



gscb

Co-Leader Handbook



girlscouts 
of the chesapeake bay

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Thank You

Thank you for stepping up to serve as a Girl Scout Co-Leader. Your time, energy, and dedication make a lasting difference in the lives of girls. By creating a safe, inclusive, and empowering environment, you help Girl Scouts discover their strengths, build confidence, and develop the skills they need to lead.

Every meeting you plan, every challenge you support, and every moment you share helps shape courageous, confident, and compassionate young leaders. Your partnership, commitment, and heart for Girl Scouting are truly appreciated.

We hope this Co-Leader Handbook serves as a helpful guide on your journey, providing the tools, resources, and support you need to feel confident, prepared, and inspired as you lead your troop.

We wish you a joyful, rewarding, and adventure-filled Girl Scout experience!



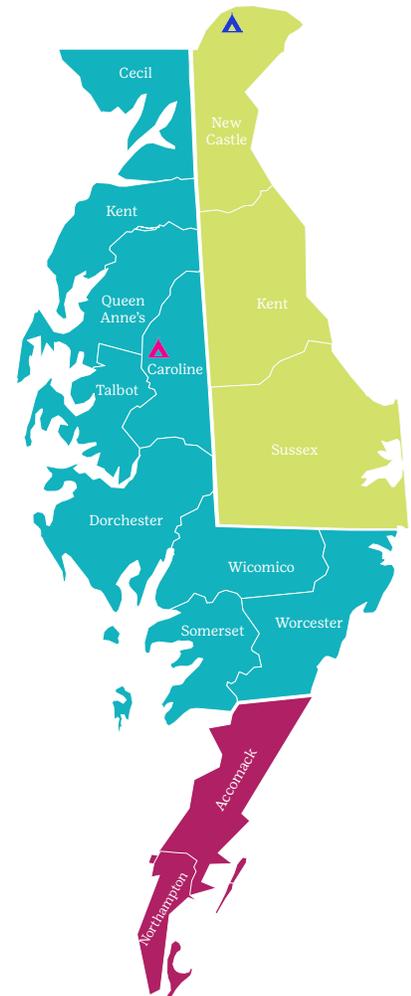
Meet Our Council

Welcome to GSCB!

Thank you for becoming a Girl Scout Volunteer! 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. Girl Scouts, 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. You're now a part of our team. We can't wait to see the impact you'll make!

About Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay

Over one hundred years ago, the first Girl Scout troop was founded on the Delmarva Peninsula. With nearly 4,000 girls supported by 2,400 adult volunteers, Girl Scouts of the Chesapeake Bay helps girls discover their strengths, passions and talents. Today, we continue the Girl Scout mission of building girls of courage, confidence and character who make the world a better place. And with programs for Girl Scouts in 14 counties in Delaware and the Eastern Shores of Maryland and Virginia, Girl Scouts offers today's girls a chance to do something amazing.



Our Camps

Camp Country Center

Sitting on just over forty acres in Hockessin, DE this property features an environmentally sustainable Science & Technology Lodge with a Digital Media Center and a variety of structures for hosting troop activities as well as camp overnights!

Activities on this property include a low-challenge course and archery! Additionally, GSCB Program Specialists offer Programs in the STEM lodge - check out our calendar to see what we have planned! Or you can make a reservation for Program on the Move to deliver programming just for your troop!



[Learn More about Camp Country Center](#)

Camp Todd

Snuggled nicely in Denton, Maryland, you can almost miss this property because of its hidden entrance! When you arrive at Camp Todd, you will notice the camp offers a few nice amenities. The Program Center has two large rooms that can be utilized for Awards Ceremony, Annual Service Unit Meetings and so much more!

The grounds are open and wooded, offering you a nice selection of activities to do outside, along with a pond. Some fun activities are music in the woods, zip lining, kayaking, geocaching, orienteering, archery, and low-challenge course!



[Learn More about Camp Todd](#)

Contact Us

Mailing Address: 4142 Ogletown Stanton Rd. PMB #312 Newark, DE 19713

Member Care Phone: 800-341-4007 | **Email:** MemberCare@cbgsc.org

Member Care Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9AM - 5PM, Friday 9AM - 12PM

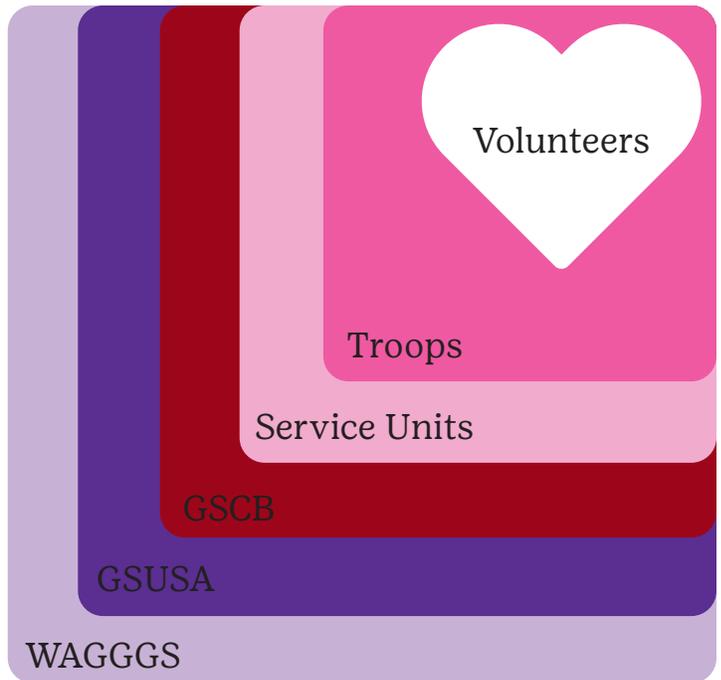
Fax: 302-456-7188

Web: www.gscb.org

Local Structure

Girl Scouts in the Community

Girl Scouts is known globally as Girl Guiding and is governed by the World Association of Girl Guiding and Girl Scouts or WAGGGS. Domestically, Girl Scouts of the USA oversees local councils, like GSCB which are spread across the nation and cover all 50 states. Every council has service units that are run by volunteers and serve individual geographies. Those service units serve our troops and provide a greater sense of community for all volunteers and Girl Scout members! Our volunteers are the heart of everything we do!



Service Units

GSCB has service units throughout the council footprint. While each service unit is unique, their purpose is to serve local communities and troops through activities such as recruitment events, encampments, Product Program rallies, community service efforts, and other Girl Scout program activities. Service Unit teams also serve as mentors for leaders, helping guide them through the many firsts you experience when becoming a Troop Leader.

You can learn more about your service unit by attending one of their leader meetings, reaching out to your Volunteer Engagement Specialist (VES), or connecting with your Service Unit Manager (SUM) to explore open opportunities on the service unit team.

Our Community Engagement Specialists (CES) and Volunteer Engagement Specialists (VES) collaborate to support troops and volunteers throughout the council. CES team members focus on recruiting girls and adult volunteers and onboarding new troop leaders, helping families and volunteers get started with confidence. VES team members provide ongoing support, guidance, and resources to help leaders and volunteers thrive throughout the Girl Scout year.

If you're not sure who your SUM, CES, or VES is, contact MemberCare@cbgsc.org.

Troops

Troops can become like family! They are a supportive micro-community for girls to express who they are, discover new interests, and seek challenges surrounded by inspiring role models. A Girl Scout volunteer should never underestimate her ability to make a difference in the lives of girls!

Girl Scouts is centered around the Girl Scout Leadership Experience which is built on the foundation that girls are the decision-makers! This means that every troop will be a little different and the activities and experience will vary. Connecting with your peers at a service unit meeting is a great way to learn what other troops are up to and potentially plan something for your troops to do together!

Juliettes

The Girl Scout program is extremely customizable! This makes it a great activity for girls to participate in as an individual or Juliette. If a traditional troop isn't the right fit for a girl, she can participate as a Juliette - where she can choose her own programming using the Volunteer Toolkit, the same online tool Troop Leaders use, as well as participate in Product Programs, and service unit or council-sponsored programming and events. This flexible experience is great for older girls who participate in several other activities and may not be able to commit to a regular meeting time.

If you have questions about Juliette participation, contact MemberCare@cbgsc.org.



Your Role as a Troop Co-Leader

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.



The Girl Scout Program and the Co-Leader Role

As Girl Scouts, members discover the fun, friendship, and power of working together. They grow courageous and strong through a wide variety of enriching experiences, such as field trips, skill-building sports clinics, community service projects, cultural exchanges, and environmental stewardship.

Badges are a key part of the Girl Scout program. Girl Scouts earn badges by learning new skills and doing activities that demonstrate their accomplishments and understanding.

In earning badges, Girl Scouts...

- Build skills. As they earn badges, Girl Scouts develop new skills and explore their interests.
- Show their accomplishments. When worn, badges show the world what a Girl Scout can do.
- Make a difference. Badge work helps Girl Scouts discover ways to make a difference in their community.

Girl Scouts Explore in a Fun and Safe Environment

Girl Scouts typically complete activities as part of a troop. A troop is a group of Girl Scouts and volunteers who meet regularly to have fun, learn new skills, and improve their community. Troop involvement allows Girl Scout members to grow their confidence, explore new interests, and find their voice. Troops can either be single-level or multi-level.



A single-level troop is made up of Girl Scouts from a single program level, such as Daisies. This structure allows activities and experiences to be tailored to the group's age and developmental stage.

A multi-level troop includes Girl Scouts from more than one program level—such as Daisies, Brownies, and Juniors—together in the same troop. This setup lets older Girl Scouts mentor younger ones, supports diverse learning, and balances shared activities with age-specific needs.

Both troop types offer unique benefits! The choice depends on leader preferences, community needs, and available resources.

Resources Per Girl Scout Level

[Resources for Daisy Troops](#)

[Resources for Brownie Troops](#)

[Resources for Junior Troops](#)

[Resources for Cadette Troops](#)

[Resources for Senior Troops](#)

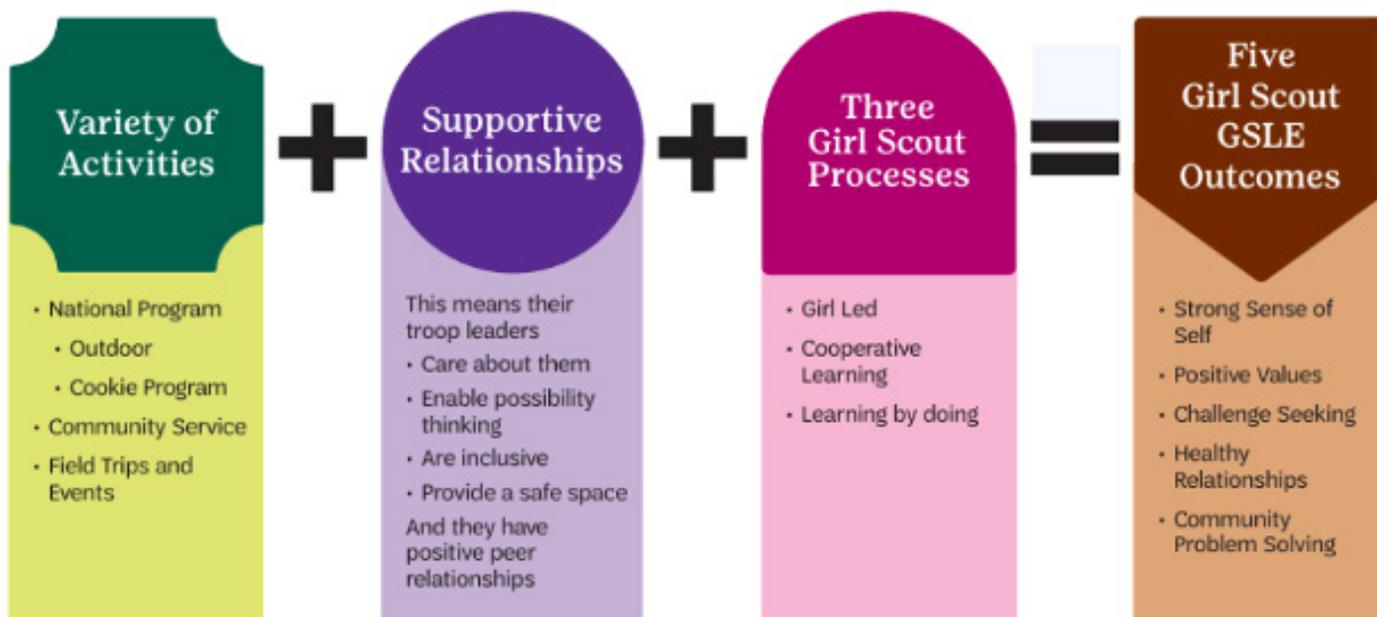
[Resources for Ambassador Troops](#)

[Daisy-Brownie-Junior Multi Level Troop Year Planner](#)

[Cadette-Senior-Ambassador Multi-Level Troop Planner](#)

The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE)

Girl Scouts look at the world and take action to change it for the better. They make friends, challenge themselves with new experiences, write their own stories, and develop the skills and confidence to say, “I know I can do this!” As a troop leader, you support this process—and the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) is the tool that helps you to do it.



Putting the GSLE into Practice

It's time to put the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (our secret sauce) to work! Implementing it is simple. Just remember these three steps, and you're good to go:

1. Plan a variety of activities, both in and out of the meeting space. Explore Girl Scout badges in STEM, life skills, the outdoors, and entrepreneurship. Get out and experience the world through field trips, council-run events, community service, cookie sales, and more.
2. Create a supportive environment. Support your Girl Scouts' physical, mental, and emotional well-being, and make sure other adult helpers provide positive support as well. Inspire and guide your Girl Scouts to value, respect, and encourage each other, too! As the troop leader, you'll want to make sure ALL Girl Scouts feel they are welcome, included, and all-around supported within the troop. Take the lead in creating safer spaces where Girl Scouts can thrive!
3. Let Girl Scouts shine by empowering them in three key ways:
 - **Girl-Led:** Encourage Girl Scouts to take the lead, whatever their age. When you let your troop choose things like snacks, badge activities, or how to use cookie sale proceeds, you give them the confidence to grow their skills and follow their dreams.

- **Cooperative Learning:** Plan activities that have Girl Scouts working together and learning that principles of collaboration and mutual respect can help them conquer any challenge. Cooperative learning can be as simple as sharing supplies (for younger Girl Scouts) or playing games and completing activities that require teamwork (for older Girl Scouts).
- **Learning by Doing:** Hands-on activities aren't just fun, they're also empowering. Girl Scouts unlock their "I got this!" attitude as they work through details to get things done. At the end of each troop meeting, gather members for a discussion about what they experienced, what it means, and what they'll do together with what they learned.

Multi Level Tip: "Girl-led" looks different at each age. Be sure to include program level-appropriate ways for each Girl Scout in your troop to keep it girl-led. For example, Brownies may pick which badges they'd like to earn, while Juniors may start leading specific activities with their peers or younger Girl Scouts.

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!

First Steps/Get Ready

Follow this checklist to kick off a great Girl Scout year:

Get Started

- Register as a volunteer with the council, if you haven't already.
- Complete a background check. A link and portal code will be provided when you register.
- Invite potential members to join the troop. (Talk to your Community Engagement Specialist (CES) or your Volunteer Engagement Specialist (VES) for recruitment support).
- Familiarize yourself with the GSCB website, myGS, the volunteer toolkit, and gsLearn.
- If you haven't already, reach out to your network or Service Unit Manager to find a potential co-leader for your new troop.
- Meet with your co-leader(s), once established, to plan an initial family/caregiver meeting.

In Your First Month

- Access gsLearn and complete your Troop Co-Leader training (this includes mandated reporter and abuse prevention).
- Determine where you'll hold your meetings. (if you are having trouble finding a location, reach out to your service unit manager or Volunteer Engagement Specialist for help).
- Check out [GSUSA'S Troop Year Plans](#) and the [GSCB Event Calendar](#) as you start planning for your first troop meeting.
- Connect with your service unit for peer-to-peer advice, local event information and coordination, and for general support.
- Hold your family/caregiver meeting.
- Host your first Troop Meeting.
- Open our troop bank account. Please review the [GSCB Financial Account Management Guidance](#) to get started and for guidance on managing your troop account.

In Your First 3 Months

- Register to complete one of our First Aid/CPR/AED trainings (found on the [GSCB Event Calendar](#)).
- Follow up with your Volunteer Engagement Specialist if you have any additional questions. Not sure who your assigned VES is? Contact Member Care at MemberCare@cbgsc.org or 1-800-341-4007.
- Host your first one or two troop meetings.

Building Your Troop Leadership and Support System

Participation in Girl Scouts isn't just for youth members. Everyone in the family can have fun and benefit—Girl Scouts, their adults, and troop leaders, too! There are lots of ways for families to get involved, both big and small.

As a troop leader, you can engage families by:

- Communicating with them about what their Girl Scouts are doing
- Including them in Girl Scout celebrations
- Encouraging their participation in Girl Scout activities
- Enlisting their help with specific group support roles

When families feel engaged, they're more likely to help out. And their involvement results in the best possible experience for troop members. Family support also helps your troop members stay connected over time.

Troop Leadership and Support Roles

Although managing the Girl Scout experience for your troop is rewarding, it does involve the commitment of your time to ensure its success. Luckily, there are many ways that parents/caregivers and other family members can engage to support your efforts. No matter how much or little time someone has, there's always a way for them to volunteer.

Troop Leadership and Support Roles and Descriptions

- **Troop Leader/Co-Leader:** As troop Co-Leaders, you support each other in planning and running meetings and activities that bring the Girl Scout experience to life. You will guide and mentor Girl Scouts in your troop, support their personal growth, leadership skill development, and community involvement through engaging activities and learning experiences.
- **Troop Support Volunteer:** Every troop leader needs a little extra help. Ask family members to serve as troop helpers, providing support during meetings to make sure everything runs smoothly.

- **Bank Account Signer:** This volunteer manages the troop's finances. They oversee budgeting, track expenses, and clearly communicate financial information to support the troop's activities and goals.
- **Troop Fall Product Champion:** When the Fall Product season comes, you may choose to have one volunteer who will commit to supporting your troop's efforts. This person manages the Fall Product Program logistics, including troop orders and delivery.
- **Troop Cookie Champion:** When cookie season comes, you'll want one volunteer who will commit to supporting your troop's efforts throughout the process. This person manages Cookie Program logistics, including troop orders, cookie delivery, and other key functions.
- **Outdoor helper:** It's great to have one volunteer dedicated as an Outdoor Skills Facilitator to support your troop's outdoor experiences and learning. This person can help your troop explore the outdoors, serve as the camp-certified volunteer for the troop, and take on other outdoor-related responsibilities.
- **Field trip Chaperone:** This volunteer ensures the safety and well-being of Girl Scouts during outings. They supervise activities while promoting teamwork and making sure guidelines are followed.
- **Troop Driver:** Help prepare, plan, and ensure safe travel for troop trips and activities.

Parent/Caregiver Meetings

Communication with families is key and it all starts at your Family/Caregiver Meeting. It is important to hold a parent/caregiver meeting at the start of each Girl Scout year and throughout the year to update them on any important information as well as what the Troop is doing and if there are any volunteer roles that need to be filled.

Below is a meeting checklist you can follow to make sure to cover the most important points with your families/caregivers.

Welcome and Introductions

- Leader Introduction - We recommend using the Parent/Guardian Welcome Letter found in the [GSCB Troop Parent/Guardian Information Packet](#).
- Parent/Caregiver Introductions
- Troop Meeting logistics

Discover the Girl Scout Difference

- Mission, Promise, and Law - This can be found in the [GSCB Troop Parent/Guardian Information Packet](#).
- What Girl Scouts do
- Troop year plan

Family as Part of the Formula

- Why family engagement?
- Communication methods (whether it be through email or through any social media platform)



Getting Families Involved

- Troop leadership opportunities
- Other ways to help
- Utilize the Parent/Guardian Involvement Form in the [GSCB Troop Parent/Guardian Information Packet](#)

Money Matters, Paperwork, and More

- Information on Uniforms and cost - More information can be found [here](#).
- How troops pay for things (talk about Fall Product and the Cookie Program, in addition, some troops may choose to implement troop fees)
- Required paperwork:
 - [Health History Form for Youth and Adults](#) is required for all participants
 - All adult volunteers must have a current membership and complete a [background check](#).
 - For travel/high-risk activities, additional paperwork is required. (see [Travel Support and Resources](#) and [GSCB Travel Guidelines](#)).

Wrap it Up

- Close with intention
- Q&A

Note: If Girl Scouts will be attending this meeting, consider starting out by having the families/caregivers and Girl Scouts introduce themselves and discuss their hopes for their Girl Scout experience. Then provide a short craft activity for Girl Scouts to do while the parents/caregivers attend their part of the meeting.

Resources for Parent/Caregiver Meetings

- [GSCB Troop Parent/Guardian Information Packet](#)
- [Health History Form for Youth and Adults](#)
- [Uniforms - Insignia List and Placement](#)
- [Family Connection Guide - Bilingual](#)

Plan Your Girl Scout Year

It's go time! Get started with the ready-to-use Troop Year Plans on myGS. Then use the calendar below to build out a Girl Scout year packed with fun, friendship, learning, and so much more.

The Girl Scout Membership Year

The Girl Scout membership year runs from October 1 through September 30. Current Girl Scouts can renew their membership for the next year, starting on April 1. New Girl Scouts can start at any time throughout the year.

September, October, November

- Promote on-time registration/renewal for new and returning members
- Complete a [Troop Participation Form](#)
- Hold parent/caregiver meeting (can hold multiple throughout the year as needed)
- Collect [Health History Form for Youth and Adults](#) from participating youth and adult volunteers and keep for your records
- Sept. 30th - Mandated Reporter training is due for all troop volunteers
- Fall Product Program begins
- Oct. 1st - Girl Scout membership year begins
- Oct. 11th - International Day of the Girl
- Oct. 31st - Founder's Day (Juliette Gordon Low's birthday)
- Cookie Trainings available mid-November

December, January, February

- Troop Cookie Champions should complete their gsLearn trainings in December
- Plan troop meeting(s) to help support the Girl Scout Cookie Program (some Service Units may hold events to prepare for cookie season)
- Summer Camp registration opens
- Girl Scout Cookie Program begins in January
- Feb. 22nd - World Thinking Day

March, April, May

- Wrap up the Cookie Program
- Celebrate Girl Scout Week in March (always the week of March 12th)
- Mar. 12th - Girl Scout's Birthday
- Participate in Peninsula Day of Service
- Apr. 1st - Early Bird Renewal begins
- Apr. 22nd - Earth Day
- Apr. 22nd - Leader Appreciation Day
- GSCB Annual Meeting (all member meeting to review council business)
- End of year recognition activities and ceremonies in May
- Wrap up the Girl Scout year

June, July, August

- Attend Summer Camp
- Finalize the end-of-year financial report in June
- Submit the financial report in July
- Enjoy your summer!
- Prepare financial records for the upcoming year
- Plan parent/caregiver meeting for the upcoming Girl Scout year in August
- Start planning your troop year

Resources to Simplify Your Experience

Now that you have all the tools you need for a strong start, below is easy access to the useful information that will help you soar together with your Girl Scout Troop.

Resources for Parents/Caregivers

[Family Connection Guide](#)

[Family Connection Guide - Bilingual](#)

[GSCB Troop Parent/Guardian Information Packet](#)

[Health History Form for Youth and Adults](#)

[Uniforms - Insignia List and Placement](#)

Resources to Plan Troop Meetings/Activities

[Girl Scout Experience Box](#)

[Activity Resource Library](#)

[Troop Year Planner](#)

[GSCB Event List and Program Guide](#)

[GSCB Event Calendar](#)

Resources for Travel and Getting Outdoors

[Outdoor Support and Resources](#)

[Travel Support and Resources](#)

[GSCB Travel Guidelines](#)

Resources for Money Management

[Bank Account Request Form](#)

[GSCB Financial Account Management Guidance](#)

[GSCB Troop Financial Worksheet](#)

[GSCB Additional Money Earning Activity Ideas](#)

[GSCB Money Earning Application](#)

[Product Programs](#)