



# Leader's Guide to Success

# Welcome to Girl Scouts!



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

Girl Scouts, Hornets' Nest Council (GSHNC) empowers girls everywhere to stand up and make a difference. By nurturing innovation and developing leadership skills, we prepare girls to overcome challenges and advocate for their ideas now and later. With an emphasis on self-discovery, character building, and community impact, Girl Scouts helps girls become a powerful force for good in the world.

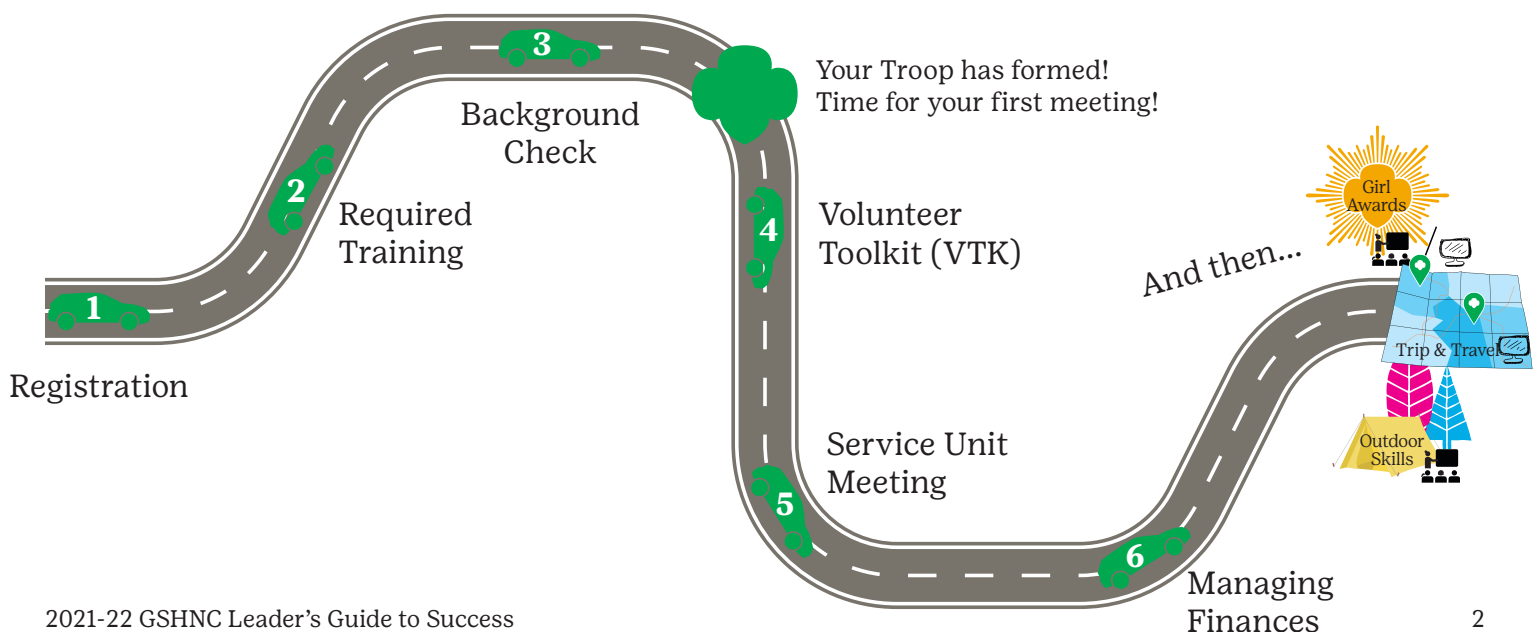
No matter where or how you volunteer, you'll make a difference in girls' lives. This go-to guide will prepare you to effectively lead during your first year as a Girl Scout volunteer. Need help along the way? Let us know! We have tools, training resources, and people to help support you through each step.

You're now a part of our team. We can't wait to see the impact you'll make this year!

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## New Leader Roadmap



# The Girl Scout Basics

## 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.

## 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.

## Girl Scout Mission

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

## What the Age Levels Do



**DAISIES**  
K & 1ST

**Girl Scout Daisies** sparkle with that “first time ever” newness in everything they do. They go on trips, learn about nature and science and explore the arts and their communities—and so much more. Girl Scout Daisies can also earn Learning Petals and receive participation patches.



**BROWNIES**  
2ND & 3RD

**Girl Scout Brownies** work together, earn badges, and explore their community. Friendship, fun, and age-appropriate activities begin at the Girl Scout Brownie meeting and move out to the community and wider world. While earning badges, they build skills, learn hobbies, and have fun!



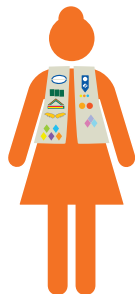
**JUNIORS**  
4TH & 5TH

**Girl Scout Juniors** are big-idea thinkers. They're explorers at camp and product designers when they earn their Innovation and Storytelling badges, or even their Bronze Award. Every day, they wake up ready to play a new role.



**CADETTES**  
6TH - 8TH

**Girl Scout Cadettes** chart their own course and let their curiosity and imagination lead the way. They learn about the power of being a good friend, gain confidence mentoring younger girls, and can earn the Silver Award.



**SENIORS**  
9TH & 10TH

**Girl Scout Seniors** are ready to take the world by storm, and Girl Scouts gives them millions of ways to do it. Their experiences help to shape their world, while giving them a safe space to be themselves and explore their interests. Girl Scout Seniors can earn their Gold Award (which, by the way, adds something “extra” to college applications).



**AMBASSADORS**  
11TH & 12TH

**Girl Scout Ambassadors** know that small acts create big change. While they get ready for life beyond high school, Girl Scouts helps them take flight. They also earn the Gold Award (which, by the way, adds something “extra” to college applications).

# What is the Girl Scout Program?

At Girl Scouts, girls have tons of fun, make new friends, and go on fantastic new adventures. Our program centers on something called the Girl Scout Leadership Experience—a collection of activities and experiences girls have as they complete Journeys, earn badges, sell cookies, go on exciting trips, explore the outdoors and do Take Action projects that make a difference.

## In Girl Scouts, girls will:

### Discover

Find out who they are, what they care about, and what their talents are.

### Connect

Collaborate with other people, locally and globally, to make a difference in the world.

### Take Action

Do something to make the world a better place.

### Journeys

Identify a problem, come up with a creative solution, create a team plan to make the solution a reality, put a plan into action, and talk about what they have learned. As girls go on Journeys, they'll earn awards to put on their uniforms.

### Badges

Make their own movie, go geocaching, plant a garden? Great news! They can learn to do all these things and more while earning Girl Scout badges. Badges are worn on the front of the vest or sash.

### Patches

Patches are like collecting memories in Girl Scouts. They're often a part of the fun activities without the requirements of badges and are worn on the back of the vest or sash.

### Highest Awards

All three awards give girls the chance to do big things while working on an issue they care about. Whether they want to plant a community garden and inspire others to eat healthy for their Bronze, advocate for animal rights for their Silver, or build a career network that encourages girls to become scientists and engineers for their Gold, they'll inspire others (and you!).

# Resources, Programs, and Awards



## GSHNC Website

Buzz into our central hive at [www.hngirlscouts.org](http://www.hngirlscouts.org)! From troop forms to cookie resources, our website has it all! We've catered the website to cover all of your essential needs, including office information, the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, program opportunities, camp and properties, sponsorship opportunities, troop resources, cookie resources and so much more!

## Events and Programs

From STEM to camping, baking to sports, and everywhere in between – Girl Scouts, Hornets' Nest Council provides events for every kind of girl and volunteer! Events are open to attend as a troop, or individually, depending on interest. Visit our event calendar on our website under the “Events” tab to see what is being offered. Our community partners are also featured under this section of the website. Troop Leaders can connect directly with partners who offer programming and service opportunities for girls.

## E-Communications

- **The Buzz**

The Buzz is a weekly newsletter sent out by GSHNC to keep you up to date on what's happening at the council, including highlights of special events and tips on what's coming up in the Girl Scout year.

- **Nest News**

Nest News is our newsletter catering to our Girl Scout parents to ensure they stay updated on Girl Scout opportunities and upcoming programs.

- **H&N: Hear and Now**

Hear and Now is a monthly newsletter dedicated to our Cadette, Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts. The newsletter features scholarship/grant opportunities along with Bronze, Silver and Gold trainings to help girls earn their highest awards.



## Awards

Recognizing volunteers and girls is an important part of the Girl Scout program. Two awards can be earned in your first year as a troop:

- **Green Hornet Award**

The Green Hornet is awarded to first year Troop Leaders who have fulfilled the position with enthusiasm and vigor, while providing a well-rounded experience for girls by completing leader training, attending Service Unit meetings, and participating in events.

- **Outstanding Troop Award**

The Outstanding Troop Award recognizes troops who have incorporated all pillars of the Girl Scout movement into their troop and emphasizes girl-led experiences, service in the community, diversity and inclusion, STEM and the outdoors, and more. The Outstanding Troop Award is a great roadmap to a well-rounded Girl Scout year!

Visit the “Adults” tab on our website to learn about complete requirements for each award.

# Your Role as a Leader

What does it mean to be a Girl Scout leader? It means to go on an amazing journey marked by helping girls build courage, confidence, and character through Girl Scouting. Serving as a leader can bring many joys, including developing a personal relationship with each girl in the troop, building adult friendships through the sisterhood of Girl Scouts, receiving sincere appreciation and thanks from parents, and, most importantly, knowing you're shaping the future by working with girls today.

Leadership is more than “being in charge” or having a title; it's recognizing that you're part of a team and understanding that team's needs and interests.

Leadership is teaching girls:

- That they can do and be anything!
- That they are decision-makers and should own their decisions
- How to live the Girl Scout Law by modeling it for them

As a leader, see yourself as a coach who:

- Guides and instructs, not as a teacher providing rote lessons and activities
- Advises and discusses
- Ensures each girl can carry out her responsibilities within the troop
- Encourages girls to build their skills and their ethics
- Assigns more responsibilities to the girls as they grow and develop

It's important to remember that:

- You can't expect to know everything the girls want to learn
- You'll explore and learn alongside your girls and grow your confidence in the process
- You're not expected to know everything about Girl Scouting, but you should know where to go for information—and to ask for help when you need it

## Your Troop's Volunteers

The volunteers in your Troop are the extra set of eyes, ears, and hands that help Girl Scouts safely explore the world around them. Depending on your Troop's needs, volunteers can play an active role—for instance, someone can step up as a dedicated troop treasurer—or simply provide occasional helping hands when you need to keep a meeting's activity on track, or act as chaperones for events that require a number of adult volunteers.

If a parent or caregiver isn't sure they can commit to a committee or co-leader role, encourage them to try volunteering in a smaller capacity that matches their skillset. Just like your young Girl Scouts, once troop parents and caregivers discover they can succeed in a volunteer role, they'll feel empowered to volunteer again.



# MyGS: Your Digital Girl Scout Toolkit

MyGS is an online portal with access to a variety of resources- connecting Volunteers and Families to their Girl Scouts experience!

To access, visit [www.hngirlscouts.org](http://www.hngirlscouts.org) and click “Sign in” at the top. When you log in with your email address and password and select My Account, you will have access to all of your MyGS Resources, including:

**My Household** is available to the head of every family involved in Girl Scouts. This is where families renew memberships every year, update profiles or change participation selections. Troop Volunteers have access to their own household members in this area.

**My Troops** is where families can view information about the troop(s) they are involved with, including contact information for volunteers and troop meeting times and locations. Troop Leaders can also change meeting details, renew members of their troops and privately invite families to join their troop.

**My Events** allows families to view information in the gsEvent system - both registering for new Events and looking at the history of past attended events. Troop Leaders can also view event information for the whole troop, including registering the troop for events and seeing which events girls in the troop have participated in.

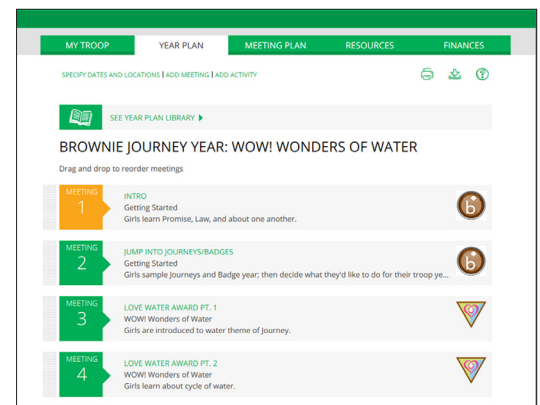
**The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)** is designed to provide Girl Scout program content to simplify troop planning, help with troop management, and allow volunteers to communicate with families. Information you put into the VTK is available to families through their own MyGS so they can keep track of what their Girl Scout is doing, be aware of Troop Activities and Finances, and access frequently used forms and documents.

**gsLearn** is an online training platform with courses designed for adult members, whether they are volunteers or just lifelong Girl Scouts. This is where you will find your required trainings before you start your troop and where you can return in the future to pick up new skills as your troop progresses.

## Volunteer Toolkit: Plan Your Year!

Your Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) experience begins with the Explore tab, which contains a variety of Year Plans for all age levels designed to allow you and your girls to select a journey and get started right away. Each year plan features a series of Meeting Plans that provide detailed agendas, activity plans, and a materials list which makes preparing for your meetings a breeze.

The best part? Your year plan is completely customizable by reordering, adding, or removing any Badges or Activities!



Also found in the VTK is a selection of Resources that feature the most important documents for successfully running your troop, including our Safety Activity Checkpoints that will be very important to reference when you start planning activities and detailed guides for both the VTK and MyGS.

# FIRST MEETING PREPARATION CHECKLIST

## FIRST MEETING

- Invite parents to attend the first meeting alongside their girls.
- Welcome girls and parents to the meeting.
- Introduce yourself and brief overview of your Girl Scout relationship
- Using an icebreaker game, have each girl/adult introduce themselves
- Separate into two meeting groups following icebreaker; one leader meet with girls while the other leader meets with adults.



## MEETING WITH PARENTS

- Give a high level overview of what you would like to do with girls, including badges and journeys, outdoor activities, field trips, community service projects, etc.
- Confirm troop meeting logistics (day, time, & frequency) and discuss troop dues.
- Ask for volunteers to serve in troop support roles (Fall Sale Coordinator, Cookie Coordinator, Chaperones, Treasurer, Transportation, Snacks, First Aider, Communications and Sister to Sister).
- Have the parents fill out the Health History form for their girls.

## MEETING WITH GIRLS

- Recite Pledge of Allegiance and Girl Scout Promise and Law to officially open troop meeting
  1. Have Promise and Laws written out and to help girls (and adults) memorize
  2. Explain that the pledge and Promise are always recited when the troop starts meetings
  3. Show girls how to make the Girl Scout sign.
- Sing a fun song with girls (have words to Make New Friends displayed)
- Teach girls the Girl Scout Quiet sign (right hand raised high to signal everyone raises hand and gets quiet).
- Discuss what the girls' expectations are for the troop year as it relates to badges, activities, product sales, field trips, council programs, etc.
  1. Have a sample Girls Guide Handbook and Journey available for girls to look through.
  2. Have a calendar available to reference as you begin initial planning for troop meetings.
  3. The girls should choose the Journey or badges that they want to accomplish during the year.
- Have an activity for girls to do.
  - Daisy & Brownie age girls can decorate a name tag. (have Daisy & Brownie name tag template sheets available and already hole punched, markers, scissors, & yarn. Keep name tags with troop supplies)
  - Junior age girls can draw a picture of their favorite place, activity or animal and use the letters of their name to decorate it. Once done, each girl can share about themselves using their art work. Display the drawings in the room or in a troop collage.
- Clean Up & snack time
- Close meeting; review what was discussed in meeting and teach girls Friendship Circle
  - Friendship Circle – gather in a circle, cross right arm over left arm in front of you, hold hands. Once quiet, leader squeezes hand to her right and as received, each girl makes a wish and passes the squeeze on until it returns to the leader. Exit circle under right arm.



# Troop Finances: What You Need to Know

## Troop Bank Account

When you are ready, you will need to set up a troop bank account. Before doing so, consider the following:

- Your account must have a minimum of 2 Girl Scouts registered, unrelated cosigners, who have cleared a background check.
- Bank accounts should be opened using the Girl Scouts, Hornets' Nest Council Tax ID number.
- Choose a bank with no fees, or who will waive the bank fees.

## Troop Dues

Most troops collect dues to help with the day-to-day operating budget of the troop, including supplies, badges, etc. Work with parents to set up dues for the year.

The average range for our council is \$2 to \$5 a month.

## Annual Troop Finance Report

Once a year, you will be responsible for submitting a Troop Finance Report via the Volunteer Toolkit. This report will include bank statements, and is required to participate in the following years' product sales (Treats & Reads in the fall, and the Cookie Program in the winter/spring).

# Product Sales Programs

## Smart Cookies Change the World

The Girl Scout Product Programs are the largest girl-led entrepreneurial programs in the world and is such an important part of the overall Girl Scout experience! Girls learn to work as a team to accomplish common goals and solve problems, while building the confidence they need to shine as girls, as young women, and as future leaders.

## Troop Benefits

1. As entrepreneurs, girls learn essential life skills like goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics.
2. The Cookie Program and Fall Treats and Reads Program funds the Girl Scout Leadership Experience for Girl Scouts of Hornets' Nest Council, including programming, events and even financial aid to ensure every girl can be a Girl Scout!
3. All of the net revenue raised through the Girl Scout Product Programs—100 percent of it—stay with the local council and troops. Proceeds enable troops to fund trips, activities or a project that will improve their community and beyond!

# Outdoor Program and Properties

## Dale Earnhardt Environmental Leadership Campus at Oak Springs

Our largest property is the Dale Earnhardt Environmental Leadership Campus at Oak Springs in Statesville. This property offers all kinds of outdoor activities, such as canoeing, archery, lake swimming, tower-climbing, and team-building games at our cooperation course! Troops can visit independently, come to an encampment offered by their Service Unit, or sign their girls up for overnight resident camp throughout the summer.



## POD Village

Our POD Village at the GSHNC Service Center in Charlotte is perfect for Troops just starting out on their outdoor adventure. The PODs sleep 15-25 people, are equipped with full family-style kitchens, bathrooms, and heating and air conditioning, and come with mattresses to lay out on the floor in a slumber party arrangement. Throughout the summer, we also offer Day Camp programs at our POD Village from Monday through Friday, including enriching and exciting programs for girls rising first grade and older.

## Holly Hut

Holly Hut is our property on the grounds of the Dan Nicholas Park in Salisbury, and offers quick access to all of the park's amenities, such as the gem mine, lake, and carousel. There are multiple lodging options at Holly Hut, which are available in our "Camp" tab.



## Reserve a Property!

All of our properties can be rented online at [www.hngirlscouts.org](http://www.hngirlscouts.org) in the "Camp" tab.

## Required Camp Trainings

To help create a safe and fun space for our Girl Scouts while experiencing outdoor adventure at any of our properties, there are a variety of trainings required for Troop Leaders to be able to reserve a space. Details for required trainings are available online, and we offer them online and in person as appropriate throughout the year.

# Safety Tips

While working with our girls and learning new skills is rewarding, assuming responsibility and for other people's children means that some level of risk management and due diligence is involved. Be sure to take some time and review Safety Check Points on our website to help you minimize risk and keep girls safe.

## Understanding How Many Adults You Need

Girl Scout groups are large enough to provide a cooperative learning environment and small enough to allow development of individual girls. Girl Scouts' adult-to-girl ratios show the minimum number of adults needed to supervise a specific number of girls. These supervision ratios were devised to ensure the safety and health of girls.

Adult-to-Girl Ratio Chart	Group Meetings		Events, Travel and Camping	
	Two unrelated Volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:	Two unrelated Volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:
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

Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved volunteers present at all times, plus additional adults as necessary, depending on the size of the group and the ages and abilities of girls. Any adult that is supervising girls must be an approved volunteer. Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old and must be screened before volunteering. One Troop Leader in every group must be female. Please refer to the ratio chart above.

## Planning Safe Activities

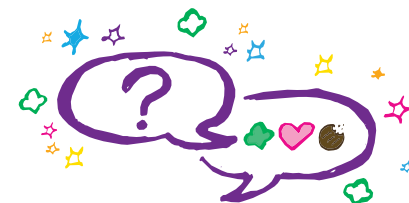
When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading Girl Scouts' Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. You can find this resource on the Resources tab of the Volunteer Toolkit. Each safety activity checkpoint specifies required guidelines on where to do the activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear for the activity, and the specific steps to follow on the day of the activity. Safety Activity Checkpoints will also note if a first-aid is required.

If a safety activity checkpoint doesn't exist for an activity you and your girls are interested in, contact Customer Care at [customercare@hngirlscouts.org](mailto:customercare@hngirlscouts.org) or 704-731-6500 before making any definite plans.



# GSHNC Office and Resources

The Girl Scouts, Hornets' Nest Council team is always available to assist you as you take on the awesome experience of being a Troop Leader! Dedicated team members can help provide you with guidance and resources to help make this year unforgettable for both you and your new Girl Scouts. Contact the team at [customercare@hngirlscouts.org](mailto:customercare@hngirlscouts.org), or 704-731-6500 to let us help you answer questions, find resources, plan activities, and more!



## Finding the GSHNC Office

Our office is located at 7007 Idlewild Road, Charlotte, NC 28212. Throughout the year, there are numerous reasons you may need to stop by the office, whether you're picking up Girl Scout Cookies at the cupboard, getting badges at the shop, or picking up resources like flags, banners, and cookie costumes.

Throughout the 2021-22 Membership Year, please visit our website at [hngirlscouts.org](http://hngirlscouts.org) to see our most up-to-date open hours and visiting opportunities. Out of an abundance of caution for the safety and wellbeing of our volunteers and staff, our office closed to the public to eliminate possibility of COVID-19 spread in early 2020. Details on the current open status of the physical office and Council shop are available at <https://bit.ly/gshncCOVID19>, but throughout physical office closures, our staff remains dedicated to helping support you and your Girl Scouts.



## Hornets' Nest Council Girl Scout Shop

The Council Shop is your one stop shop for all your troop essentials! You can view our visiting hours and access our full selection of merchandise at [www.hngirlscouts.org/shop](http://www.hngirlscouts.org/shop). In addition to in-person shopping, we're proud to offer curbside shopping opportunities. To learn about available curbside shopping availability, please reach out to the shop at [store@hngirlscouts.org](mailto:store@hngirlscouts.org), or at 704-731-6608. Please note, curbside pickup is not available when shopping through the online store.

## Get Started with Starter Kits!

Kits include everything a new Girl Scout needs to set up her uniform, including troop numbers, Council bar, membership pins, and more! Kits and add on materials available for every age level to help every Girl Scout, no matter how old she is, look and feel confident with her troop!

