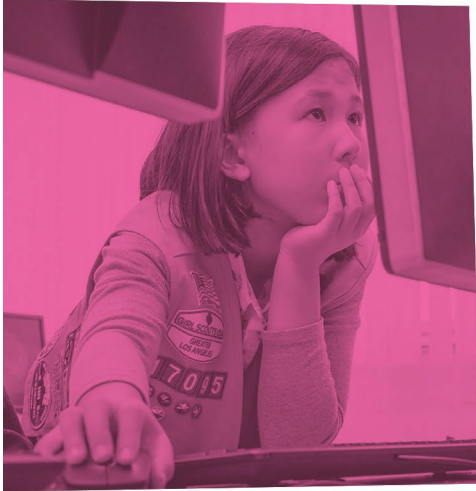
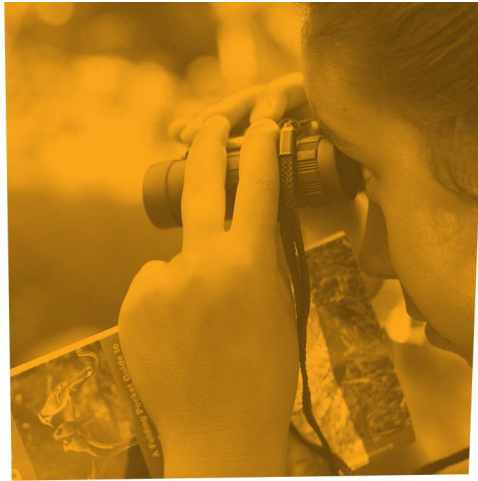
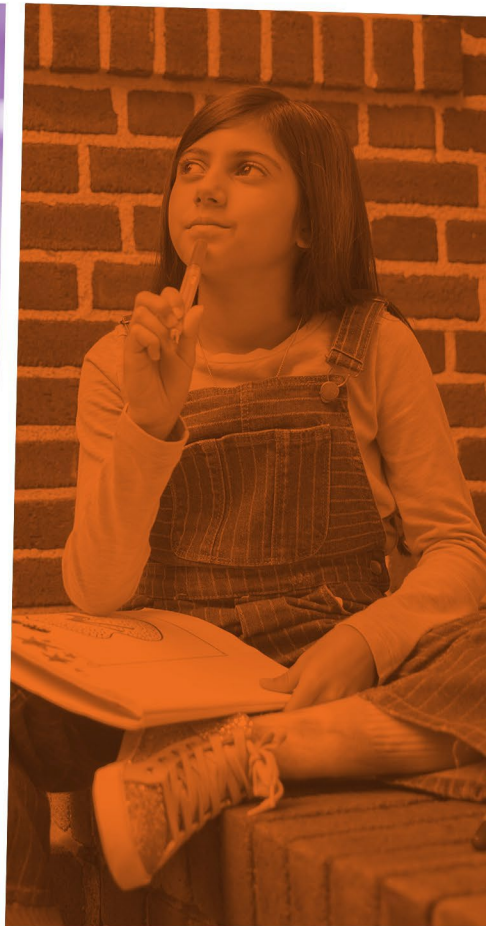
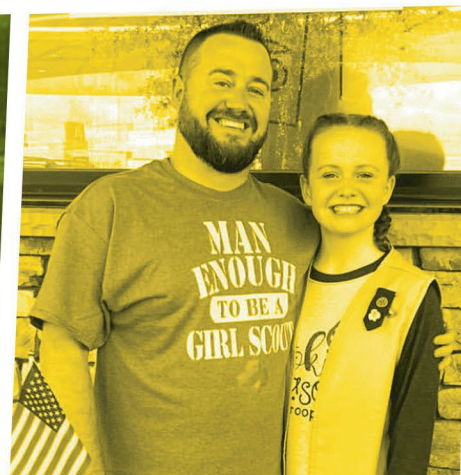


girl scouts  
heart of the hudson



# New Leader's Guide to Success

2023-2024 Membership Year





# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Table of Contents

Welcome to Girl Scouts.....	3
You—A Girl Scout Leader.....	4
Volunteers Learn and Grow.....	5
Volunteer Resources.....	6
The Girl Scout Leadership Experience.....	7
Where Girl Scouts Can Take Your Girls.....	8
Guiding Your Troop Experience.....	9
Organizational Structure.....	10
Layers of Support in Girl Scouts.....	11
Successful Troop Experience.....	12
Family Connections.....	13
Parent / Caregiver Meeting.....	14
Your First Troop Meeting.....	15
Girl Scout Uniforms.....	16
Keeping Girls Safe.....	17-18
Ceremonies and Traditions.....	19
Beyond the Troop Meeting.....	20
Funding the Fun.....	21
GSHH Volunteer Policies.....	22
Your Contacts.....	23
New Leader Checklist.....	24

### The Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:  
 To serve God\* and my  
 country, To help people at all  
 times,  
 And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

### The Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be  
 honest and fair,  
 friendly and helpful,  
 considerate and caring,  
 courageous and strong, and  
 responsible for what I say and do,  
 and to respect myself and others,  
 respect authority, use resources  
 wisely,  
 make the world a better place,  
 and be a sister to every Girl  
 Scout.

### Our Mission

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

\*Members may substitute for the  
 word God in accordance with their  
 own spiritual beliefs.



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Welcome to Girl Scouts!

Thank you for becoming a Girl Scout troop leader or co-leader! We're thrilled you joined the Girl Scout Movement.

Girl Scouts is so much more than a fun activity—it's a movement. It's how girls become forces for good and make a difference in their schools and communities, across the country, and around the world. Girls—as well as the caring volunteers who support them—grow the values and leadership skills they need to power a lifetime of success and adventure, whatever that looks like for them.

This guide will help prepare you to effectively lead during your first year as a Girl Scout volunteer. Need help along the way? Let us know! We have various tools, training resources, and people to 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!

### **Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc.**

[www.girlscoutshh.org](http://www.girlscoutshh.org)

#### **Office, Retail, and Program Center Orange County**

30 Scott's Corners Drive  
Montgomery NY, 12549  
845-236-6002

#### **Office and Program Center Westchester County**

119 Highland Avenue  
Eastchester NY, 10709  
914-747-3080

#### **Office and Retail Location Rockland County**

87 Maple Avenue  
New City NY, 10956  
845-638-0438

#### **Office and Retail Location Dutchess County**

1488 Route 9, Suite 3  
Wappinger Falls, NY 12590  
845-452-1810

### **Office & Shop Hours**

Office hours are:  
Monday thru Friday  
from  
9am-5pm except on holidays.

Shop hours change  
seasonally.

[See the current shop hours.](#)

### **Member Care**

855-232-GSHH (4744)  
[membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org)

### **Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson**

Services Seven Counties:  
Dutchess, Orange, Putnam,  
Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster and  
Westchester Counties.



[@GirlScoutsHH](https://twitter.com/GirlScoutsHH)



[/girlscoutshh](https://www.facebook.com/girlscoutshh)



[/girlscoutshh](https://www.instagram.com/girlscoutshh)



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## You—A Girl Scout Leader!

### Your Role

Being a Girl Scout troop leader is an incredible journey for you and your girls. And together you'll shape the future through all you do today! Along the way, you'll hone your own leadership style and discover that you'll achieve more than you thought possible.

In Girl Scouting, leadership isn't about 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 who 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:

- Advises and cheers on your troop, not as a teacher with a planned lesson or activity
- Ensures each girl can carry out her responsibilities within the troop
- Encourages girls to build their skills and their ethics
- Gives more responsibility to the girls as they grow and develop

### It's important to remember that:

- You can't expect to know everything the girls might 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



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Volunteers Learn and Grow

Learning the ins and outs of being a Girl Scout Troop Leader or Co-Leader is an ongoing process. There are always new things to learn with your girls, and in Adult Learning Opportunities that are provided by Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson.

### Troop Leader Training Path

When you're set up for success, you'll be empowered to set up your troop for success! To help you become the best leader you can be, we offer in-person workshops, online training courses, and other great resources.

Plan to attend the appropriate training well in advance of planning activities that require training completion, to avoid having to cancel plans if there are changes in training dates or availability.

These courses are required prior to participating in certain activities with your troop:

#### First Aid / CPR

This course is not required for troop meetings, but is required for all overnights, travel outside of the GSHH council jurisdiction, and high-risk activities.

#### Sleep in

This course is required prior to taking your troop on an overnight at an indoor facility with running water and electricity.

#### Cook Out

This course is required prior to participating in fire building or outdoor cooking activities with your troop.

#### Camp Out

This course is required prior to taking girls tent camping. Volunteers must have attended Volunteer Essentials, Sleep In, and Cook Out before attending Camp Out training.

### Additional Adult Learning Opportunities

In addition to the trainings that are required in order to address safety and skill requirements, there are also a number of optional opportunities to learn techniques for leading a successful troop. Look for these and other learning opportunities on our [Activities and Events calendar](#).

#### Leader Circles

These monthly meetings allow troop leaders to join in a facilitated discussion by Girl Scout level to learn how to guide girls through a meaningful girl-led experience.

#### Jump 2 Journeys

Gain the skills and confidence to guide your girls on a Girl Scout Leadership Journey. Learn how Discovering, Connecting, and Taking Action teaches girls to become problem-solvers and community leaders. Journeys are prerequisites for earning the highest awards in Girl Scouting, the Girl Scout Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards.

#### Volunteer How-To Webinars

Add some new skills to your toolbox on topics such as parent engagement, conflict management, multi-level troop management, and guiding a girl-led troop.

These and other learning opportunities are offered at various times throughout the year. Look for them in our [Activities and Events Calendar](#).



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Volunteer Resources

### Volunteer Toolkit

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is your fully customizable digital planning tool, which provides you with Girl Scout program content, award requirements, and other resources, so you can keep your Girl Scout year running smoothly. Leaders can explore meeting plans, print step-by-step activity guides and shopping lists, edit the troop roster, renew members, and much more! The VTK is free and accessible on computers, tablets, and mobile devices. Access the VTK through the MyGS link at the top of [www.girlscoutshh.org](http://www.girlscoutshh.org).

### Volunteer Essentials

With key information, policies, and procedures that support the safe and consistent delivery of Girl Scout programming to girls across the council, [Volunteer Essentials](#) is just that—essential. By agreeing to be a Girl Scout volunteer, you agree to follow the items outlined in this resource. Volunteer Essentials is updated annually, and the newest version can always be found on our website.

### Safety Activity Checkpoints

This guide has everything you need to know to be prepared and keep your girls safe during a range of activities both at your normal Girl Scout troop meetings and during all of the adventures outside of the meeting. Consult [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) before planning your Girl Scout activities.

### Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting and Journey Books

What does it mean to be a go-getting Girl Scout? These grade level-specific binders will help you break it down for your girls. It's part handbook, part badge book, and 100% fun. Journey adult guide books provide adults with the steps for completing Journey programs with girls. These resources are available for purchase at the local GSHH shops or [online Girl Scout shop](#).

### Adult Learning Opportunities

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson offers a variety of courses to prepare volunteers for their adventures with Girl Scouts, such as overnights and campouts. A variety of webinars and in-person courses are available, and can be found in our [Activities and Events calendar](#).

### Girl Scout Websites

The Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson website at [girlscoutshh.org](http://girlscoutshh.org) is your go-to for forms, program and event calendars, learning opportunities, property rental information, and much more. The Girl Scouts of the USA's national website at [girlscouts.org](http://girlscouts.org) provides information for volunteers, activities for girls, links to the Girl Scout online shop, and more. Meeting virtually? Girl Scouts at Home is where you'll find family friendly activities, virtual meeting resources, and a virtual events calendar with engaging sessions everyone can do from home. Find it at [girlscouts.org/athome](http://girlscouts.org/athome).

### GSHH Publications and Social Media

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson updates members and volunteers on the latest and greatest information through [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), and the *Headlines & Happenings* newsletter delivered by email. The [Program Guide](#) is also published annually and updated quarterly.

### Tips for Troop Leaders

When you're looking for real-world advice from fellow troop leaders who've been there, this volunteer- to-volunteer resource on the Girl Scouts of the USA website has the tips you need for a successful troop year. Find it at [girlscouts.org/tipsfortroopleaders](http://girlscouts.org/tipsfortroopleaders).



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## The Girl Scout Leadership Experience

What makes Girl Scouts truly unique? Everything is designed especially for, and is tested by, girls! Our program centers on our research-backed Girl Scout Leadership Experience— that is, *what* girls do and *how* they do it. Activities are girl- led, which gives girls opportunities to explore leadership roles and to learn by doing in a cooperative-learning environment.

At Girl Scouts, girls will:

**Discover:** Every activity girls tackle through Girl Scouts helps them discover who they are, what excites them, and what their talents are.

**Connect:** Girls collaborate with and learn from other people as they expand their horizons. This helps them care about and inspire others.

**Take action:** As girls deepen their relationship with the world around them, they become eager to take action to make the world a better place.

Girl Scouts is proven to help girls thrive in **five key ways** as they:



Develop a strong sense of self.



Display positive values.



Seek challenges and learn from setbacks.



Form and maintain healthy relationships.



Identify and solve problems in the community.

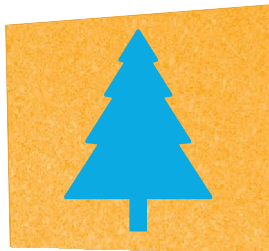
## What Girl Scouts Do

No matter what excites your girls, they'll find engaging and fun activities in the four areas that make up the core of the Girl Scout program:



### STEM

Computer science, engineering, robotics, outdoor STEM, and more



### OUTDOORS

Adventure and skill building, from the backyard to the backcountry, including through camping experiences for all ages



### LIFE SKILLS

Civic engagement, healthy living, global citizenship, communication skills— to name a few



### ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Girl Scout Cookie Program and Nuts + Mags Program teach goal setting, decision making, money management, business ethics, and people skills

Whether they complete Girl Scout Leadership Journeys, earn badges, run their own cookie business, pack for their first hike, change the world through Take Action projects, or any combination of these activities, at Girl Scouts, every girl has countless ways to explore our four program areas and hone the skills they'll need to power a lifetime of success—whatever that looks like for them.

Explore the many exciting possibilities with the Award and Badge Explorer at [girlscouts.org/badges](https://www.girlscouts.org/badges)



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Where Girl Scouts Can Take Your Girls

As your girls progress through Girl Scouts, they'll learn to take the reins and make their Girl Scout experiences their own—it's what being girl-led is all about! And as a leader, you'll encourage them to dream big and challenge themselves as they take their newfound passions to the next level.

While program elements—like outdoor expeditions and entrepreneurial ventures—align across all grade levels, Girl Scout Daisies and Brownies won't be doing the same activities as seasoned Seniors and Ambassadors. But by building on the knowledge and skills they gain year after year, your girls' confidence will grow exponentially and they'll be eager to take those next steps.

So what can you expect as they grow through each level of Girl Scouting?



DAISIE  
S K &  
1ST

**Girl Scout Daisies** sparkle with that first-time 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. Daisies can also earn learning petals.



BROWNIE  
S 2ND &  
3RD

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



JUNIOR  
S 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.



CADETTE  
S 6TH -  
8TH

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



SENIORS  
9TH &  
10TH

**Girl Scout Seniors** are ready to take the world by storm, and Girl Scouts gives them countless ways to do it. Their experiences shape their world, while giving them a safe space to be themselves and explore their interests. Seniors can earn the prestigious Gold Award.



AMBASSADORS  
11TH & 12TH

**Girl Scout Ambassadors** know that small acts produce big change. While they get ready for life beyond high school, Girl Scouts helps them take flight. They can also earn their Gold Award and drive lasting impact in their communities.

Throughout their time as Girl Scouts, girls grow into forces for good who transform the world through the [Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards](#). By earning these awards, your girls will tackle issues close to their hearts and make a real difference—and the Gold Award qualifies them for exclusive college scholarships and opens doors to promising career opportunities. The longer your girls are in Girl Scouts, the brighter their futures will be!





# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Guiding Your Troop Experience

In leading a new troop, you'll want to guide the structure and experiences of your troop—from how and when meetings are held to how the troop communicates, and from steering girl-led activities to setting financial expectations. You'll make these decisions collaboratively with your volunteer team or co-leader, as well as with input from the girls and their families.

Use these questions to guide your conversation with troop volunteers or co-leader before discussing the topics with families.

### Meeting Logistics:

- When will we meet and for how long? How frequently should we schedule troop meetings?
- Where will we meet? Great meeting spaces include schools, places of worship, libraries, and community centers. If working with teens, consider meeting at coffee shops, bookstores, or another place they enjoy. **Meeting in private homes is prohibited.**
- If we meet virtually, which platform will we use? Can all girls access the necessary technology?

[Refer to Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)

### Your Troop:

- Will our troop consist of girls in a single grade level or facilitated as a multi-level troop with girls of many grade levels?

### Troop Communication:

- How often will we communicate with troop families?
- How will we keep families in the loop? The Volunteer Toolkit? Emails? Group texts?

### Money Matters:

- Will our troop charge dues?
- How much money will we need to cover supplies and activities? What should our financial plan look like?
- Which components of the uniform—tunic, sash, vest—will troop families need to purchase? (Troop leader pro tip: get the full rundown on uniforms and insignia at [girlscouts.org/uniforms](http://girlscouts.org/uniforms))

## Your Troop Volunteer Team

You're never alone on your troop leader journey! Set the stage for a successful troop year by tapping into the people resources already at your fingertips: families, friends, and members of the community have their own unique strengths and can provide troops with time, experience, and ideas—so get them involved from the very beginning as part of your troop volunteer team! All adult members associated with a troop should have a volunteer role.

Some members of your volunteer team might play more active roles than others—and that's OK! One caregiver in your troop might step up as a dedicated troop treasurer, while others might volunteer to chaperone a field trip. Some roles, especially those that involve handling troop funds and supervising girls, require additional registration and approval. Be sure those volunteers get signed up before they jump into the fun! See a list of the official troop volunteer roles on page 11 of this guide.



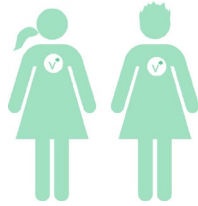
# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Your Troop and How You Belong

### Troops are made of:

#### Leader & Co-Leader

Must be unrelated Girl Scout members (at least one who is female) who have completed background checks and training before the troop opens for members to join.



#### Members

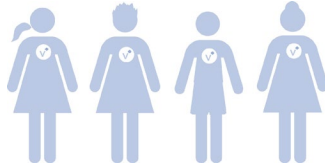
Members are girls, adults, and lifetime Girl Scouts who join together in their commitment to build girls of courage, confidence, and character who make the world a better place.

#### Troops & Juliettes

Most girls participate in Girl Scouts in troops. Troops are led by volunteers (often parents or family members). Girls Scouts who are not members of troops are called Juliettes and participate in Girl Scouts individually.

#### Troop Committee

Volunteers in official roles (see next page) with background checks.



#### Service Units

Service Units are areas that may include a town, school district, or other area. Service units are led by experienced volunteers who support their local troops and individuals.

#### Girl Members

Registered girl members of one level or multi-level.



#### Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc.

GSHH is one of more than 100 councils in the U.S. and serves nearly 20,000 girls in seven counties. Staff are here to support you, and we look forward to getting to know you!

#### Adult Members

Registered adult members who attend meetings or activities.



#### Girl Scouts of the U.S.A. (GSUSA)

GSUSA is the national organization to which GSHH belongs. Originally founded in 1912, GSUSA serves 2.6 million girls and adults in all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

**We recommend girls be registered members by the second or third meeting they attend.**

**Any and all chaperones on overnights will need to be registered and background checked with GSHH Council.**

#### W.A.G.G.G.S.

The World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts is an international organization that strives to inspire girls and women worldwide to reach their potential. GSUSA is one of 146 members of WAGGGS.



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Layers of Support in Girl Scouting

### Troop Team

### Service Unit Team

### GSHH Staff Team

#### **Leader & Co-Leaders**

Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) trained in Volunteer Essentials present at all troop activities

#### **Troop Treasurer**

Manages finances and prepares annual troop finance report

#### **Troop NUTS + MAGS Chair**

Supports and coordinates the troop's NUTS + MAGS program, October thru December

#### **Troop Cookie Chair**

Supports and coordinates the troop's Girl Scout Cookie program, February thru May

#### **Troop Annual Giving Chair**

Asks for support from troop families for GSHH's Annual Giving Campaign, once a year

#### **Driver**

21+ years old, maintains license, registration, insurance, and inspection, and follows all Girl Scout transportation policies during approved Girl Scout trips

*All of the above troop team members must complete a background check.*

#### **Service Unit (SU) Manager**

Partners with GSHH to organize, recruit, train, and support the Service Unit Team and troops

#### **SU Treasurer**

Manages finances of Service Unit and submits annual report

#### **SU NUTS + MAGS Chair**

Facilitates training and distribution of materials to troops for NUTS + MAGS program

#### **SU Cookie Chair**

Facilitates training and distribution of materials to troops, coordinates order and delivery of cookies

#### **SU Annual Giving Chair**

Provides training and materials to troops for Annual Giving

#### **SU Recruiter**

Assists in recruitment of members, assigns girls to troop, keeps records of waiting lists.

#### **SU Delegate/Alternate**

Provides input from operational volunteers to the GSHH Board of Directors

#### **SU Adult Recognition Chair**

Coordinates education of recognition program and collects nominations of adult awards

#### **Member Care**

Your first point of contact for all Girl Scout questions, provides fast answers or direct your inquiry to appropriate staff

#### **Community Engagement Specialists**

Recruitment and ongoing support for girls and adults across the council's jurisdiction

#### **Product Sales**

Support the GSHH girl product sale programs - NUTS + MAGS and Girl Scout Cookie program

#### **Girl Experience**

Ensure Girl Scout program is available to girls of all ages in all areas of our council and coordinate events and activities

#### **Volunteer Engagement**

Coordinate adult learning opportunities to support volunteers' roles and responsibilities, and adult recognitions

*Additional staff teams in philanthropy, property, and retail, to name a few, will also be supporting you along the way.*



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## What Makes a Successful Troop Experience?

No matter where your girls live, a universal Girl Scout experience connects them to their fellow Girl Scout sisters around the country. And there are so many ways to make sure your girls get the full Girl Scout experience in a way that excites and inspires them!





# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Family Connections: The Key Ingredient to Successful Girl Scout Troops!

Girl Scouting provides the best opportunities for girls when families step up and play an active part in the troop. Without meaningful support from parents, it's difficult for a troop to be all it can be. Plus, girls feel a special sense of pride when their families take part and show interest in the things they are doing!

### Kick the Year Off Right With a Parents and Caregivers Meeting

A parent and caregiver meeting should be the first meeting you hold to start each troop year; it sets up both new and returning troops for success!



#### Why? Because it helps:

- Families understand what Girl Scouting can do for their girl
- Families and leaders identify ways they will work as a team to support the troop
- Families and leaders agree about what the troop pays for and what families pay for individually
- You fill key troop positions—you never know which parent will make an amazing assistant leader or troop cookie manager
- Families know how the troop will communicate things like upcoming events or schedule changes
- Families learn about uniforms, books, and other important basics

Outlining clear expectations, building a team, and engaging families in the Girl Scout experience is a great way to start off your troop year. When families are involved, leaders have support, and when the troop has a plan, girls benefit!

Check out the parent / caregiver meeting outline on the next page. This meeting will make all the difference in the year ahead. **100% of troops with the most satisfied parents and troop leaders report they hold parent meetings.** You'll also want to hold an additional family meeting ahead of cookie season to introduce parents and caregivers to the program and how they can help out.

Although Girl Scout programming is always focused on the girls themselves, it's important and helpful to open a few events to girls' families throughout the year. Inviting a whole crew — whether it's through a virtual meeting where siblings and caregivers join in the fun, a bridging ceremony, or a fun “reverse meeting” where girls take on the role of leader and guide the adults through an activity—helps families better understand the value of Girl Scouts and makes them more likely to invest their time and talents in the troop.

Keep communication lines open throughout the year—whether it's through your troop's social media page, personal emails, or in-person chats—to keep parents in the loop on what the girls are doing and learning during each meeting. Encourage them to let their daughters “be the expert” at home by, for example, explaining or teaching a new skill she's learned to the rest of the family.



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## The Parent / Caregiver Meeting

While you're welcome to put your own unique spin on this meeting agenda, following this format will ensure the most relevant information is communicated clearly and that everyone's on the same page.

### Welcome and Introductions (10 mins)

- Leader introductions: Share why you volunteer your time with Girl Scouts.
- Meeting times, dates, and locations
- Parent and caregiver introductions: Ask them to share their expectations for the Girl Scout year.

### Wonderful World of Girl Scouts (10 mins)

- Explain the Girl Scout Mission, Promise, and Law.
- Explain girl-led, meaning that girls collectively decide, with your guidance, what they'd like to do as a troop. As they get older, they'll take on more leadership roles. Explain how cooperative learning and hands-on experiences help girls take risks and gain skills while having fun and making friends.
- Share overview of your year plan - including plans for virtual and/or in-person engagement, special events and activities the girls will do, and what choices the girls will make.

### COVID-19 and Girl Scouting (10 mins)

- Share the [COVID-19 Guidelines](#) from Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson.
- Explain what virtual and/or in-person activities you'll facilitate with the troop, and explain that participating in in-person activities is not a requirement for any girl or adult.
- Collect feedback on which girls will participate in-person right away, and which girls will not.

### Family Involvement (5 mins)

- Explain how you'll be engaging parents in their girls' Girl Scouts activities by keeping them in the loop on what the girls are learning and doing.
- Encourage them to let their daughters "be the expert" at home, explaining or teaching a new skill to the rest of the family.
- Tell them there will be opportunities for families to be involved with their Girl Scout's activities.

### Hooked on Helping (5 mins)

- Point out that spending a little time to help the troop makes a big impact.
- Explain the support that is needed and the opportunities available, from 30 minutes a week to 2 hours per week. Emphasize they're not just welcome to lend a hand, they're wanted.
- Have a sign up sheet to secure adults to help out with available tasks. Include on this list the Troop Team Roles on page 11 of this guide. Additional tasks you might consider adding to the list could include preparing troop snacks for meetings, managing a social media page for the troop, or sending communications by text or email.

### Money Matters (10 mins)

- Outline costs to parents to parents and caregivers. Include membership fees, background check fees (if necessary for their role), uniform costs, and other supplies needed for the year.
- Explain dues expectations, and how they'll be used to support the troop.
- If participating in the Nuts & Mags or Cookie Sale programs, explain how money raised benefits the troop, and mention the five critical financial skills girls will develop.
- Monies collected and earned with the troop, stays with the troop.

### Wrap-Up (10 mins)

- Hand out [Girl Health History forms](#) if your troop will be meeting in-person) for parents to complete and leave with you.
- Provide your contact information, phone, email, troop number, and meeting info, in writing.
- Allow time for questions, concerns, and getting to know each other.



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Let's Go—Your First Troop Meeting!

Your first troop meeting is a great chance to get to know the girls and brainstorm all the exciting things they want to do in the year to come.

### Six Elements of a Great Troop Meeting

- 1. Start Up.** Plan activities for the girls on arrival at the meeting so they have something to do until the meeting begins. This could be as simple as coloring pages, a simple game, or talking to one another. (5 minutes)
- 2. Opening.** Each troop decides how to open their meetings. Most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, a simple flag ceremony, a Girl Scout song, or other activity designed by the girls. (5–10 minutes)
- 3. Business.** Collect dues and make announcements. Let girls plan their upcoming meetings or decide what events they want to attend. (5 minutes)
- 4. Activities.** Use the meeting plans found in the Volunteer Toolkit! Activities are already designed to fit easily into this part of your meeting as you help your troop earn badges and complete Journeys. Let girls get hands-on, work together, and take the lead!(30–45 minutes)
- 5. Clean up.** Girl Scouts should always leave a place cleaner than they found it! (5 minutes)
- 6. Closing.** As with the opening, each troop can decide how to close—with a song, game, friendship circle, story, or pretty much any thing else! (5-10 minutes)

*Volunteers must follow the Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson COVID-19 Volunteer Guidelines at all in-person activities!*

*Meeting virtually? Check out a sample meeting agenda and other virtual resources in the "For Troop Leaders" section of Girl Scouts at Home.*

### First meeting checklist:

- 1. Cover the basics.** Review the details about when and where the meeting will take place and make sure parents/caregivers are aware.
- 2. Get ready.** Use the Volunteer Toolkit to verify your troop roster and email parents. This might be a great time to ask parents to provide you with any needed items, such as health history forms, uniform order forms, and troop dues.
- 3. Know the agenda.** Refer to our "Six Elements of a Troop Meeting" list and the Volunteer Toolkit sample meeting agenda.
- 4. Review and practice your agenda.** You'll feel calmer during the actual meeting and ready to make adjustments as needed.
- 5. Be prepared...for fun!** When the girls and parents see that you're prepared for the meeting and ready to have a great time, they'll follow your lead!

If you're feeling a little nervous about leading troop meetings and experiences with your girls, that's OK! Just remember:

**It doesn't need to be perfect.** Did an activity run over time? Did you have tech issues during your virtual meeting? Take a deep breath, roll with the changes, and have fun! The girls aren't expecting perfection from you: your time, attention, and guidance are the best part of your leadership.

**Learn with your girls.** Keeping activities girl-led means that at some point, the girls will want to earn a badge or complete a project in a subject unfamiliar to you. Don't let that hold you back! Be open with the girls when you don't know something and become their partner in learning more. You'll show them that learning is a lifelong process and that with an open mind, they can overcome any challenges that come their way.



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Girl Scout Uniforms

Girls at each level wear one required element (tunic or vest for Daisies, sash or vest for all other levels) to display official pins and awards. Girls can mix and match pieces from the official Girl Scout uniform collection to complete their uniform, or add white collared shirts and khakis from their own wardrobes.

Girls may place the United States flag patch, the Council ID set, the insignia tab with the Girl Scout and WAGGGS membership pins, her troop number, her troop crest (if her troop has selected one), and her years of membership stars to her uniform. All other insignia, badges, pins, and awards, may only be displayed on the uniform after she has completed the requirements to earn them.

The adult uniform is navy attire with official Girl Scout membership pins, and khakis. For official events or ceremonies, adult members wear navy business attire with an adult Girl Scout membership scarf for women or an adult Girl Scout tie for men.

Uniforms are not required to be a member of Girl Scouts. However, wearing a uniform is a symbol of belonging to a great organization, and an important way for girls to proudly display their Girl Scout accomplishments. If cost is a prohibitive factor in a girl having a uniform, contact Member Care at 855-232-GSHH (4744) or [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org) to ask about need-based financial assistance.

Find charts of how and where to place insignia on the Girl Scout uniforms at every level here: [Where to Place Insignia on a Uniform](#)



## Speak to a Retail Associate in a local GSHH Shop:

**Montgomery:** 845-236-6002

**New City:** 845-638-0438

**New Rochelle:** 914-747-3080

**Wappingers Falls:** 845-452-1810







# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Keeping Girls Safe

### Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need

From camping weekends to cookie booths, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure the girls have fun and stay safe. Your group must always have at least two unrelated, trained leaders or co-leaders, with background checks, one of whom must be female, present at all times, plus additional adult volunteers as necessary. The helpful chart below breaks down the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls.

Volunteer-to-Girl Ratio Chart	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two Troop Leaders or Co-Leaders (Girl Scout members, unrelated, at least one of whom is female, with background checks and Volunteer Essentials training) for:	One additional adult volunteer (Girl Scout member) to each additional:	Two Troop Leaders or Co-Leaders (Girl Scout members, unrelated, at least one female, with background checks and Volunteer Essentials training) for:	One additional adult volunteer (Girl Scout member) to each additional:
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K-1)	Up to 12	1-6	Up to 6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2-3)	Up to 20	1-8	Up to 12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4-5)	Up to 25	1-10	Up to 16	1-8
Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6-8)	Up to 25	1-12	Up to 20	1-10
Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9-10)	Up to 30	1-15	Up to 24	1-12
Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11-12)	Up to 30	1-15	Up to 24	1-12

### Emotional Safety

Establish an environment that is just as safe emotionally as it is physically. Create, together as a whole troop, a Team Agreement, and coach girls to honor the agreement. Team agreements typically encourage behaviors like respecting diverse feelings and opinions, resolving conflicts constructively, avoiding physical and verbal bullying or clique behavior, practicing fairness, and showing positive, respectful, and helpful communication with others. Refer to [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for additional information on protecting emotional safety of girls.

### Sensitive Issues

If issues come up in conversation or program that could be considered sensitive by parents, put the topic on hold until written parental permission has been obtained for the specific discussion or activity that will address the issue. Parents and caregivers make all decisions regarding their girl's participation with sensitive issues.

### COVID-19 Guidelines

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. has guidelines in place for all in-person activities during the COVID-19 pandemic. The latest information is always here: [GSHH Coronavirus Updates Webpage](#)



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Troop Meeting Safety

- Ensure proper supervision at all times (page 17 of this guide)
- Have a first aid kit at your meeting place and with you at all activities.
- Know the location of fire exits and extinguishers at your meeting place.
- Use the buddy system. Every girl must always have a buddy.

## Planning Safe Activities

- Refer to [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for all activities and follow specified guidelines.
- Have a first aid kit in each vehicle when transporting girls, and with you at events and activities.
- Obtain parent permission when leaving your meeting location and submit appropriate paperwork to your service unit or GSHH staff.

## Emergencies / Accidents

1. If an incident is life-threatening, call 911 and follow instructions.
2. Provide immediate care for ill or injured persons.
3. Contact the GSHH Emergency Number **845-558-9436**.
4. With GSHH staff guidance, notify parents and guardians.
5. Submit an Accident/ Incident Report Form to Member Care.

## Keeping Girls Safe

*Safety Activity Checkpoints* is your most important resource regarding safety with Girl Scouts. Familiarize yourself with the first section within 30 days of starting meeting with your troop. When preparing for any activities with girls, check [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) for required guidelines on where to do an activity, what safety equipment and precautions are required, and the specific steps to follow on the day of the activity. [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) will also note if a first-aider is required.

## Troop First Aid Kit

Recommended list of contents:

- 25 adhesive bandages of various sizes
- 2 absorbent gauze pads, 5" x 9"
- 5 sterile gauze pads, 3" x 3"
- 5 sterile gauze pads, 4" x 4"
- 1 gauze roller bandage, 3"
- 1 adhesive cloth tape, 1" x 10 yd
- 5 anti-septic wipe packets
- 1 emergency blanket
- 1 breathing barrier
- 1 oral thermometer
- 1 instant cold pack
- 2 triangular bandages
- First Aid guide
- Disposable face masks
- Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol)
- Disinfecting wipes
- No-touch thermometer (optional)

## These items can only be dispensed to children with written parental permission:

- Aspirin
- Antibiotic ointment
- Hydrocortisone cream
- Anti-histamine tablets / caplets / liquid

## Girl Scout specific items (in a ziplock):

- [Girls' and Adults' Health Forms](#)
- 2 blank [Accident/Incident Report Forms](#)
- GSHH Emergency Number (845-558-9436), Poison Control Number (800-222-1222), and contact information for staff and parents
- [Parent permission slips](#)



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Ceremonies and Traditions

Even while participating in cutting-edge STEM topics, participating in Girl Scout traditions and ceremonies adds special memories to a girl's experiences and reinforces the significance of being part of a nationwide sisterhood.

Below are some tips to get started incorporating traditions and ceremonies into your troop's activities. As you're ready to learn and do more, there are many sources of information including [GSUSA's Traditions Webpage](#), and other local volunteers who have years of experience in the organization.

Kaper Chart	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3	Meeting 4
Lead Opening Ceremony				
Collect Dues & Attendance				
Serve Snack				
Lead Closing Ceremony				

### Kaper Chart

A kaper chart assigns patrols to complete duties, or kapers, during a troop meeting (like the example here), outdoor cookout, or weekend trip. Patrols can be Girl Scout cookies, animal mascots, or anything else the girls imagine.

Girls can help decide their patrols, decorate the chart, and then complete their responsibilities.

### Girl Scout Sign

Members hold three fingers in the air, holding their pinkie finger down with their thumb.



### Girl Scout Quiet Sign

Leader holds right hand in the air. Girls put their right hands up and stop speaking.



### Girl Scout Motto:

"Be prepared."

### Girl Scouts of the USA Founder:

Juliette Gordon Low

### Girl Scout Slogan:

"Do a good turn daily."



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Beyond the Troop Meeting

From field trips to global travel, roasting marshmallows to backpacking, Girl Scouts see and learn new things and pack their bags full of inspiring life-changing experiences and memories. Follow the guidelines while you prepare your girls for adventure:

- Submit a [Trip/Activity Notification form](#) when indicated in the chart below.
- [Parent Permission Slips](#) are required for all activities that take place outside of the normal meeting location.
- Always check [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#) when planning a trip or activities outside of the meeting.
- Purchase non-member insurance for non-member children and adults attending Girl Scout activities.
- Refer to the chart below when preparing your troop for trips and events:

Type of Trip	Training Required	First Aider	Forms	Participant List	Additional Insurance	Approval
Day trip within council	Volunteer Essentials (VE)	Recommended	N/A	No	Non-member if needed	Service Unit (SU)
Day trip Out of council	Volunteer Essentials (VE)	Recommended	Trip/Activity	Yes	Non-member if needed	Service Unit (SU)
Fire Building or Outdoor Cooking	VE, Cook Out	Required	Trip/Activity	Yes	Non-member if needed	Service Unit (SU)
Overnight Indoors	VE & Sleep In	Required	Trip/Activity	Yes	Non-member or 3+ nights if needed	SU & Staff
Overnight In Tents	VE, Sleep In, Cook Out, & Camp Out	Required	Trip/Activity	Yes	Non-member or 3+ nights if needed	SU & Staff
Council Overnights	VE; If required: Sleep In and/or Camp Out (depends on event)	Required	Trip/Activity, Event Registration	Yes	Non-member or 3+ nights if needed	SU & Staff
SU Camping at Council camp	VE, Sleep In, Cook Out, Camp Out	Required	Trip/Activity, Event Registration	Yes	Non-member or 3+ nights if needed	SU & Staff

- **Please note:** Any and all adult chaperones on overnights will need to be registered members with background checks.



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Funding the Fun

Your girls probably have some big ideas about what they want to do in Girl Scouts—and that's awesome! As a troop leader, you'll coach them as they learn to earn and manage troop funds. But where do you start?

Troop activities are funded in two main ways:

**Troop Dues:** Many troops decide to collect troop dues to help provide startup funds for troop activities and supplies. The amount of dues could range from a few dollars per meeting to a lump sum for the entire school year. It is up to each troop to decide what works best for them in order to support the activities they want to do.

**Money-earning Activities:** The [Fall NUTS + MAGS](#) and [Cookie Program](#) are the primary [money-earning activities](#) for a troop. These programs are hands-on ways for girls to learn money management skills that will serve them well for the rest of their lives. You'll learn the ins and outs of these programs in a separate training.

Money-earning activities must be pre-approved by Girl Scout staff. [Learn more here.](#)

## The Cookie Sale Program Teaches Girl Scouts:

**5 financial literacy Skills**

- 1 Goal Setting
- 2 Decision Making
- 3 Money Management
- 4 People Skills
- 5 Business Ethics

## Troop Money Management

**Opening a Bank Account:** New troops will need to set up a bank account to collect dues, pay for troop supplies and activities, and collect product sales revenue. Submit a [Bank Account Request Form](#) to Member Care to get started opening the account.

[Form](#) to Member Care to get started opening the account.

**Financial Assistance:** Money shouldn't stand in the way of a Girl Scout's participation. Any girl needing financial assistance for membership can request it as part of the online member registration process. Other financial assistance is available for uniform components, events, and camps. Contact Member Care at 855-232-GSHH (4744) to learn how to apply for assistance.

**Tax Exemption:** Councils are 501(c)(3) nonprofits, so take advantage of your council's tax-exempt form when purchasing supplies and materials for Girl Scout troop use. [Submit a Tax Exempt Request through our website.](#)

**Troop Finance Reporting:** Track expenses and income and keep receipts to maintain organized management of troop funds. Troop account information should be supplied to parents or caregivers upon request. Each year by June 30, troops submit their year's finance report through the Volunteer Toolkit.

**Troop Changes:** Troop funds belong to the entire troop, and not to individual girls. If a troop disbands, contact Member Care for support in managing the closing of the troop account and transfer of funds.



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## GSHH Volunteer Policies

Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. has adopted these volunteer policies to complement and be used in conjunction with GSUSA guidelines and the *Blue Book of Basic Documents*. All volunteers must follow these policies as written.

**Affirmative Action Policy**—Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc., in recognition of its responsibility to its volunteers, its staff, and the girls it serves, and in keeping with the Girl Scouts of the U.S.A.'s affirmative action policies, reaffirms its policy to ensure fair and equal treatment, in all practices to all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, sexual preference, ethnicity, citizenship, heights, weight, marital status, or national origin. There shall be no discrimination against an individual by reason of disability, age or socioeconomic status (refer to GSUSA guidelines and The Blue Book.)

**Contractual Agreement Policy**—Contracts and/or agreements are legally binding. Contracts of \$500 or more must be reviewed and approved by the Chief Operating Officer or his/her designee. If a volunteer signs a contract or agreement, the volunteer accepts fiscal responsibility for said contract or agreement. Please submit all contractual agreements of \$500 or more to Member Care at [membercare@girlscoutshh.org](mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org).

**Grievance Policy**—Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. maintains an open-door policy regarding volunteer concerns. Every volunteer may file a grievance without fear of jeopardizing his/her volunteer status. A systematic process to ensure the objective hearing and orderly handling of a volunteer's formal problem resolution request is in place.

**Sexual Harassment Policy**—Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of sexual harassment between any individuals of the same or opposite sex. Sexual harassment includes, but is not limited to, unwelcome sexual advances or suggestions of sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or abusing the dignity of another through insulting or degrading sexual remarks, conduct, and/or threats. It is against council policies to sexually harass another volunteer, employee, or girl/adult member. Any such harassment will not be tolerated.

**Smoking/Substance Abuse Policy**—While participating in a Girl Scout function, any activity that is deemed to be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the girls is prohibited. Prohibited activities include, but are not limited to: the possession or consumption of alcoholic beverages; the possession or use of illegal drugs; the use of any tobacco products including cigarette smoking, cannabis or vaping. Any person under the influence of alcohol, cannabis or an illegal drug, or any person misusing a prescription drug, may not participate in or be present at Girl Scout activities involving girls or operate a vehicle transporting girls.

**Termination Policy**—Any volunteer or his/her supervisor may initiate termination of service prior to the end of the term of appointment. A volunteer unable to complete his/her term should give written notice as far in advance as possible. The council will initiate release of a volunteer only after full consideration of all factors. Reasons for the council to initiate termination usually fall into one or more of the following categories: misappropriation of funds; failure to comply with GSUSA or council policies or guidelines; inability to follow or complete the requirements of the position. Certain types of misconduct may be so serious as to subject volunteers to immediate suspension with recommendation for dismissal without notice.

**First Aid/CPR Policy**—Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson, Inc. requires that adults who serve as the primary First Aid volunteer for a troop or group must have a current certification in First Aid and CPR that includes the Pediatric CPR certification. The council offers the First Aid and CPR course throughout the year. These courses are offered by registered and certified instructors with the MEDIC First Aid Company and are valid for a period of two years. GSHH accepts First Aid and CPR certifications by some other vendors. The course must include infant, child and adult First Aid, CPR and AED. Please see the GSHH website for approved First Aid/CPR vendors.



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## New Leader Checklist

### Taking the Leadership Role

- [Join Girl Scouts Heart of the Hudson](#).
- Log into your [Member Profile](#) online.
- Watch the welcome video and submit your answers.
- Designate your leadership role in your profile.
- Complete your criminal background check.
- Attend [Volunteer Essentials](#) training.
- Print your [adult learning card](#) and track trainings.
- Access the Volunteer Toolkit.
- Review your Girl Scouts resources—[Volunteer Essentials](#), [New Leader's Guide to Success](#), and [Safety Activity Checkpoints](#).

### Prepare for Your Troop

- Connect with your co-leader.
- Review the [GSHH Covid-19 Guidelines](#).
- Determine your meeting location, days, and times.
- Invite girls and adults to register in your troop.
- Prepare for your parent/guardian meeting.
- Send an invitation to all girls and adults to first meeting.
- Hold the first parent/guardian meeting.
- Recruit troop support volunteers.
- Utilize the Volunteer Toolkit to create meeting plans.
- Submit the [Bank Account Request Form](#) and open your troop account.
- Submit a [Tax Exempt Request](#) for your troop.
- Reach out to your Service Unit Manager to learn about monthly leaders' meetings and other local resources.

### Keep the Fun Going

- Go to [www.girlscoutshh.org](http://www.girlscoutshh.org) to see upcoming opportunities for Girl Scouts on the program & events calendar.
- Find additional [adult learning opportunities](#) to enrich your knowledge and prepare for adventures.
- Find out when NUTS+MAGS and [Girl Scout Cookie programs](#) take place, and when training is available to get your troop involved.

### Forms for Leaders

**[Accident / Incident Report](#)**—To document and report an incident as soon after its occurrence as possible

**[Adult Learning Card](#)**—To record your trainings and learning opportunities

**[Bank Account Request Form](#)**—To request to open your troop bank account

**[Certificate of Insurance](#)**—Provided by Member Care upon request for meeting location, if requested by facility

**[Covid-19 Liability Waiver](#)** - Must be collected for every adult and girl prior to participating in an in-person Girl Scout activity

**[Girl ID Cards](#)**—Identification cards used for girls during outings in case of emergency or separation

**[Health History Form](#)**—Parent portion should be collected for each girl in the troop. Physician portion required only for trips of 3 nights or more or as required by Safety Activity Checkpoints.

**[Money-Earning Activity Request Form](#)**—To apply to conduct a troop fund-raiser after participating in council product sales programs

**[Annual Parent Permission Form](#)** and **[Single Event Parent Permission Form](#)** - collected from parents for any activity outside of the normal meeting place

**[Trip Activity Notification Packet](#)**— required prior to certain trips and activities including all overnight, high risk, and out-of-council activities



# NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

## Contact Information

<b>Council Staff Contact</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone #/Email</b>
<b>GSHH Council Phone</b>		<b>914-747-3080</b>
<b>Emergency Phone</b>	<b>Emergency Only</b>	<b>845-558-9436</b>
<b>Member Care Team</b>		<a href="mailto:membercare@girlscoutshh.org">membercare@girlscoutshh.org</a> <b>855-232-GSHH (4744)</b>
<b>Community Engagement Specialist</b>		<b>855-232-GSHH (4744)</b>
<b>Service Unit Contact</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone #/Email</b>
<b>Service Unit Manager</b>		
<b>Service Unit Recruiter</b>		
<b>Service Unit Cookie Chair</b>		
<b>Service Unit Nuts &amp; Mags Chair</b>		
<b>Service Unit Treasurer</b>		
<b>Service Unit Annual Giving Chair</b>		
<b>Service Unit Adult Recognition Chair</b>		
<b>Other</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Phone #/Email</b>



