girls brainstorm and plan any trip or event.
- Enjoy the full journey, including its take-action project.
- Along the way, add in related badge activities that girls will enjoy and that will give them a well-rounded year.
- Have the girls plan, budget for, and work on their Girl Scout Cookie sale.
- Help girls plan a field trip or other travel opportunity.
- Encourage girls to plan a culminating ceremony for the journey, including awards presentations, using ideas in the journey girls' book and/or adult guide.
- Pre-register girls for next year.
- Camp out!
- Participate in a council-wide event with girls from around your region.
- Have the girls plan and hold a bridging ceremony for girls continuing on to the next Girl Scout grade level.

Re-engaging Girls

The end of the troop year doesn't have to be the end of a girls' time with Girl Scouts, or the end of your time with girls. Some girls may no longer have time for a full-year commitment and will be unsure what's next for them. Others won't be able to imagine their lives without this same group of girls. Here's how you can best reengage your troop:

- Some girls may want other options besides troops. That's okay—Girl Scouts offers many ways to participate. Talk to girls about day and residence camp, travel opportunities, series offerings, and events your council may offer. Older girls, especially, enjoy these shorter-term, flexible ways to be Girl Scouts.
- Some girls will be excited to bridge to the next grade-level in Girl Scouts, and will look to you for guidance on how to hold a bridging ceremony. Even if you're not sure of your continued participation with Girl Scouts (and we hope you will find lots of exciting ways to be involved, even if leading a troop no longer fits your life), be sure to capture their excitement and work with them as a plan a meaningful bridging ceremony.
- If you plan to stay with this troop, but some girls are bridging to the next grade level, talk to your council about which troop they might enter next. And if you find that a troop isn't available for these girls, work with your council to find other options—for example, series, events, and travel!
- Talk to girls about earning their Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, or Gold Awards, which are opportunities for them to make a dramatic difference in their communities . . . and to have plenty to brag about with college admissions officers, too.

And what about you? If you want to stay with this troop, start working with them to plan their group activities next year. And if you're a little worn out but are interested in staying with Girl Scouts in other, flexible ways, be sure to let your council know how you'd like to be a part of girls' lives in the future. Are you ready to volunteer at camp? help organize a series or event? take a trip? The possibilities are endless.

Community Service Teams

This section defines and describes the community service team, its function, and the jobs performed by members of the team.

Position Definitions

The Community Service Team is the most common term used by Girl Scout councils to denote the district subdivisions of GSWESTOK. The service team provides the setting within which the Troop Pathway of a council (organizing troops/groups and providing direct services to girls and Girl Scout leaders) takes place. To be a functioning community service team, there must be a minimum of 8 individuals willing to serve as team positions including all eight required positions, a minimum of 100 girls in a minimum of 8 troops/groups that show annual membership growth. The functioning status of the community service team will be reviewed and evaluated annually by council staff.

The Community Service Team is a group of volunteers within the community service team that have agreed to provide enhanced services to the girls and adults in the district by serving in specific positions. This team is usually composed of the following positions:

Community Service Manager	-Required
Secretary/Registrar	-Required
Treasurer	-Required
Product Sales Consultant	-Required
Cooke Consultant	-Required
Troop/Group Organizer	-Required
Hut Manager	-Required (When hut and/or resources are available)
Event Coordinator	-Recommended
Assistant Community Service Team Manager	-Recommended
Troop/Group Mentor	-Recommended
Girl Mentor	-Recommended

The Community Service Manager is appointed by and accountable to the community development executive for developing and managing the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in the community. The community service manager is appointed by the community development executive for a 1 year term. Volunteers can serve up to three 1 year terms as community service manager and then transition knowledge and responsibilities to the assistant community service manager upon approval by the community development executive before stepping down from their role as manager. The Manager also will receive a monthly e-newsletter from GSWESTOK with announcements and information to be shared at monthly CST meetings.

The Community Service Secretary/Registrar is elected by and accountable to the community service team and approved by the community development executive. This position is responsible for seeing that girls and adults that participate are registered as members of Girl Scouts and that all required forms are completed and returned to GSWESTOK.

The Community Service Treasurer is elected by and accountable to the community service team and approved by the community development executive. This position is responsible for preparing the community service team budget, writing checks, balancing the checkbook, authorizing payments, maintaining receipts and general bookkeeping practices. This position also presents scholarship requests to the elected community service scholarship committee.

The Product Sales Consultant is elected by and accountable to the community service team and approved by the community development executive. This position is responsible for carrying out the product sales (Tops) in the district. This position also coordinates product sales training and information as well as assists troops/groups with their sales.

The Cookie Consultant is elected by and accountable to the community service team and approved by the community development executive. This position is responsible for carrying out the product sales in the district. This position also coordinates product sales in the district. This position also coordinates product sales training and information as well as assists troops/groups with their sales.

The Troop/Group Organizer is elected by and accountable to the community service team and approved by the community development executive. This position is responsible for organizing troops/groups.

The Event Coordinator is elected by and accountable to the community service team and approved by the community development executive. This position is responsible for planning and carrying out special events that support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in the district/area for example, play days, camping weekends, international festivities, Father/Daughter or Mother/Daughter events, etc. Additionally they are responsible for submitting all necessary paperwork to GSWESTOK and securing additional insurance as needed for the event.

The Assistant Community Service Manager is elected by and accountable to the community service team and approved by the community development executive. This position is responsible for assisting the community service team with any and all activities handled by the community service manager. They are many times next in line to serve as community service manager at the end of their term.

The Troop/Group Advisor is elected by and accountable to the community service team and approved by the community development executive. This position is responsible for providing ongoing leadership assistance to girls and leaders. This includes: ☐☐☐

- Giving information, advice, and encouragement to new and experienced leaders.
- Helping leaders to increase their knowledge of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience and of available resources at GSWESTOK and online.
- Communicating adult development opportunities to all community service team adults.

The Girl Mentor also acts as the community service team liaison for all Pathway Offerings except the Troop Pathway. The size of a service team and the number and types of functions performed will vary from community to community. All jobs, however, lend themselves to the recruitment of persons for specific amounts of time to carry out specific tasks.

Services That Girls and Adults Receive from their Community Service Team

This resource “offers a comprehensive list of services that girl and adult Girl Scout members should receive from the community service team manager and the members of the team.

Organizing Groups of Girls

- Help in recruitment and placement of girls and adult leaders.
- Help with membership registration.
- Help in finding suitable meeting places.
- Help in securing and orienting troop committee members and other supporting adults.
- Help in obtaining parental support.
- Publicity concerning Girl Scout activities and education of the public about the purpose of Girl Scouts

Girl Scout Leadership Experience Opportunities

- Help in structuring progressive learning experiences for girls that meet 5 of the 15 Girl Scout Leadership Outcomes.
- Opportunities for girls to grow in understanding the Promise and Law.
- Ideas for community service projects.
- Ideas for outdoor activities and for places that groups can visit.
- Ideas for money-earning projects, including guidelines and restrictions.
- Ideas for large troop/group activities.
- Council-sponsored activities and projects.
- Camping opportunities (group, day, resident).
- Information on national and international opportunities

Adult Support

- Person-to-person help from the day the volunteer starts the job.
- Opportunities for adults to learn in many ways and from many sources.
- Access to Girl Scout and other books, films, camping, equipment, and additional aids.
- Opportunities to express needs and make suggestions.
- Information on council organization and operation, and participation of girls and adults in the organization.
- Interpretation and clarification of national and local policies, standards, and procedures.
- Feedback on how well a job is being carried out.

New Leader Checklist

Placement Process

- __Volunteer application completed/approved
 - __Complete Criminal Background Check
 - __GSUSA Membership Paid (\$12 ANNUAL FEE)
 - __Complete the GSUSA On-line Orientation (available at www.gswestok.org on the on-line training link to reach the tutorial)
 - __Complete the Girl Scout Essentials
 - __Complete CPR/First Aid (you must have 2 adults with CPR/First Aid members may be certified for only \$10 CPR and \$10 First Aid. Preregistration is REQUIRED.
 - __Mentor Assignment
 - __Troop Visit
 - __Complete the Leader Agreement Form
 - __Ensure 5 girls per troop
 - __Troop number assigned -if registering as an (O1-troop leader)
 - __Select a Co-Leader for your troop or request assistance with this step.
- *All troops must have a minimum of 2 non-related adults registered in each troop.**

Troop

- __Conduct Parent Meeting
- __Complete registration forms for all girls and all operational leaders, assistant and support adults (i.e. Drivers, camp certified person, product sale chair, treasurer, first aider) and turn into council office ASAP to insure girls/adults are covered under insurance.

- __Conduct first troop meeting; cover troop guidelines and council policies. You may choose to use the council publication called —The Communicator as your guide during the Parent Meeting. Be sure to enlist parent help from the very beginning to support your troop’s activities and program.
- __Open troop checking account, This is usually done using the checks received from registration night to create a balance and then troop writes one check for members who have registered. Remember a minimum of 2 adults and 5 children for each troop. Each account must have 2 unrelated people as signers on the account, plus GSWESTOK’s CEO listed on all accounts as Girl Scouts-Western Oklahoma, Inc., CST_____, Troop_____. *A financial report is due to GSWESTOK each year by June 30. Sound money management is the ultimate responsibility of the leader.*
- __Select a troop treasurer of the leader and co-leader are related and ensure they are a registered member.
- __Select a product sales consultant to be responsible for troop cookie sales and other product sales.
- __Request one parent of each registered girl also become a registered member so they can assist with troop activities, transportation and other activities.

Community Service Team-your district support area in scouting

- __Contact your Community Service Manager (CSM) to update contact information and troop data. She/he will be a great resource in your new role.
- __Return phone calls & emails from your Community Service Manager (CSM), she/he is there to support you in your leadership experience.
- __Attend monthly Community Service Team Meeting for additional troop and leadership support or assign a troop representative to attend for you.
- __Ask about a Mentor/Coach at the Community Service Team Meeting or share your email. We encourage yahoo group other email support group to share information, successes and idea!
- __Attend an activity that supports the efforts of your Community Service Team. Attend special Community Service Team Team Meetings when planning larger troop/CST events. Remember girls experiences will be more enriching if sharing it with others.

Council

- __ Contact your council representative, (CDE – Community Development Executive) if you need assistance in recruiting troop members or other form of support.
- __ Remember to consult your safety standards if you are uncertain about policy or procedures for travel and activity planning.
- __ Attend Council Training Events: Your council provides both leadership support training and enrichment training for personal & professional development. This is a great opportunity for building friendships, as well as networking!
- __ Be mindful of registration deadlines - They are important!

You

- __ Recruit troop committee, do not do this alone!
- __ Enjoy your girls!
- __ Relax and have fun!
- __ Remember the gift of your time is invaluable to another. Our volunteers are precious treasures—we are lucky to count you among them!