
The Girl Scout Program?
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—the largest girl-led entrepreneurial program in the world—teaches goal setting, decision making, money management, business ethics, and people skills
Welcome to Girl Scouts ................................................................. 4
Let’s Get Started ....................................................................... 5
Girl Scout Levels ...................................................................... 6
The Girl Scout Uniform ............................................................. 6
Organizational Structure ............................................................ 6
The Girl Scout Program ............................................................. 7
Keeping Girls Safe .................................................................... 8
Your Role and Troop Volunteers .............................................. 9-10
The Family Connection ............................................................. 11
Guiding Your Troop Experience .............................................. 12
Troop Planning Meeting ............................................................ 13
6 Elements of a Great Troop Meeting ...................................... 15
Troop Finances ........................................................................ 16
Volunteer Resources ............................................................... 17
Volunteer Trainings ................................................................. 18
Service Centers and Shop Locations and Hours .................. 19

**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**

Building 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.*
WELCOME TO GIRL SCOUTS!

We’re so excited for you to join the Girl Scout movement.

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

Badgerland Council spans a 23-county region in south-central and southwest Wisconsin, as well as, Iowa’s Allamakee County and Minnesota’s Houston County. Badgerland serves nearly 9,000 girls and 3,500 adult volunteers from all socio-economic, ethnic, racial, rural and urban populations throughout the jurisdiction.

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

You’re now a part of our team. We can’t wait to see the impact you’ll make this year!
LET’S GET STARTED

Managing Your Member Experience Online
After your background check process is completed and you’re approved to serve as a volunteer, you’ll receive an email confirmation prompting you to log into MyGS, your Girl Scout member community, for the first time. MyGS allows you to manage your member experience online. Go to gsbadgerland.org and click ‘SIGN IN” in the upper right corner of the site.

On the Troop tab in MyGS, you can see any girls and adults who have signed up for your troop and add new girls to your troop.

Next Steps
You will receive a “Welcome New Troop Leader” email with details on leader training and resources available to you as a troop leader. If you have not received the Hello email, check your junk email folder. See page 18 of this document for more details on required trainings.
GIRL SCOUT LEVELS

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

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

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.

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

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

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

THE GIRL SCOUT UNIFORM

Uniforms are an important part of the Girl Scout experience, connecting girls to Girl Scout traditions, displaying their accomplishments, and creating memories to last a lifetime. Girls want to look and feel their best when representing Girl Scouts. And now they can, with uniform options that are in step with today’s trends and active lifestyles. Girl Scouts at each level now wear one required element (tunic, sash, or vest) to display official pins and awards. Girls can mix and match pieces from the official Girl Scout collection to complete the uniform. Troop Leaders may opt to collect money from parents and purchase sashes, vests, and insignia from a council shop, or ask parents to purchase items on their own. Financial assistance for uniform components is available for qualifying families.

Visit one of our shop locations to purchase uniforms, starter kits, and more. Our shop staff are here to help! Or shop online at gsbadgerland.org and click “Shop” in the upper right.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)
A national organization supporting the work of more than 100 councils across the U.S. for more than 100 years. Headquartered in New York, New York.

Girl Scouts of Wisconsin - Badgerland
Independent 501(c)3 nonprofit chartered by GSUSA operating under the direction of a local board of directors and overseeing all membership areas and troops within a given geographic area.

Service Unit (SU)
Comprised of volunteers who support the work of troop volunteers within a given geographic area.

Troops
Volunteer-supervised groups of girls who participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
WHAT’S THE GIRL SCOUT PROGRAM?

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

In Girl Scouts, girls will:

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

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

**Take Action**
Do something to make the world a better place.

**Journeys**
Identify a problem, come up with a creative solution, create a team plan to make the solution a reality, put a plan into action, and talk about what they have learned. As girls go on Journeys, they’ll earn awards to put on their uniforms. The Volunteer Toolkit and Journey books are your resources for the requirements to earning awards.

**Highest Awards**
These represent the highest honors a Girl Scout can earn.

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

**Badges**
What have your girls always wanted to do?

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

The Volunteer Toolkit and Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting are your resources for the requirements to earning badges.

**Patches**
Think of patches like collecting memories in Girl Scouts. They’re often a part of the fun activities you can do in Girl Scouts without the requirements of badges. Patches are always worn on the back of the vest or sash.
**KEEPING GIRLS SAFE**

While working with girls and learning new skills is fun and rewarding, assuming responsibility for other people’s children means that some level of risk management and due diligence is involved. There are several resources we use to help you minimize risk and keep girls safe.

**Understanding How Many Volunteers You Need**

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

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer-to-Girl Ratio Chart</th>
<th>Troop Meetings</th>
<th>Events, Travel and Camping</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two unrelated Volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:</td>
<td>Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Daisies (grades K-1)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1-6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2-3)</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1-8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4-5)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1-10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Cadettes (grades 6-8)</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>1-12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Seniors (grades 9-10)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girl Scout Ambassadors (grades 11-12)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>1-15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Planning Safe Activities**

When preparing for any activity with girls, start by reading the Girl Scout Safety Activity Checkpoints for that particular activity. Find these on the resources tab of the Volunteer Toolkit and in the Volunteer Resources section of gsbadgerland.org. Each Safety Activity Checkpoint lists required guidelines on where to do the activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find basic and specialized gear for the activity, how to prepare for the activity, and the steps to follow on the day of the activity. Safety Activity Checkpoints will note if a First Aider is required.

NOTE: If Safety Activity Checkpoints do not exist for an activity your girls want to do, contact us before making any definite plans: info@gsbadgerland.org or call 800.236.2710.

**What to do in an Emergency**

At the scene of the incident, safety is the first priority. Provide care for the injured person or obtain medical assistance and then report the emergency to Badgerland.

Make sure a general first aid kit is available at your meeting place and accompanies girls on any activity. You may need to provide the kit if one is not already available at your meeting location. You must always have on hand the names and numbers of our council office, parents/guardians and emergency services such as the police, fire department, or hospital.
YOU—A GIRL SCOUT LEADER!

Your Role
What does it mean to be a Girl Scout leader? It’s the amazing journey of helping girls build courage, confidence, and character through Girl Scouts. As a leader, it’s important to remember that leadership can bring many joys, including developing a personal relationship with each girl in the troop, building adult friendships through the sisterhood of Girl Scouts, receiving sincere appreciation and thanks from parents, and most importantly, knowing you are shaping the future by working with a girl today.

What does it mean to you to be a Girl Scout leader? That’s something you’ll discover throughout your time with the girls and adults in your troop, as well as through relationships you make with fellow volunteers and families. It’s an exciting adventure!

As you build relationships, leadership ...
• will develop as you get to know each girl and adult troop member.
• means communicating with parents and co-leaders.
• includes understanding the needs and interests of the girls, helping them plan activities and excursions beyond the troop meeting, and guiding them as they discover new interests.

As a leader, it’s important to remember that ...
• you cannot know everything the girls might ever want to learn.
• you’ll explore and learn along with the girls.
• you are expected to know where to go for information and resources (this guide is a great place to start!). At the same time, we get it—there’s lots of stuff here and you don’t need to know everything about Girl Scouts! Get your own resources lined up and always reach out to us for help!

Leadership is teaching ...
• girls that they can do and be anything.
• girls that they are decision makers.
• girls not only for the sake of knowing things, but also for the sake of development and growth.
• through being a good role model.

See yourself as a coach ...
• not as a teacher with a canned lesson or activity or as someone who has to perform for the girls each week.
• who guides and instructs.
• who advises and discusses.
• who work so each girl can carry out responsibilities within the troop.
• as the girls build their skills and ethics.
• and give more responsibilities to the girls as they grow and develop.

“Belonging” in leadership means ...
• understanding you are part of a troop and a team.
• listening, providing suggestions, and contributing ideas.
YOUR TROOP VOLUNTEERS

On my honor, I will ... not do this alone!

Before you hold your first troop meeting with girls, consider the support and resources you’ll need throughout the year. Parents, friends, family, and other members of the community can provide time, experience, and ideas to a troop, so get them involved from the very beginning as part of your volunteer troop team. This team is made up of Troop Leaders (like you) and other adult volunteers.

All of these adults must be screened and approved. They commit to these roles based on the amount of time the volunteer has to give and interest in specific areas on the team. Interested individuals should be guided to the Join or Volunteer buttons at gsbadgerland.org.

The Troop volunteers play a big role in making your troop run smoothly and in supporting the girls’ plans. They’re an extra set of eyes, ears and hands whose skill sets are leveraged to help the troop safely explore the world around them.

Ideally, your troop volunteers will include:
• Troop Cookie Coordinator
• One or more Chaperones and Drivers
• Fall Product Sale Coordinator
• Troop Co-Treasurers

Some Troop volunteers are not able to volunteer on a regular basis but are ready to help out when you need an extra set of hands to manage an activity station, provide a snack, lead songs, and keep the activity on track and fun. Often parents start in this role if they aren’t sure they can commit to a troop volunteer or leader role. Once they see how fun it is, they may sign up for more!

Troop Co-leader Responsibilities
• Liaison with volunteers and council staff
• Troop financial management
• Communication with parents
• Girl safety
• Guiding the troop’s Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

Troop Volunteer Responsibilities
• Assist Troop Co-leaders
• Girl safety
• May drive girls, coordinate finances, and/or chaperone troop activities
• Provide extra help at troop meetings

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities
• Communicate with Troop Leadership
• Provide permission and information needed for participation in activities
• Ensure current membership for their girl
• Provide transportation to and from meetings
• Complete and submit the Health History form

Girl Responsibilities
• Be ready to learn and have fun
• Use your imagination and creativity
• Always stay with the group and be safe
• Clean up after yourself
• Listen when others are speaking
• Have fun!

All Girl Scouts live by the Girl Scout Law.

As a Troop Co-leader, you will guide the structure and experiences of your troop; from how and when meetings are held to how the troop communicates, from steering activities to setting financial expectations. These decisions will be made collaboratively with your volunteer team, as well as with input from the girls and their parents/guardians.
The Secret Ingredient of Successful Girl Scout Troops: FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Obviously, you want the girls in your troop to have fun, be inspired, take risks, and learn about themselves and the world this year—that’s why you’re a Girl Scout troop leader! The thing is, parents and caregivers want the same thing for their girls, but getting families to pitch in and play an active role in the troop, while also enhancing the experience for their own daughter, can be tricky for many volunteers. It doesn’t have to be this way! After your troop’s initial Troop Planning Meeting (page 13), here’s how you can best keep parents and caregivers on board.

Make the ask(s)
The main reason people don’t take action is because they were never asked to in the first place. That’s why hearing one out of three Girl Scout parents say no one had communicated expectations around involvement with their girl’s troop is so troubling. Parents may have many talents, but they’re certainly not mind readers! If you’re nervous about getting turned down, don’t be. Sure, a few parents might be unable to lend a hand, but the helpers you do get will be worth their weight in gold. And just because someone wasn’t available a month or two ago doesn’t mean they won’t be free to help now. Loop back, follow up, ask again!

Make sense of “why”
Explain that not only does the whole troop benefit with extra help from parents and caregivers, but also girls feel a special sense of pride in seeing their own family member step up and take a leadership role. Getting involved can strengthen the caregiver/girl bond and is a meaningful way to show daughters they are a priority in their parents’ lives.

Make it quick and easy
Everybody’s got a full plate these days, so instead of starting parent conversations with a list of tasks or responsibilities they could take on (which can be intimidating!), ask caregivers how much time each week they might be able to dedicate to the troop, then go from there. For instance, if a troop mom or dad has 15 minutes each week to spare, they could organize and manage the calendar for troop snacks and carpools. If a grandparent has one to two hours, they could assist with leading the troop through a specific badge on a topic they’re already comfortable with. For more ways parents and other caregivers can help out when faced with a tricky schedule, check out the Family Resources tab in the Volunteer Toolkit.

Make family part of the formula
While Girl Scouts programming is always focused on the girls themselves, it’s important and helpful to open up a few events to their families throughout the year. Inviting a whole crew to celebrate her accomplishments in Girl Scouting—whether at a holiday open house, a bridging ceremony, or a fun “reverse meeting” where girls take the role of leaders and guide the adults, including caregivers, through an activity—will help parents better understand the value of Girl Scouts and be more likely to invest their time and talents with the troop. That said, there’s no need to wait for one of these special events to engage parents in their girls’ Girl Scout lives. 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, and encourage them to let their daughters “be the expert” at home, such as explaining or teaching a new skill she’s learned to the rest of the family.
GUIDING YOUR TROOP EXPERIENCE

Use these questions to talk with your fellow co-leader and troop volunteers to outline your troop’s structure before discussing these topics with parents/guardians at the Troop Planning Meeting.

Let’s Talk Expectations
- What do you, as a troop volunteer, want from this experience?
- What do you want for your girl to experience during the Troop year?
- What strengths do you bring to the table? (use their strengths and interests to slot into volunteer roles)

Let’s Talk Details
- How often, when will we meet, and for how long (length of each meeting and until what part of year)?
- Where will we meet? Your meeting space should be somewhere safe, clean, and secure that allows all girls to participate. Some great meeting space ideas include:
  - schools
  - places of worship
  - libraries
  - community centers
- Which components of the uniform will families need to purchase?
- How are we going to work with girls to decide on activities that are what they want to do, are age appropriate, and help them discover, connect, and take action? You can utilize the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) to help you through this process by exploring options for activities and reviewing the meeting plans and resources lists.
- How and how often are we going to communicate to parents/guardians? Keep everyone in the loop to make sure they know when, where, and what the activities will be and that girls are prepared for the activity. Effective communication will help set expectations and clarify parent/guardian responsibilities.
- How will we fund the fun? Will our troop charge dues, use product program proceeds, and/or charge per activity? How much money will we need to cover supplies and activities? Outline a financial plan, and then fill in the details once girls determine what they want to do this year.

Girl Scouts is designed to be girl-led. Talk to the girls about what they’d like to get out of Girl Scouts this year and make sure you’re having fun, too!
THE TROOP PLANNING MEETING

Kick off the Year Right by Engaging ALL Troop Parents

Girl Scouting provides the best opportunities for girls when families step up and play an active part in the troop.

The Troop Planning Meeting is the first meeting to start each troop year—whether you are a new or returning troop. It's valuable for all troops.

Why? Because it helps:
• parents and leaders identify ways they will work as a team to support the troop
• parents and leaders agree on what the troop pays for and what families pay for individually
• fill key troop volunteer positions—you never know which parent will make an awesome Chaperone/Driver, Troop Cookie Coordinator, etc.
• parents know how the troop will communicate things like upcoming events, schedule changes, etc.
• parents learn about uniforms, books, and other important basics

TROOP PARENT MEETING AGENDA

Introductions
Co-leaders introduce themselves and any other troop volunteers. Invite all parents to make an introduction and name of their girl along with what their hopes are for their daughter’s Girl Scout year.

Ask for Help
Explain the volunteer roles available: chaperone/driver, troop cookie coordinator, fall product sale coordinator and treasurer. Requirements to volunteer: agree to become a Girl Scout member and complete a background check. FACT: The more involved parents get in the troop, the greater the experience is for all the girls (and grown-ups).

Get the Girls Registered
Make sure all your Girl Scouts have a membership (not sure? ask us). Set up a laptop where adults can register their daughters on the spot if they haven't already. Problems registering? We’re here to help: 800-236-2710.

Health Histories
Have parents complete their girl’s pink health history form. If you need more, the form is available to print on our website. Continuing troops should have parents review and update these forms annually.

Troop Year Schedule
Present a calendar outlining your troop’s year including when and where to meet along with any badges (petals), patches or activities you are planning. Be open to flexibility around the activities since you’ll need help.

Troop Communications
Explain how you will keep in touch between meetings. Volunteer Toolkit is one option since it has troop emails pre-loaded. Other ideas: a private Facebook page or Shutterfly account, texts, phone trees, printed newsletters.

Uniforms and More
Tell parents about the uniform components she will need and other program pieces you may want them to provide. Alert parents to My Girl Scout Kits, great for new and bridging girls, and available in all Badgerland’s shops.

Financial Assistance
Assistance is available to families meeting the National School Lunch criteria. Aid is available for membership fees, uniforms and program attendance. Tell families to complete the form on our site or to call us: 800-236-2710

Permission Forms
Parents they will be required to complete Girl Scout Permission Forms for activities outside normal meeting times.

Badgerland Fall Fundraiser and Girl Scout Cookie Program
Explain that both events are fundraisers for the troop and will pay for outings and activities and, next year, could pay girl membership fees. Give them the dates for these sales now! If you don’t have one already, now is the time to emphasize the importance of having a troop cookie coordinator.
LET’S GO — YOUR FIRST TROOP MEETING!

The first troop meeting is always exciting! It is really where you will see the adventure of being a Girl Scout Troop Co-leader start to unfold. Remember to have fun! As you help the girls on their journey to discover, connect and take action in the world around them, those experiences will be a part of your Girl Scout journey too. Enjoy it!

Your first troop meeting is a great chance to:
- Get to know the girls!
- Brainstorm all of the exciting things the girls want to do this year.
- Introduce girls to Girl Scout traditions.
- Introduce the whole troop volunteer team to the girls and their parents/guardians.

If you are feeling a little nervous about leading troop meetings and experiences with your girls – that’s ok! Working directly with girls can be challenging at times but it is always rewarding and can be a lot of fun. As a Girl Scout Troop Co-leader you are encouraged to listen to the girls with an open-mind and lead them with your heart.

Many adults feel that, when working with kids, they have to be the expert and have everything perfect. But this is not the case in Girl Scouts. When preparing for your first (or any) troop meeting, keep these things in mind:
- **It doesn't need to be perfect.** There are lots of resources with information and guidance to help you facilitate great troop meetings and experiences but you are encouraged to be creative. And, if you forget a part of the troop meeting or the field trip doesn't go the way you planned or you run out of time – that's ok! The girls aren't expecting perfection from you; your time, attention and guidance are the best part of your leadership.
- **Learn with your girls!** As you use the girl-led process in the development of your troop's meetings and experiences, the girls will, at some point, want to earn a badge or complete a project in a subject unfamiliar to you. Be open with the girls when you don't know something but don't use that as a reason to keep them from exploring the topic or doing the project. Instead, become their partner in figuring out how to learn more. When they see you learning alongside them, their confidence in their current knowledge and skills as well as their ability to learn will rise. It will also help them to understand that learning is a lifelong process.

### First Meeting Preparation Checklist

- **Cover the basics.** Review the details about when and where the meeting will take place and that all the parents know that information. You might find it helpful to visit the location beforehand.
- **Get ready.** Use the Volunteer Toolkit to verify your troop roster and email your 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, or troop dues.
- **Know the agenda.** Use the “Six Elements of a Troop Meeting” on the next page and the Volunteer Toolkit meeting agenda to customize your meeting plan.
- **Review and practice your agenda.** This will help you feel calmer and be more flexible during the actual meeting.
- **Expect to have fun!** When the girls and parents see that you are prepared for the meeting and ready to have a great time, they'll follow your lead!
6 ELEMENTS OF A GREAT TROOP MEETING

**Most important – your meetings should be fun!** Girls come to Girl Scouts to learn how to be leaders, make decisions, and have fun in the activities they choose.

1. **Opening Activity**—Plan activities for girls as they arrive at the meeting so they have something to do until the meeting begins. It could be as simple as coloring pages, journaling, or talking with each other. (5 minutes)

2. **Opening**—Each troop decides how to open their meeting—most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other activity designed by the girls. (5-10 minutes)

3. **Business**—Announcement and updates, make group decisions, reinforce troop norms and appropriate behavior that reflect the Girl Scout Promise and Law (5 minutes)

4. **Activities**—Use the meeting plans found in the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). Activities are already designed to fit easily into this part of your meeting as you help your troop earn badges and complete Journeys. (30-45 minutes)

5. **Clean Up**—Girl Scouts should always leave a place cleaner than they found it! (5 minutes)

6. **Closing**—Just like the opening each troop can decide how to close. Badgerland recommends the “Friendship Circle” (a Girl Scout tradition) be part of your closing. (5-10 minutes)

Volunteer Toolkit
@ gsbadgerland.org
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT TROOP FINANCES

Open a Bank Account — As Troop Co-leader, you and one more approved volunteer should establish a bank account for collection of troop dues (optional), payment of troop supplies and activities and product sales revenue (Badgerland Fall Fundraiser & Cookie Program). Your Troop Finance Guide (in the New Leader Packet) has all the details.

Financial Assistance — Girl Scouts is open to all girls and adults regardless of their ability to pay. To encourage participation, Girl Scouts of Wisconsin–Badgerland Council has budgeted money to help girls and adults who need financial assistance. Girl members may apply for Financial Assistance for membership dues, uniforms, Girl’s Guides, Journey books, summer camps and Badgerland council-sponsored activities and programs. Adult members may also apply for membership dues. Financial Assistance is approved on a case-by-case basis. Contact Customer Care for information or assistance: info@gsbadgerland.org or 800.236.2710

Tax Exemption — As a 501(c)3 nonprofit, volunteers can use the tax exempt form when purchasing supplies and materials for Girl Scout troop use—this will add up to tremendous savings for your troop! The form is in your New Leader Packet and also available to print from our website.

Funding the Fun

Girls have some big ideas about what they want to do in Girls Scouts – and as a Troop Co-leader, you will guide them on how to plan and budget for those ideas. How do you do this?

Troop Dues — Troop dues are for troop program activities and supplies. The amount of dues and frequency of payment should be determined by the girls, their families and the troop volunteers, and should reflect the troop’s plans for the year, as well as the families’ ability to pay. Consideration should be given to: product sales earnings, parents’ financial situations and what activities the girls want to do. Younger girl dues average $.25-$0.50 per meeting and older girl dues may average $1.50-$2.00 per month. The troop and/or parents should decide whether these dues are collected at each meeting or if they will be paid in lump sums during the year. Troop dues are generally a first-year cost for new troops to establish a financial base for the troop. After the troop participates in the council sponsored product sales, dues are not usually necessary.

Money-earning Activities — The Fall Product and Cookie programs are the primary money-earning activities for a troop. You will learn all about these fantastic programs in a separate training when the time is right. Daisies and Brownies may only participate in the council sponsored product sales. Older girls may decide to plan additional money-earning activities to fund their higher award projects. These money-earning activities must be approved by Badgerland Council. For a helpful guide to money-earning dos and don’ts see the Money-Earning Application at gsbadgerland.org.

Managing Your Troop’s Funds

Remember, Girl Scout funds are girl-earned and girl-spent. How the funds are used is a decision made by the entire troop, not just the leaders, parents, or a few select girls from the troop. It is also important to know that troop funds belong to the entire troop and cannot be earmarked for individual girl use. Funds can be used to purchase badges and patches, Journey and Guide books, uniform components, pay for celebrations and ceremonies, community service projects, field trips, and more. Let the girls come up with some ideas and then have the troop vote.

As the girls begin to spend their troop’s funds, you or the volunteer responsible for the troop finances has a responsibility to keep track of the receipts and expenses. Once a year, each troop must submit a Financial Report. This report details all troop income and expenses. Copies or originals of bank statements and receipts will be submitted, so be sure to save them throughout the year. Girl Scout Troop Co-leaders should report out to troop parents about finances at least three times per year.
The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)
The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is your official source for delivering easy, fun troop meetings year-round! This fully customizable digital planning tool provides you with Girl Scout program content, award requirements, and other resources, so you can keep your Girl Scout year running smoothly. Accessible on any computer, tablet, or mobile device, the Volunteer Toolkit lets troop leaders:

- Explore meeting topics and program activities with their girls
- Print step-by-step activity guides and shopping lists
- View, edit and update the troop roster and contact information
- Renew members
- Manage girl attendance and track achievements
- Message and share troop meeting activities with troop families
- Add local events their girls choose

Learn more and access the VTK at gsbadgerland.org.

Girl’s Guide to Girl Scouting
Part handbook; part badgebook. This grade level-specific binders (one for each level) are full of great info on being a Girl Scout, activities and awards. The guides are available in Badgerland shops.

Safety Activity Checkpoints
These are online lists containing everything you need to know to be prepared and keep your girls safe during a range of activities outside of the normal Girl Scout troop meeting. Safety Activity Checkpoints can be found at gsbadgerland.org in the Volunteer Resources section.

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. Find it in the Volunteer tab at gsbadgerland.org.

gsLearn
This online learning series will give all the info you need to get started as a troop leader. Access it by signing on at gsbadgerland.org. You will find the Successful Leader Learning Series at gsLearn.

Badgerland Social Media
Stay connected and see what other troops are up to - connect with Badgerland on social channels. Nearly everyday we post photos and stories about Badgerland troops and Girl Scouts. We also use social media to share timely information including Pop-Up Programs for girls around Badgerland.

Badgerland Customer Care
Serving our volunteers is a top priority. Reach out anytime by either clicking on the “Contact Us” form at gsbadgerland.org or connect with the team weekdays, 9-5: info@gsbadgerland.org or call 800.236.2710. Messages sent over the weekend will be addressed within 24 hours of regular business hours.

Badgerland News & Updates
Watch your email for monthly newsletters with important information for leaders and families. You can also access all the newsletters under the “News” tab at gsbadgerland.org.
Required Training for Badgerland Troop Co-leaders
Successful Leader Learning Series
All new troop co-leaders must complete the online training called Successful Leader Learning Series. It is accessible on gsLearn.

Highly Recommended
In-Person Workshop
Come meet other new leaders and get your questions answered! All new troop co-leaders are encouraged to take advantage of this Badgerland training opportunity. Interactive and lively, this session covers topics and skills essential to new Girl co-leaders and other troop volunteers. BONUS Come to this training and you’ll get a new co-leader supply kit! Know some other volunteers who will be helping with the troop? Bring them along, too.

Required Trainings to Take Girls Camping or Traveling
Troop Overnight Certification 1 (TOC 1)
Home-study course. Required for overnights with your Girl Scouts at a property with indoor plumbing and electricity. Complete and submit the Course Completion in the home-study packet to earn certification.

Troop Overnight Certification 2 (TOC 2)
Home-study course. Required for overnights with your Girl Scouts at a property with primitive conditions such as no indoor plumbing or electricity. Complete and submit the test questions at the end of the home-study packet to earn certification. NOTE: Occasionally, TOC 2 is offered in-person.

Traveling Troops Guide
Use when planning any Girl Scout travel that will last 3 nights or longer. Find the Traveling Troops guide on at gsbadgerland.org

Higher Awards Trainings
For volunteers whose Girl Scouts are planning to earn the Bronze, Silver and Gold awards. Check the Activity Calendar for in-person or webinar trainings to help you guide girls to earning these awards.

Volunteer Enrichment
Let’s Go!
A one-day event with trainings, networking, resources, and celebrating Badgerland’s volunteers.

CPR/First Aid Certification
Offered occasionally during the Girl Scout year; watch the Leader Newsletter for availability. Volunteers are encouraged to find a CPR/First Aid training opportunity that fits their schedule.

HOW TO ACCESS THESE TRAININGS:
gsbadgerland.org
Volunteers > Volunteer Training
or Activities > Activities Calendar
WHERE WE’RE LOCATED AND HOW TO CONNECT

VISIT SERVICE CENTERS & SHOPS
Each Service Center is staffed with Girl Scout professionals who can answer your GS questions and provide valuable resources. Additionally, all the offices are home to Girl Scout Shops where you can shop for GS uniforms, badges and tons of GS merch your girls will love.

La Crosse
2710 Quarry Rd
La Crosse, WI 54601
Office and Shop Hours:
  9-5 Weekdays
  Second Saturday of the Month
  >September-May: 9am-Noon

Madison
2710 Ski Lane
Madison, WI 53713
Office and Shop Hours:
  9-5 Weekdays
  Second Saturday of the Month
  >September-May: 9am-Noon

Janesville
3000 Milton Avenue, Suite 113
Janesville, WI 53545
Office and Shop Hours:
  9-5 Weekdays
  Second Saturday of the Month
  >September-May: 9am-Noon

Platteville
305 East Business Hwy 151, Suite D
Platteville, WI 53818
Office and Shop Hours:
  Tuesday and Friday: 12-6
  Thursday 9-2
  Second Saturday of the Month
  >September-May: 9am-Noon

WE’RE HERE TO HELP.
Contact Badgerland Girl Scouts.
CALL: 800.236.2710
EMAIL: info@gsbadgerland.org