



New Leader Launch

October Questions

Guest 1 – Lisa Ranon, Volunteer Support Manager- Girl Scout Experience Box

1. Is it easy to lead a Girl Scout troop?

Yes, new Daisy, Brownie, and Junior leaders can receive monthly Girl Scout Experience Boxes—delivered to your door! Each box includes simple scripts, easy instructions, and ready-to-use supplies for fun, stress-free troop meetings. Daisy boxes will focus on guiding Daisies through earning their petals, while Brownie and Junior boxes will allow girls to explore badges across our four program pillars – Entrepreneurship, Life Skills, Outdoors, and STEM.

2. How many boxes do I receive during the year?

The box subscriptions are one per troop, per level. Your troop will receive up to nine monthly boxes, depending on when you are signed up and meet the minimum number of girls for that level. The first box is a Welcome to GSWCF Leader box and includes enough leader items for two leaders to share and enough forms to support twelve girls.

Some of the forms & documents included are:

- Ways Adults Can Help - used to help parents indicate how they can support the troop.
- Girl Scout Health Form – used for each girl and troop leader/helper to complete and keep at all meetings
- Girl Scout Permission Form – Annual form for parents or caregivers to give permission for their girl to participate in Girl Scout activities.
- GS Lingo document that lists terms that are GS specific and their meaning.

The GSWCF Welcome Box also comes with two copies of the New Troop Leader Start-Up Guide and the most recent version of Volunteer Essentials. All forms can be located on the GSWCF website. Go to the [Forms and Documents](#) page and click on the Troop Leader Resources dropdown menu.

3. How do I sign up for the boxes?

When you meet with your [Community Manager](#) they will speak with you about the box subscription and sign you up. *It is very important to speak with your co-leader if you have one at the time, to determine who will receive the box. The Daisy and Brownie boxes ship through Girl Scouts of the USA and the Junior boxes ship from GSWCF. To receive a box, your troop must have a minimum of four girls in that level.

4. Can you receive a welcome box as a new leader for the year if you are a new leader for an established troop?

Yes, while the GSWCF welcome box is generally intended to help new troops get started, troops that are transitioning their leadership may also receive a welcome box.

5. Are the boxes only for the troop's first year or is it also when you move up levels? If we have Daisies this year that bridge to brownies next year, do we get more boxes?

Yes, the term “new” is either completely new to Girl Scouts or an existing troop that is new to the Daisy, Brownie or Junior level. We do not have boxes for older girl program levels.

6. Do we get multiple boxes for multilevel troops? We're supposed to be gaining 6 daisies with the 4 brownie Girl Scouts; can we get a box for each level?

Yes, if you meet the minimum for each level. In the example above, the troop qualifies for Daisy and Brownie boxes.

7. I signed up for the GSUSA box and received the 2nd and 3rd just not 1st, who can I let know I am missing a box?

If you are missing a box, please email info@gswcf.org. We will reach out to confirm which box and communicate with GSUSA to expedite a replacement.

8. Which Daisy box was posted that has the markers, hole punchers etc?

The first activity box from GSUSA and the first Junior box from GSWCF contains those supplies. If you wish to purchase extra markers which are GS branded, you can find them [on our website at the GS shop portal](#) .

Guest 2 – Cathy Glasgow, Community Manager (Hernando and Citrus County), Troop Finances and Bank Account

1. What kind of costs should new leaders expect when running a Girl Scout troop?

Running a troop does come with some expenses, but they're all tied to giving girls a great experience. Most troops budget for things like annual membership fees, program and activity costs, leader training, and supplies for meetings or service projects. You might also have camping trips, badge workshops, or end-of-year celebrations to plan and facilitate.

2. Is there anything that troop funds should not be used for?

Troop money shouldn't be used for personal expenses like trip expenses for adults who are not required to meet the girl-adult supervision ratio, annual passes to theme parks, or donations to individuals for personal use. Also, personal clothing items outside of Girl Scout uniforms or Girl Scout paraphernalia, gift cards, and

dorm/college items or wardrobe are not allowed. Every dollar should support the troop's Girl Scout mission.

3. How do troops pay their expenses? Do troop leaders pay out of pocket?

Not at all! Troops have three ways they can pay for expenses – Product Program proceeds, troop dues, or families agree to pay certain expenses. Troops use the Girl Scout Cookie Program, which occurs in the winter and spring, and the Sweets and Treats program, which occurs in the fall, as the main way to generate troop funds. Troop dues are a set amount of additional money families agree to pay the troop during the troop year. Families can also agree to pay for certain expenses like uniforms and membership fees. The goal of every troop should be to use troop funds after the first year to be self-sustaining and not have to have parents pay for basic items such as membership fees, uniforms, supplies or booklets.

4. Can you give more details about troop dues? How much should troop leaders charge?

Many troops decide to collect troop dues to help supplement their cookies and sweets and treats proceeds. Dues average \$1-5 per meeting to \$20-\$40 for the entire year paid all at one time. It's completely up to each troop to decide what works best for them. Hosting a parent/caregiver meeting at the beginning of the year is a good time to explain this to families and let them decide how they would like to contribute.

5. Where should they keep troop funds?

Troop bank accounts are your place to deposit troop dues, Cookie Program/Fall Sweets and Treats proceeds, and other funds. Troop funds should never be held in a personal checking account.

6. How will leaders open a bank account for their troop? Is there a certain bank they should use?

All troops must establish a bank account with two unrelated approved background checked adult signers from the troop + two signers from the service unit team. Contact your service unit accounting coordinator to set up a troop bank account. Each service unit determines which bank(s) they establish accounts. Your service unit accounting coordinator has a copy of the council-issued banking packet. They will work with you to confirm what personal identification is needed and assist you at the bank with opening the account.

7. Once troop leaders have a troop bank account established, what should they do?

You will need to ensure that the money is spent wisely as this is the girl's money. Remember troop money shouldn't be used for personal expenses or in ways that do not support the girl's Girl Scout experience.

Second you need to keep thorough records of all funds that are income and expenses. Keep a receipt every time the troop spends or receives money, or when money/product exchanges hands. Keep receipts for a minimum of two years in the event caregivers or your council make a financial inquiry.

Finally, leaders should coach girls on financial literacy so by the time they are older, they are ready to start managing the troop's finances under your supervision.

8. How do troop leaders engage younger girls like Daisies and Brownies in managing troop finances?

Starting off, Troop Leaders will handle all budgeting for their Daisies. When selling cookies, adults will always handle money while girls sell the product. Daisies should practice identifying money and counting back change. When girls bridge to Brownies, leaders start talking about the cost of things with the girls and they can begin to decide how they want to spend their money. GSUSA has also created financial literacy badges that help guide your girls through money management skills in an appropriate age way.

9. How do leaders keep accurate accounting records? Is there a special way they should keep these records?

Our council offers a finance report in two versions – one in PDF and the other in excel. This is how you will report to your service unit how troop funds are being earned and spent. Both Troop Finance Reports are available at www.gswcf.org on the forms & documents page, under the troop leader resources dropdown. Your troop finance report is due twice a year to your service unit accounting coordinator.

If the finance report is not turned in by the deadline it could prevent the troop from participating in fall product sales in the next membership year and may lead to troop funds being transferred into the service unit account until the finance report is received.

10. What if troops want to earn more money than they earn from the Cookie Program or Sweets and Treats program?

Girls have the option to participate in supplemental money earning activities, however there are specific guidelines and an approval process that troops must follow. Page 37 of Volunteer Essentials outlines these guidelines and the approval process.

One of the key learning elements within the product program is to discuss with girls the goals they want to accomplish from participating. The expenses associated with the goal should be realistic and provide the appropriate amount. As the girls progress to the older program levels, trips and other experiences may require additional funds, some time may be needed to obtain the amount requiring the troop to save over a couple of years.

11. What if a girl moves away after the troop has participated in the product sale program, does she take part of the troop's funds with her, or does those funds stay to support the girls who continue in the troop?

Troop funds belong to the troop as a whole—not to any individual girl or family. The money your troop earns through product programs or fundraising is meant to support the entire group's Girl Scout experience. So even if a girl moves or leaves the troop,

those funds stay in the troop account to benefit the remaining girls and future members.

12. Since Girl Scouts is a non-profit organization, are troops tax exempt??

No. Although Girl Scouts of West Central Florida is a tax exempt 501(c) (3) corporation, Florida law prohibits Girl Scout troops from using the council's tax-exempt number to avoid paying sales tax.

13. Where can troop leaders go for more details on troop finances?

Troop leaders can complete the course "Funding the Fun: Managing Girl Scout Troop Finances" in gsLearn. This is part of their new leader training and covers everything we talked about today. It also talks more about how to set troop dues, supplemental money earning, building a money management plan with your troop, and more about banking best practices.

Additional Questions from Our Volunteers

1. I'm struggling with how to make sure my brownie is getting what she needs when I have mostly Daisies and my meeting plan is multi-level, but is geared at Daisies.

In the beginning, it can be a struggle to make sure all girls in the troop are having a good experience when the troop is multi-level. However, the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is a great tool to plan for many levels. The VTK will allow you to look at badges that are similar among the levels, so while the age appropriateness will be different, the topic will be the same or easy to manage with only a few girls in a particular program level.

Visit the "For Volunteers" page on our [website](#) for more information and instructions for accessing the VTK. There is also training in gsLearn about the Volunteer Toolkit.

In addition you can use the [Badge Explorer](#) on GSUSA's website to help narrow down badges that are similar across levels.

2. How can we let parents see the calendar/planner for meetings?

Parents automatically have "view only" access to the Year Plan (troop calendar) in the VTK.

3. Can you give a few key items to cover with parents in first meeting (I know you said finances, such as deciding on dues? Anything else?

You can find a parent/caregiver meeting agenda in the [New Troop Leader Start-Up Guide](#) on pages 9 and 10.

4. Does the bank run your credit for you to be a signer on the troop bank account?

No, this is not part of the process. You will use the council's EIN to set up the account.

5. How long does it typically take for the bank account to be set up and do both co-leaders have to meet at the same time with the service unit contact?

The service unit accounting coordinator, who is a volunteer, is the person that you will meet with, and they will set up the bank account with you and your co-leader. We have a specific process on how to set up our bank accounts.

Depending on schedules of everyone involved, it can usually be done in a couple of weeks. If only one co-leader wishes to be on the account, a troop helper who has an approved background screening with GSWCF can share the managing of troop finances. However, everyone needs to be at the bank at the same time to open an account.

6. Will our service unit accounting contact proactively reach out to us to set up a bank account, or do we need to initiate the process?

The service unit manager (SUM), who is a volunteer, may make an introduction between you and the other team members. You may also meet the accounting coordinator at your local leader's meeting held each month. Remember the accounting coordinator (AC) is also a volunteer, so if you do not hear from them and you are ready to set up the account, you can reach out to your SUM or directly with the AC if you have the contact information.

7. Is there somewhere that offers free or low-cost printing for troops, or can we use our nonprofit status for a discount?

Girl Scout troops are not tax exempt. Copies can be funded with troop money. We provide enough copies of the necessary forms in the GSWCF Welcome Leader box for a troop of 12. Your service unit may have local facilities they are aware of that provide discounts on copies.

8. I understand the prizes earned during product program participation are based on sales. What if there are families that don't participate in fall product or cookie sales?

Rewards are given to individual girls for reaching certain levels in sales during the product programs. Rewards can be patches, plushies, hats, experiences, shirts, etc. Girls cannot earn individual funds. The troop earns funds (money for certain number of sales). Troop funds are to be used for all the girls.

If a girl's family does not allow the girl to participate, she is not able to earn rewards. However, she can share troop funds. The girl can also support the booth sale activity by attending and helping in aspects of the program like giving change to customers or sharing "why" the troop is trying to earn funds.