

Girl Scout Event Planning Guide

Thank You

We're so glad your here!



Thank you for volunteering to provide each Girl Scout in your service unit with fun and meaningful program opportunities and experiences. Girl Scout events at the service unit level develop community and belonging, which are essential to the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. And most importantly, the memories last a lifetime! Your time and continued dedication to Girl Scouts don't go unnoticed. It is deeply appreciated!

Overview of Girl Scout Events

A Girl Scout event is any pre-planned activity open to more than two troops. These events are typically organized by service units but can also be organized by others, such as troops or older girl groups. A service unit's ultimate goal should be to have multiple events during the year that are inclusive and accessible to all our Girl Scout families. Importantly, this category includes programming events for Girl Scouts of all program levels and economic statuses.



Honoring Traditions and Welcoming New Ideas

Girl Scouts has a proud 110+ year history filled with meaningful traditions, including events like World Thinking Day, Juliette Gordon Low's Birthday (Founder's Day), and Investiture (new member ceremony), and Bridging Ceremonies (graduation into new Girl Scout levels). We also encourage new and creative events such as Me and My Guy Dances, Ice Skating Nights, and Girl Scout Movie Nights.



Outdoor Adventures Matter

Outdoor experiences are a core part of the Girl Scout program. Service unit outdoor events help make this possible. These can range from casual hikes and family camping trips to multi-night, themed camporees.



Event Planning and Leadership

Each event is led by one or more service unit event planners supported by a volunteer committee. Event planners are part of the service unit program committee and work closely with service unit program advisors throughout the planning process.

Table of Contents

Service Unit Roles	4-6
<u>Event Planner</u>	4
<u>Program Advisor</u>	5
<u>Event First Aider</u>	6
Defining Types of Girl Scout Events	7-8
Checklists for Planing a Girl Scout Event.....	9-19
<u>Three-Four Months Before the Event</u>	9-11
<u>Two-Three Months Before the Event</u>	14
<u>One Month Before the Event</u>	15-16
<u>Day of the Event</u>	17-18
<u>After the Event</u>	18-19
Spotlight on Money Topics	20-22
<u>Money-Earning Events</u>	20
<u>Collecting Donations</u>	20
<u>Council Credit Reimbursement</u>	21
<u>Cheddar Up</u>	21-22
Spotlight on Event Program Topics	22-25
<u>Program and Activities</u>	22-23
<u>Scheduling</u>	23
<u>Choosing an Event Site</u>	24
<u>Food Management</u>	25
Spotlight on Safety Topics	26-30
<u>Site Safety</u>	26
<u>First Aid</u>	27
<u>Youth Physical and Emotional Safety</u>	28
<u>Travel Guidelines</u>	29
<u>Overnight Events</u>	29
<u>Girl Scout Activity Accident Insurance</u>	30

Service Unit Event Roles



Your Commitment:

- Complete the Event Planner learning path online.

Encouraging Community Engagement:

Centering youth voices and keeping programs youth-informed leads to stronger engagement and outcomes for event attendees.

Involve attendees (both adults and youth) in the planning of the event to ensure that voices and needs are heard and incorporated.

Investigate the availability of community partnerships and resources to enhance events and potentially bring new and exciting content to the service unit.

Note: Service units may have multiple event planners, each responsible for a different event.

Event Planner

Primary Responsibilities

- Ensure the smooth running of service unit event(s).
- Follow all safety guidelines and relevant Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Plan and implement a varied and balanced program that provides relevant experiences in accordance with the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE).

Qualifications

- Registered and background checked.
- Organizational skills.
- Understanding of and ability to implement the Girl Scout Leadership Experience with a focus on desired outcomes for youth.
- Familiarity with Volunteer Essentials, Volunteer Toolkit, approved vendors, and Safety Activity Checkpoints.
- Abide by the Girl Scout Law and Promise.

Ongoing Tasks

- Recruitment of event committee as needed, and delegation of responsibilities accordingly.
- Creation and submission of event budget and flyer to the service unit team for approval.
- Completion and submission of event paperwork to council on a timely basis.
- Overall responsibility for planning and execution of the event, including location, budget, supplies, registration, emergency management plan, event activities, and advertising.
- Ensure that all safety policies and regulations are followed and communicated to attendees, including provision of a first aider and emergency management plan.
- Conduct after-action review of the event with the service unit team.
- Identify areas of improvement and incorporate them into future events.
- Partner with recognition coordinator to ensure that volunteers are appreciated and celebrated.

Service Unit Event Roles



Your Commitment:

- Complete the trainings relevant to your role.
- Participate in all council summits annually.
- Participate in service unit planning each year.

Encouraging

Community Engagement:

Before planning the service unit event calendar, be sure to find out from the troops what kinds of events they would like.

Include all levels in the annual planning, particularly Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador (CSA) who may be on board with helping at events, but will also want some events that are just for them!

Partner with the recognition coordinator to ensure that your team receives proper recognition and appreciation. Build relationships with community partners!

Note: One of the key drivers of youth renewals is experiencing a well-rounded troop year with a variety of activities, including outdoors.

Program Advisor

Primary Responsibilities

- Partner with the service unit team to complete relevant portions of the Plan for Success.
- Recruit and support event planners and adult trainers. Support troop volunteers with program-related questions, training, and paperwork.
- Partner with the council program and adult learning staff to ensure service unit needs are met.

Qualifications

- Registered and background checked.
- Experience hosting service unit events, with training and paperwork required for events and troop trips.
- Familiarity with GSLE, Volunteer Essentials, and VTK.
- Knowledge of approved vendors and the approval process.
- Abide by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Ongoing Tasks

- Recruit and mentor event planners: ensure they take required training, support with paperwork if needed, and guide them in annual planning.
- Recruit adult trainers and assist in planning service unit training events.
- Utilize volunteer meetings as a vehicle for training in troop trip/travel procedures and policies, as well as program trainings.
- Support with troop and individual travel questions.
- Ensure health and safety policies are communicated and followed for service unit events and troop activities.
- Share council event opportunities with service unit adults.
- Ensure IRG / Juliettes are included in service unit events.
- Develop community outreach and partnerships to identify local event opportunities.
- Help troop volunteers understand how to take action and community service projects differ, and support with higher awards.

Service Unit Event Roles



Event First Aider

Primary Responsibilities

- Establish event safety guidelines.
- Ensure the safety of attendees during a Girl Scout event.
- Administer first aid as needed.

Qualifications

- Registered and background checked.
- Ability to practice good judgment regarding health and safety procedures and crisis situations.
- Knowledge of typical emotional and physical needs of children.
- Knowledge of first aid and CPR protocols for adults and children.
- Abide by the Girl Scout Promise and Law.

Ongoing Tasks

- Establish safety guidelines for the event.
- Be present through the entire event with no other responsibilities.
- Ensure that health and safety procedures are followed.
- Follow the 14 Girl Scout Safety Guidelines.
- Maintain a first aid kit: check and purchase supplies in advance of the event.
- Maintain a list of emergency phone numbers and directions to the nearest hospital.
- Ensure a suitable (visible and convenient) first aid station is set up.
- Follow council guidelines for keeping and administering medications.
- Maintain a health log.
- Ensure completion of Accident / Injury, Incident, and Insurance forms as required.
- Collect, store, and review Health History Forms and maintain confidentiality.
- Administer first aid as needed.
- Assess and call for additional medical attention if required.

Your Commitment:

- Complete the Event First Aider learning path online.
- Maintain current first aid and CPR certification.

Encouraging

Community Engagement:

Where possible, involve troop volunteers and youth members in the development of a safety plan for events.

Review safety guidelines with the group at SU events and request their input on creating a safe environment for all attendees.

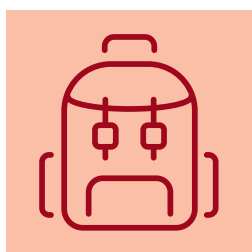
Note: Service units are encouraged to have multiple active event first aiders.

Girl Scout Event Categories



Volunteer Run Camp

A volunteer-run camp is a series of 3+ nights or 4+ day camps. A volunteer-run camp requires additional training for the directors and more lead time. This is a day or sleepaway camp experience where members are individually registered.



Camporee

A weekend camping event where members can be registered individually or by troop that has a strong outdoor component. At least one attending adult has successfully completed and is current in Outdoor Certified Training.



Overnight

A one- or two-night slumber party in a non-outdoor environment such as a church hall, Girl Scout Program Center, or hotel, where multiple troops are spending the night as part of the event. Examples: Sleepover at the Mall, Pajama Party.



Service Unit Events

Most Girl Scout events fall in this category. These are several-hour events with no overnight component. Examples: World Thinking Day, Cookie Rally, Daisy Sing Along, campfire, or garden cleanup.



Membership Recruiting and Renewals

The event's goal is primarily to bring in new members or renew current members. Examples: Daisy Day, Parent Info Night, Ice Cream Social, Girl Scout Open House, or Welcome Back to Girl Scout BBQ.

Girl Scout Event Categories



Training / Adult Learning

Official Girl Scout trainings where the attendees get credit for the in-person training. Examples: camp out, first aid volunteer instructor, wilderness first aid, backpacking.



Skills Session

Unofficial training for girls and/or adults. Examples: building a fire, Dutch oven cooking, and knot tying.



Virtual

Online-only event using a virtual platform, for example: Zoom dance party, virtual game night, or watch a movie.



All Other Events:

Examples of events include a Court of Awards event, an adult appreciation event, a volunteer-run camp training or retreat, and an adult retreat.

Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

Three to Four Months Before Event

Identify the Key People

- Identify the event planner. Remember, a service unit can have multiple event planners – the same person does not have to plan all the service unit's events.
- Recruit a team of volunteers to assist with planning and running the event.
 1. Delegate roles to volunteers to spread the work and make the event run more smoothly.
 2. Review best practices for an effective event committee.
- Identify the event first aider(s). The number required is based on event size.
 1. Events with <200 people: ONE event first aider.
 2. Events with 200-400 people: TWO event first aiders.
- Involve Girl Scouts.
 1. Include Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador (CSA) Girl Scouts in planning and leading activities.
 2. Involve Girl Scouts of all ages in areas such as picking a theme or choosing event activities.
- All adult volunteers (i.e., event planner, committee members, and event first aiders) involved with the event must meet the following requirements.
 1. Be a registered adult Girl Scout with a current background check.
 2. Completed GSDSW Mandated Reporter training within the past two years. It is found in gsLearn (login through your MyGS volunteer account).
- The event planner must also complete the service unit Event Planner learning path found in gsLearn (login through your MyGS volunteer account). The event first aider(s) must also complete two additional trainings.
 1. An in-person First Aid / CPR course (e.g., from the Red Cross) within the past two years.
 2. GSDSW Event First Aider learning path found in gsLearn (login through your MyGS volunteer account).

Confirm volunteers have completed required training(s).

Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

Three to Four Months Before Event

Make an Initial Plan

- Determine the purpose and focus of your event. The event can be a repeat from a previous year or a brand-new program. The possibilities are endless!
 1. Make sure your event supports the values in the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
 2. When possible, the program should provide opportunities for hands-on learning.
 3. Look for opportunities to link the event's program to badges or other Girl Scout programs.
 4. If you will offer a patch, determine if it needs to be custom-ordered. There are many online purchasing options.
 5. If this is a repeat event, review evaluations from previous years, taking note of areas that need improvement and areas that worked well.

Girl Scout adult volunteer- to-youth ratios (minimums)	Group Meetings: Two unrelated volunteers (at least one if female) for up to this number of Girl Scouts	One additional volunteer to each additional Girl Scout	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is a female) for up to their number of Girl Scouts	One additional volunteer to each additional Girl Scout
Daisy (grades K - 1)	12	1 to 6	6	1 to 4
Brownies (grades 2 - 3)	20	1 to 8	12	1 to 6
Juniors (grades 4 - 5)	25	1 to 10	16	1 to 8
Cadettes (grades 6 - 8)	25	1 to 12	20	1 to 10
Seniors (grades 9 - 10)	30	1 to 15	24	1 to 12
Ambassadors (grade 11 - 12)	30	1 to 15	24	1 to 12

Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

Three to Four Months Before Event

Make an Initial Plan continued...

Decide who will be invited. You will need to answer the following questions:

Which age group(s) can attend?

- Check the [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for the proposed activity to ensure it will be suitable for the age and experience level of those invited.
- Follow the adult volunteer-to-youth supervision ratios for the program levels you are serving.

Can Girl Scouts attend as individuals, or do they have to attend with their troops?

- Your answer will influence how you format your registration form.

Will you open the event to other service units, or is it limited to Girl Scouts in your service unit?

- Your answer will influence how you format your registration form and advertise your event.

Will you allow non-Girl Scout (youth or adult) participants?

- If yes, this could be a good “Invite-a-Friend” recruitment event to help grow Girl Scouts in your community.

Select a date.

- Be sure to reference service unit, school, cultural, and religious calendars to avoid conflicts.
- Find an appropriate location or venue.
- Service units using a GSDSW property should submit the online [Property Reservation Request Form](#).
- If using an outside vendor or site, review the policies and procedures surrounding contracts and Certificates of Insurance.
- Email contracts that need a signature to info@gsdsw.org.
- If needed, email info@gsdsw.org to request a Certificate of Insurance for your event.

Draft your event schedule.



Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

Three to Four Months Before Event

Build a Budget

Determine if this is a money-earning event.

If YES: Read the guidelines and complete the Entrepreneurship Money-Earning Application. Review the money-earning event section of this guide.

If NO: Continue to move forward in this checklist.

- Begin by creating an initial budget using the Event Budget Worksheet. As a general rule, events should be self-sustaining, with participant fees covering the full cost of the event. Exceptions may be made if the service unit allocates grant funds or bonus money to help subsidize expenses.
- Determine the minimum number of participants needed to break even and run the event, as well as the maximum number of participants that the event can accommodate.
- Determine the per-person fee. The fee should be reasonable, affordable, and accessible for most families, given what is being offered.
- If an event generates more money than it spends, excess income will remain in the service unit account (unless the event has been designated as a money-earning event).
- To help keep costs low, borrow supplies when possible and look for opportunities to ask for donations and/or gifts-in-kind. Be sure to fill out the donation form if you receive any.
- Service units provide their own financial aid for service unit events. A best practice is to budget for several girls to receive financial aid. Check with your service unit on their financial aid process for events.
- Decide if you will accept Desert Dollars to be used as payment for your event. If YES, the following information applies:
 1. The event planner will complete the Desert Dollar Redemption Form to receive reimbursement from GSDSW.
 2. Reimbursement takes 4 - 6 weeks after the form is submitted.
 3. Council Desert Dollars cannot be used by adults.

Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

Three to Four Months Before Event

Create a Flyer and Registration Form

Refer to these event flyer guidelines to create an informational event flyer. Make sure you are following GSDSW brand guidelines.

Determine if you will use an online registration system such as Cheddar Up.

If YES: Read the online registration system guidelines and choose a web-based provider with PCI compliance.

If NO: Make your own registration and confirmation materials.

- No matter what type of registration you use, you will want to collect relevant information such as names, contact information, age/grade level, money collected, t-shirt or patch orders and sizes, emergency contacts, as well as important dietary or accommodation information to create an event roster.
- Work with your service unit team and program advisor for approval before advertising your event!
- Include the event's cancellation policy on advertising materials. How long can participants expect a full (or partial) refund if they cancel?

Helpful Event Flyer Design Tips:

- Place a strong, high-quality image to capture the viewer's attention. Choose an image that is relevant to the event theme. Use 1 - 3 images.
- Make sure key information is easy to spot. This includes date, time, location, event name, and cost, if any.
- Use larger / bolder fonts for the most important details.
- Include event contact and registration info.
- Refer to GSDSW brand guidelines for theme-appropriate palettes.
- Prioritize clarity of creativity, use two or fewer approved Girl Scout fonts.



Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

Two to Three Months Before Event

Advertise and Promote Your Event

- The approved event flyer and event information should be presented at your service unit volunteer meeting by the event planner or older Girl Scout(s) working on the event.
- If Girl Scouts outside of your service unit are invited, you can ask council to post the event on the [GSDSW Events Page](#).
- The flyer should be posted on your service unit's social media and website. Be sure to follow [GSDSW's guidelines for posting on social media](#).
- Consider reaching out to local media to help promote your event, and if media attend, be prepared! You can read these tips for contacting the media and guidelines for interacting with the press if they show up here.

One Month Before Event

Finalize Registration

- Continue collecting and tracking registrations and participation fees until the advertised closing date.
- If the event fills, create a waitlist to fill spaces created by cancellations.
- Have a process in place to prioritize your waitlist (e.g., first-come, first-served; service unit members receive higher priority over members of other service units).

Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

One Month Before Event

Finalize Registration Continued

Create a roster from the registrations. This will be used at check-in. Rosters must include:

- Full name
- Troop number
- Email address
- Cell phone number
- Emergency contact and number
- If a drop-off event, include the name of the adult(s) authorized to pick up

Send out confirmations and additional information to registrants. Include:

- Welcome letter
- Site address/directions, map, plus any parking instructions
- Safety considerations
- Remind troop leaders to bring forms such as Health History Forms for all participants (adults and girls)
- List of equipment or supplies to bring and what NOT to bring
- Information about food (if applicable)
- Schedule of activities, including check-in and check-out times
- Contact information in case of questions
- Any other actions required of participants (photo release, etc.)
- Phone number of at-home emergency contact person and, if applicable, emergency number at the site location.

Prepare troop registration packets to distribute at check-in, if appropriate. These should include any written information that needs to be distributed to the participants (e.g., schedule, map, information for emergencies, evaluation forms, and cleanup process).

Make Final Purchases and Secure Donations

- Order patches or T-shirts (custom items may take longer).
- If selling the t-shirts/patches separately, they will need to be ordered from an approved vendor.
- Check with your service unit to see if they already have any supplies you need.
- Make a plan to transport those supplies to the event.
- Purchase any items needed.
- Obtain donations (cash, gifts-in-kind, etc.) and complete the Donation Form.

Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

One Month Before Event

Follow Financial Procedures

Make an updated event budget as you finalize the numbers. Using the updated budget, inform your service unit team and treasurer of anticipated fund overages or shortfalls. An event's budget goal should always be to avoid a large shortfall and to also avoid a large profit at the expense of the participants.

- If an event is on track to have a large financial shortfall, consider canceling the event or opening it to Girl Scouts in neighboring service units. If the service unit has excess funds, it can vote to designate those funds to help cover the shortfall.
- If an event is on track to have a large profit, consider if the participation price is too high and not accessible for what is being provided. If the participation price remains the same, look for opportunities to spend the excess funds to increase the quality of an activity or other element of the event.

Keep receipts and accurate records. Work with your service unit treasurer to follow the service unit's processes for handling reimbursements and tracking of spending using the service unit account.

If accepting checks or cash payment for fees, record and deposit them promptly.

Finalize the Event

- Make sure you have all the necessary equipment and supplies. Finalize the event schedule. Consider doing a "dress rehearsal" of all planned activities.
- Plan the post-event cleanup process and communicate it ahead of time. Include ways youth can help.
- Prepare participant or troop evaluation forms for distribution on the day of the event by using an evaluation form.
- Keep your service unit team and program advisor informed.

Prepare for an Emergency

- Establish emergency procedures for the day of the event. You can find more details about establishing your Emergency Action Plan in [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).
- Print copies of the Emergency Card for Council Volunteers.

Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

Day of the Event

Set Up the Site

- Arrive early and check in with your facility, vendor, or ranger contact.
- Have your event committee all wear the same color or shirt or identify them with a special name tag or lanyard.
- Post any needed directional signs or schedules.
- Set up a clearly marked arrival/registration table.
- Set up a designated first aid area.

Run the Registration Table

- Have all the necessary registration supplies handy (e.g., pencils, scissors, tape, Sharpies, name tags).
- If you are doing on-site registration, have all the necessary supplies and paperwork readily available.
- Use the roster you created from the registrations as a sign-in sheet. You can also collect troop roster sheets. The key is to have a record of every person attending the event. If they are not on the sign-in sheet, they are NOT covered by Girl Scout insurance.
- Have an additional sign-in sheet for anyone not pre-registered for the event. This includes anyone who will be there for any length of time (even just 5 minutes!) and all siblings, including infants. If they are not on the sign-in sheet, they are NOT covered by Girl Scout insurance.
- Have a plan in place for attendees arriving late.
- Distribute registration packets.
- For drop-off events, collect Health History Forms from all participants (adults and girls).
- Distribute bracelets to anyone who has checked “no” in the photo release section of the Annual Permission slip. Be sure anyone taking photos knows to avoid photographing Girl Scouts with these bracelets.

Handle Any Emergency

- Follow the Emergency Procedure guidelines and call the GSDSW emergency number 877-636-1912.
- Within 24 hours, complete the Incident report (non-injury) and/or Accident-Injury report as applicable.

Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

Day of the Event

End the Event

Follow your cleanup plan, being sure to enlist youth to help. Girl Scouts always leave a place better than they found it!

Collect Event Evaluation Forms.

- You can set up a turn-in location for participants to submit it as they leave.
- If you do not collect evaluations on site, you should email participants that day to complete them.

Have a plan for dismissing attendees / checking out of the event, including how to return health history forms and how to handle early departures.

For drop-off events, this also includes checking the photo ID of the pick-up person and comparing it with the list of authorized pick-up adults.

After the Event(Within Two Weeks)

Financial

- Follow service unit procedures for financial reimbursement.
- Complete the Event Budget Worksheet (i.e., your final budget) and submit it along with all original receipts to your service unit. Keep copies of all receipts and the Event Finance Report for your own records.
- Submit any other documents required by your service unit to close out your event.

Checklists for Planning a Girl Scout Event

After the Event (Within Two Weeks)

Evaluate the Event

- With the event committee, review participants' event evaluations and compile major themes and conclusions. Think about what worked well and what has room for improvement.
- The event planner, committee members, and CSA Girl Scouts who helped run the event should all write brief, personal evaluations of the event, including successes, struggles, and anything else that would be useful to someone planning a similar event.
- Report on your event evaluation to the service unit team.

Prepare for Future Events

- Compile details about running the event that would be useful for others planning a similar event.
- Keep a copy of the following items on file with the service unit.
 1. Roster of all attendees (keep for one year)
 2. Flyer and any other advertising materials
 3. Registration form
 4. Confirmation email and registration information sent to registrants
 5. Registration packet distributed at check-in
 6. Program details, including the schedule and activity descriptions
 7. Patch picture (if applicable)
 8. Evaluation form
 9. Summary of evaluation results

Wrapping it All Up

- Complete the Event Budget Worksheet.
- Follow-up with patch distribution, if needed. Return borrowed equipment.
- Write thank-you letters to donors who sponsored the event, volunteers, and anyone who helped. There are many ways to recognize and thank your event volunteers for their hard work.
- Celebrate your success!

Spotlight on Money Topics

Money-Earning Events

Events can be money-earning for troops/groups if the service unit agrees that it is an appropriate event. Any gains or losses belong to that troop/group. For troop/group money-earning events, budget approval by the service unit is not required. The troop is solely responsible for event registrations and reimbursements. Key points about money-earning events are highlighted below.

- **Definition:** Money-earning activities are activities that are planned and carried out by youth and supported by adults to earn money for the group treasury. The income from group money-earning activities is used to support group program activities, including award projects and travel.
- **Requirements:** Troops/groups must follow GSDSW money-earning activity guidelines, meet all requirements of money-earning projects, and be pre-approved by GSDSW Council.
- **Pre-approval:** GSDSW uses the pre-approval process to monitor the types of money-earning projects Girl Scouts are completing, how they are planning to use the money, and the program benefits for the participating Girl Scouts. This monitoring is a requirement for GSDSW to maintain its nonprofit status.
- **Potential Denial:** GSDSW may not approve your money-earning event if it competes with Fall Product or Cookie Sales.

Flyer: The purpose of a money-earning event must be stated specifically on the event flyer and it must include a description of what the funds will be used for (e.g., “This is a money-earning event to support our troop trip to the Galapagos Islands.” or “This is a money-earning event to support our Bronze/Silver/Gold Award project.”).

Collecting Donations

Volunteers can collect donations/items / free meeting space from businesses and/or other organizations. This is a great way to build community involvement, visibility, and reduce the cost of an event. If you receive any donations or gifts-in-kind, the donation form must be completed with GSDSW.

Spotlight on Money Topics

Desert Dollar Reimbursement

Youth Girl Scout members may use Fall or Cookie Desert Dollars as payment for event fees (adult participants are not permitted to use Desert Dollars). Please accept these credits as you would money, and GSDSW will then reimburse the total amount redeemed for your event fee. Below are important details you need to keep in mind when accepting Desert Dollars.

- **Collect Information:** On your registration form, include a place for participants to provide their Desert Dollar information. You will need to record the amount, complete the back of each individual Desert Dollar, and then submit to council after the event.
- **Request Reimbursement:** Complete the [Desert Dollar Redemption Form](#) to receive reimbursement. It is important that you turn submit all the Desert Dollars, with the back of each one completed, to GSDSW, 225 E Idaho, Ste. 9, Las Cruces, NM 88005.
- It is suggested to submit any Desert Dollars as soon as registration closes – don't wait!

Spotlight on Money Topics

Cheddar Up

Cheddar Up is a digital payment and tracking tool that allows your service unit to easily collect money online for service unit events. Please see the Cheddar Up Frequently Asked Questions for more information about the platform. Below is a list of tips to help set up a Cheddar Up page for collecting service unit event registrations.

- Double-check that the Cheddar Up page and the event flyer match; there should be no conflicting information.
- Within Cheddar Up, structure your items the same way you will structure the registration process. Here are two examples:
 1. The event facility has a max occupancy of 200, and the spots can be distributed across adults and youth in any way. Within Cheddar Up, you should create one item called “Registration” with 200 spots. Then, add a question to determine if the attendee is a youth or an adult.
 2. The event can only support 50 youth and 10 adults. Within Cheddar Up, you should create two separate items: one item called “Youth Registration” with 50 spots and one item called “Adult Registration” with 10 spots.
- During registration, collect all of the information you need from attendees so you do not need to reach back out to collect more information. This can include information such as emergency contacts and phone numbers, food allergies, shirt sizes, etc.
- Under Settings, set up automatic registration open and close dates so that you do not have to remember to open and close registration yourself.
- When the Cheddar Up page is designed to be completed by a troop leader or other adult for multiple Girl Scout attendees, be sure to add a form to collect information that is the same for the full group of participants (e.g., troop number, troop leader email, troop leader phone number).

Spotlight on Event Program Topics

Program and Activities

Programming (activities) for the event should be chosen keeping the number of participants, their ages, and their abilities in mind. Activities planned should be FUN, challenging, and in keeping with the theme or purpose of the event. Below are important considerations when planning an event's program.

- **Plan Ahead:** Do troops need to prepare something for the event, like SWAPs or a skit? If yes, they will need the information far enough in advance so that they have at least three or four meetings to prepare.
- **Do's and Don'ts:** Clearly publicize any rules / do's and don'ts for your event in advance. Be clear and concise in your instructions to participants. Do not assume that people know what you expect of them.
- **On-Site Communication:** Depending upon the space, you may need to use a loudspeaker system to talk to large groups. If microphones are not available at your event site, check with your service unit to see if there is a portable PA system you can check out.
- **Opening and Closing Ceremonies:** The event should have a definite opening and closing ceremony. Participants should know when the event is about to begin and when it is at an end.
- **Activity Groups:** Participants should be divided into small groups for activities. Colored bracelets, different name tags, etc., are good means of determining groups.

Spotlight on Event Program Topics

Scheduling

Provide a printed Schedule of Events / Agenda at registration. These should be clear and available to all participants. Below are some tips and guidelines to help you create a schedule for a successful event.

- **Set Up:** Allow time for setup before registration begins. Clearly communicate with any troops or volunteers who will be assisting with setting up when they will need to arrive, where to park, and then go for setup, and with whom they should check in.
- **Registration:** Allow at least 30 to 45 minutes for registration before the event opens. Publish the beginning and ending registration times in your pre-event communications with participants.
- **Camping:** Allow several hours for arrival and setup before the first activity is scheduled to begin, particularly if troops need to pitch tents and/or cook meals.
- **Activities:** Activities should begin and end on time as much as possible.

1. Keep in mind the distances people need to travel when planning the starting and ending times. The larger the group, the longer it will take to move between locations.
2. All activity leaders should be in place, with all required materials, at least 30 minutes before the activity is scheduled to start.
3. Be sure activity leaders know how much time they have and can identify the signal to change groups.

- **Flex Time:** Plan “flex” time into the schedule – just in case things run behind. An easy way to do this is to allow more time than you need for lunch/dinner or the closing ceremony.
- **Quiet Time:** Plan some quiet time for rest and relaxation. All-day events (including travel time from home) are long days for girls. Weekend events need rest time planned as well.
- **Cleanup:** Remember to allow time for cleanup and evaluations.

Spotlight on Event Program Topics

Choosing an Event Site

When choosing a location for your event, you should ask yourself the following questions. For any question where the answer is “no,” you will need to think further about possible adjustments or accommodations that can be made in order to hold your event at that site. Alternatively, sometimes a “no” answer means the site is not an option for the event, and you will need to keep searching for another site option.

General Site

- Is the site easily accessible to all, including those with disabilities?
- Is there enough parking for the expected number of vehicles?
- Is the proposed site safe (free from obvious hazards), secure, and clean?
- Is the site well-lit (especially if the event extends past dusk)?
- Will the site be suitable in all weather conditions, or is there a rain check policy?

Building/Activity Area

- Is the space large enough for the maximum number expected?
- Is the area large enough for the planned activities?
- Is the area properly ventilated and heated?
- Are there at least two exits (from the building)?
- Are the emergency exits functioning, easily accessible, adequate, and well-marked?

Site Facilities

- Does the food preparation area meet state and local standards?
- Is there enough potable water for the expected participants?
- Are there enough bathrooms and sanitary facilities for the expected attendees? (If not, you might need port-a-potties.)
- Are tables and chairs provided by the facility? Be sure to note if there is an additional fee for their use.
- Consider if your event requires electrical, a projector, speakers, or a PA system.
- Does the site have sufficient outlets for your needs?
- Does the site have any of these items available for use? Be sure to note if there are additional fees for their use.

Spotlight on Event Program Topics

Food Management

Remember the following tips and guidelines if meals/snacks are to be part of the event.

- **Dietary Restrictions:** Be sure to include a “dietary restrictions” line on the registration form. Ensuring an allergy-friendly and nut-safe environment at the event is required!
- **For Camp:** Anyone wishing to use the dining hall kitchen must have a food handler’s certificate.
- **Designate Volunteers:** Adult volunteers who do not have any other responsibilities at the event should be responsible for cooking and cleanup. These same volunteers or others can also be responsible for planning the menu and buying the food.
- **Timing:** Allow time for food preparation, eating, and cleanup.
- **Storage:** Know ahead of time what food storage options are available to you at the event site (e.g., refrigerator, coolers). Make arrangements to bring any extra storage options that are needed.
- **Garbage:** Work with the event site ahead of time to plan for garbage and recycling disposal.
- **Troop Provided:** If troops are bringing lunches, have a designated place for these items to be stored in an orderly fashion.
- **Safe from Animals & Pests:** Know and follow the food storage requirements to keep food safe from animals and pests at your site. For example, keep food sealed and off the floor, and use food storage lockers when bears are a potential issue.

Spotlight on Safety Topics

Site Safety

Plan ahead and work with your event site contact to ensure the site is safe for all participants.

- **Primary Contact:** Know who your primary contact is and how to get in touch with them. Make sure the arrangements are clear, including date, times, cost, facilities you can and cannot use, available equipment, and what services are provided. It's best to obtain written confirmation with all the details.
- **Certificate of Insurance:** Confirm that the site has the required certificate of insurance on file.
- **Inclement Weather:** Make contingency plans for inclement weather.
- **Emergency Preparedness:** Collaborate with youth and other adults to establish and practice procedures for emergencies related to weather, fire, lost girls/ adults, and site security. Always keep handy a well-stocked first-aid kit, health histories, and contact information for Girl Scouts' families.
- **Garbage:** Work with the event site ahead of time to plan for garbage and recycling disposal and site cleanup.
- **Activity Safety Rules:** The safety rules specific to the event activities must be posted, understood, and practiced by all.

Spotlight on Safety Topics

First Aid

Event first aiders should be aware of the guidelines and instructions in the GSDSW Health and Safety Plan for Activities and Events. Meeting the health and safety needs of ALL participants at an event must be the number one priority of the event first aider as well as the event planner and the committee. Please review the areas listed below to ensure all safety guidelines have been met.

- **Event First Aider(s):** Have an identified, trained, and certified event first aider who meets the requirements. You must have one event first aider for every 200 participants.
- **First Aid Station:** Have a designated first aid station clearly marked and communicate the location to attendees. If the site does not have first aid equipment on hand, you must provide it.
- **Safety Activity Checkpoints:** Review and follow Safety Activity Checkpoints for each type of activity at the event.
- **Emergency Action Plan:** Establish an Emergency Action Plan for participants and communicate the information, including the nearest hospital.
- You can learn more about establishing your Emergency Action Plan in the Health and Safety Plan.
- **Print Ahead:** Bring to the event printed copies of the Emergency Card for Council Volunteers.

Youth Physical and Emotional Safety

Every adult in Girl Scouting is responsible for the physical and emotional safety of youth, and we all demonstrate that by agreeing to follow the guidelines below at all times.

- **Proper Adult Supervision:** Arrange for proper adult volunteer-to-youth supervision. Your group must have at least two unrelated, approved adult volunteers present, plus additional adult volunteers as needed, depending on the group's size and the ages and abilities of girls.
- One lead volunteer in every group must be female.
- Adult volunteers must be at least 18 years old, be registered Girl Scouts, have a current background check on file, and have completed GSDSW's mandated reporter training within the past two years.

Spotlight on Safety Topics

Youth Physical and Emotional Safety Continued...

- Parent / Caregiver Permission: When an activity takes place outside the normal meeting time and place, advise each parent/guardian of the activity's details and obtain permission for girls to participate. For drop-off events, collect the name(s) of the person(s) authorized to pick up each youth. At pickup, verify the photo ID of the person picking up each Girl Scout and compare it with the list of adults authorized to pick up each Girl Scout.
- **Report Abuse:** Sexual advances, improper touching, and sexual activity of any kind with youth members are forbidden. Physical, verbal, and emotional abuse of youth is also forbidden. Follow GSDSW's guidelines for reporting concerns about abuse or neglect that may be occurring inside or outside of Girl Scouting. Please reference the GSDSW Mandated Reporter Tip Sheet for further information and guidelines. GSDSW's Mandated Reporter training is required for all adult volunteers.
- **Emotionally Safe Space:** Adults are responsible for making Girl Scouting a place where youth are as safe emotionally as they are physically. Protect the emotional safety of Girl Scouts by creating a team agreement and coaching youth to honor it. Agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting a diversity of feelings and opinions, resolving conflicts constructively, and avoiding physical and verbal bullying, clique behavior, and discrimination.
- **No One is Treated Differently:** Girl Scouts welcomes all members, regardless of race, ethnicity, background, disability, family structure, religious beliefs, and socioeconomic status. When scheduling, helping plan, and carrying out activities, carefully consider the needs of all girls involved, including school schedules, family needs, financial constraints, religious holidays, and the accessibility of appropriate transportation and meeting places.
- **Role-Model the Right Behavior.** Never use illegal drugs. Don't consume alcohol, smoke, or use foul language in the presence of girls. Do not carry ammunition or firearms in the presence of girls unless given special permission by GSDSW for group marksmanship activities.

Spotlight on Safety Topics

Travel Guidelines

When transporting girls to planned Girl Scout field trips and other activities that are outside the normal meeting time and place, there are extra safety considerations. Please review the Transporting Girls section of Volunteer Essentials Safety Wise: Outdoor Trips and Travel Planning. Some guidelines are highlighted below.

- **Approved Drivers:** Ensure every driver transporting youth who are not their own children meets the requirements below. Visit the Troop Driver form for more details.
 1. Be a registered adult Girl Scout with a current background check.
 2. Complete GSDSW's Mandated Reporter training within the past two years. It is found in gsLearn (login through your [MyGS](#) volunteer account).
 3. Complete the 582 Troop Chaperones and Drivers learning path in gsLearn (login through your [MyGS](#) volunteer account).
 4. Have a good driving record, a valid license, and a registered/insured vehicle.
- **Safe Transportation:** Insist that everyone is in a legal seat, wears their seat belt, and adheres to state laws regarding booster seats and requirements for children in rear seats.
- **Non-Personal Vehicles:** When using vehicles other than a personal vehicle, please review the "Transporting Girls" section of Volunteer Essentials Safety Wise: Outdoor Trips and Travel Planning for additional guidelines.
- You should also check with GSDSW for required coverage.

Overnight Events

Information on overnights and sleeping arrangements can be found in the Outdoor Sleep-In Guide. Some key points are highlighted here.

- **Prepare:** Prepare Girl Scouts to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect.

Spotlight on Safety Topics

Overnight Events Continued...

Information on overnights and sleeping arrangements can be found in the Outdoor Sleep In Guide. Some key points are highlighted here.

- **Prepare:** Prepare Girl Scouts to be away from home by involving them in planning, so they know what to expect.
- **Men's Sleeping Area:** Designate a separate space for men to sleep that is away from youth and women.
- **Family Sleeping:** During family or caregiver-daughter overnights, one family unit may sleep in the same sleeping quarters (tent, cabin, hotel room etc.) in program areas.
- **Staff's Children:** Children of adult staff should remain in sleeping quarters with other Girl Scouts rather than in staff areas whenever possible. This helps maintain the troop experience.

Girl Scout Activity Accident Insurance

Activity accident insurance is a supplemental health insurance that protects registered Girl Scout members. Under the Basic Plan, enrolled Girl Scouts members and non-enrolled participants are automatically covered under activity accident insurance when participating in Girl Scout events and activities. This includes trips that involve overnight stays, regardless of duration or location. In order to meet insurance guidelines, please review the key points below.

- **Pre-Registration:** It is very important to do pre-registration to capture key information about everyone attending your event.
- **On-Site Registration:** Have a sign-in sheet for anyone who is not pre-registered for your event including siblings, infants, and adults who enter the event for any period of time. The sign-in sheet must contain at least the full legal name, e-mail, phone number, and address.
- **If it is a drop-off event,** include a space for listing the authorized pickup person(s).
- **Report Incidents and Accidents:** If any incident or accident occurs at the event, you must complete the Incident Report Form (non-injury) or Accident-
- [Injury Report Form](#) within 24 hours so that the claim can be processed correctly by GSDSW.

Girl Scout Mission

Girl Scouts builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place.

girl scouts 
of the desert southwest
southern new mexico
& west texas



@gsdswofficial
gsdsw.org
info@gsdsw.org