

girl scouts 
hornets' nest

WELCOME NEW LEADER



WELCOME TO YOUR NEW ADVENTURE!



Welcome to Girl Scouts and a great new adventure! Thanks to volunteers like you, a new generation of girls will get the courage, confidence and character they need to lead their lives and our world in the future. The Girl Scout team is here to support YOU! Thank You!

A troop is a youth-led, volunteer driven partnership between caregivers and adults who are committed to working together to bring Girl Scouting to our community. These adults join the adventure to help ensure their troops' experiences are top notch, inclusive, youth-led, and cooperative; and that the girls are making new friends, have a variety of experiences, and are developing the skills and confidence needed to succeed.

A Girl Scout troop's parent committee is the adult leadership team that sets policies, handles administrative tasks, and supports the troop.

Everything Daisies do—from planting a garden to making a circle of friends—sparkles with that "first time ever" newness. Along the way, Daisies gain important social skills, learn how to be a good friend, and discover the world around them. Every Daisy meeting is an adventure filled with sisterhood, giggles, learning, and fun! Daisies earn a series of badges called Petals that teach the concepts of the Girl Scout Law in a way that kindergartners and first graders can understand. Learn more about Daisies [here](#).

Each level of Girl Scouts is unique with a wide variety of activities to try. Girl Scouts can begin in kindergarten and join all the way through twelfth grade. As a Girl Scout progresses, every level builds upon the last and allows them to explore their interests in a way that is meaningful—and age-appropriate—to them. Learn more about the Girl Scout Grade Levels [here](#).

♣ FIRST STEPS AS A LEADER

1. Sign up as a New Leader. [Visit the Girl Scouts Hornets' Nest Council Website.](#)

Click the banner on the top of the home page that says “Join Today” to become a New Leader. Need Help? [Contact us](#) with any questions.

2. Complete your training. Your New Leader Training consists of three sequential parts, each unlocking the next section upon completion:

- [Leading the Way: Your Volunteer Experience Begins](#)
- [Leading the Way: Before Your First Troop Meeting](#)
- [Leading the Way: Leveling Up Your Leadership](#)

3. Complete the background check

application. To ensure the safety of our girls, all registered adults are required to pass a background check, which includes both criminal history and driving record screenings. Within 1 business day of completing your training, you will receive an email from **The Advocates at Sterling Volunteers** to complete your background check. The form should only take a couple minutes to fill out and we typically get your results back in 2-3 business days. If you do not see the email within a day or two, check your spam or junk folder, since sometimes they end up in there. In the event you do not see it in your email, contact customer care at customercare@hngirlscouts.org.



STARTING YOUR TROOP

All troops need at least two unrelated volunteer leaders to get started. Here are the key to-dos for you to check off in your first few months getting your troop started.

1. **Connect with your support network.** Your Community Engagement Specialist (council staff) is a great resource who will help you get engaged with your service unit, the group of other volunteers and leaders in your geographic area. Your Service Unit Manager and Service Unit New Leader Mentor are also great resources to have to provide guidance and support.
2. Check your Troop Roster to see who is in your troop, including girls and other volunteers.
3. Access the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK), a digital tool that helps troop leaders plan and run troop meetings, to find suggested year plans, meeting agendas and activities. Using a year plan is an easy way to get started if you are a first-time troop leader. You will find the Volunteer Toolkit via the left menu bar of MyGS in My Account. It is accessible on any desktop, tablet, or mobile device.
4. Keep girls safe by ensuring you have enough registered, background checked volunteers.
5. Meet with your troop co-leader(s) and volunteer committee to decide your troop's meeting location, frequency, and time, how to best communicate with each other and who will be an authorized signer for the troop's bank account.
6. Get your bank account letter from your Community Engagement Specialist (council staff) so you can open your troop bank account with your troop's co-leaders and/or troop treasurer.

BEFORE THE FIRST MEETING

It is completely normal to feel a little anxious about leading a group of girls, whom you may or may not know, and being a driving force in their Girl Scout experience. But with some preparation and flexibility, you can set the tone for a fun troop meeting where girls feel welcome and empowered.

Girl Scouts is girl-led. Girl-led means that girls of all ages actively participate in making decisions about the what, where, when, why, and how of their experiences, in a way that is appropriate for their grade level. Your role as a troop leader is to help guide your troop members through their activities. For younger girls, that can mean a little more structure and planning. As they get older, it means understanding their goal and helping them get there while letting them take charge.

Girl-led activities are the secret sauce of Girl Scouting. When girls step up and take ownership of their decisions, they grow into confident leaders who can make informed and empowered decisions—a valuable skill they will carry throughout their lives.

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 remind parents to send health history forms, uniform orders, and troop dues to the meeting.
3. Know the agenda. Refer to your meeting agenda/plans.
4. Review and practice your agenda. You will feel calmer during the actual meeting and ready to make adjustments as needed.

WITHIN THE FIRST MONTH

Now you are ready for the next thing, your first month of fun activities with your Girl Scouts and their families! Move at your own pace over the next several weeks to build up your troop! Next steps could include:

1. Identify your **First Aider** (Adult & Pediatric CPR/First Aid/AED certified adult) or sign up to be certified yourself.
2. Assign tasks to caregivers who offer to help.
3. Anyone driving, chaperoning overnight, or regularly supervising Girl Scouts must join the troop in a Troop Volunteer role and must also complete a background check, in which the final determination must read as “Eligible” to volunteer.
4. Collect [Health History](#) and [Family Agreement forms](#). You must have a Health History form for each member with you for every Girl Scout activity.
5. Select a troop year plan. Review badge requirements and troop meeting agendas with activity details in the Volunteer Toolkit.
6. Review upcoming council events on our [Event Calendar](#) and select one of interest.
7. Decide if you will collect troop dues, and how much.
8. Tell families about the uniform pieces they should purchase, and if you are doing a group order.

YOU, THE TROOP LEADER

Each troop needs two unrelated adults who are 18 years of age or older and are Girl Scout members who have completed a background check to be able to meet. A friend, neighbor, co-worker, a parent, are all great people to lead a troop with. If you need assistance recruiting a co-leader, talk to your Community Engagement Specialist.

Here are some responsibilities of a Girl Scout troop co-leader:

- **Planning:** Establish a consistent meeting format, help plan activities, and coordinate the troop calendar.
- **Communicating:** Keep parents and caregivers informed, communicate with the service unit and council, and handle troop communications.
- **Mentoring:** Guide girls in discovering their leadership skills and help them set and achieve goals.
- **Safety:** Ensure the safety of the girls and address issues of bullying, discrimination, and hazing.
- **Training:** Complete required training and understand the general philosophy of Girl Scouting.
- **Volunteering:** Connect adult volunteers with troop roles and collect dues.



♣ PARTS OF A TROOP MEETING

The only requirement for your troop meetings is that your girls are engaged and having fun! Many leaders use this basic structure for troop meetings:

1. **Ramp Up**—plan an opening activity for girls upon arrival at the meeting so that they have something to do before the meeting begins. Plan about five minutes for this, it could be a snack, or creating a thank you card, coloring a page to donate, etc.
2. **Opening** – Each troop decides what they will do regularly. Most begin with reciting the Girl Scout Promise & Law, the Pledge of Allegiance, a song, game, story, or other activity designed by the girls. Plan 5-10 minutes for this.
3. **Troop Business** – Collect dues, take attendance, make announcements or plan upcoming activities while parents may be present.
4. **Let the fun begin!** This is your main activity for the meeting. You can work on a badge, journey, or complete other activities during this time. You should plan 30 minutes to 1 hour according to your meeting time.
5. **Clean Up** – Girls clean up all supplies and always leave a place cleaner than they found it. Plan about five minutes. Use a kaper (chores) chart to assign jobs to girls.
6. **Closing** – As a troop, girls decide how they will end each meeting – a song, a game, a Girl Scout tradition. Plan 5-10 minutes for this.

GOT SNACKS?

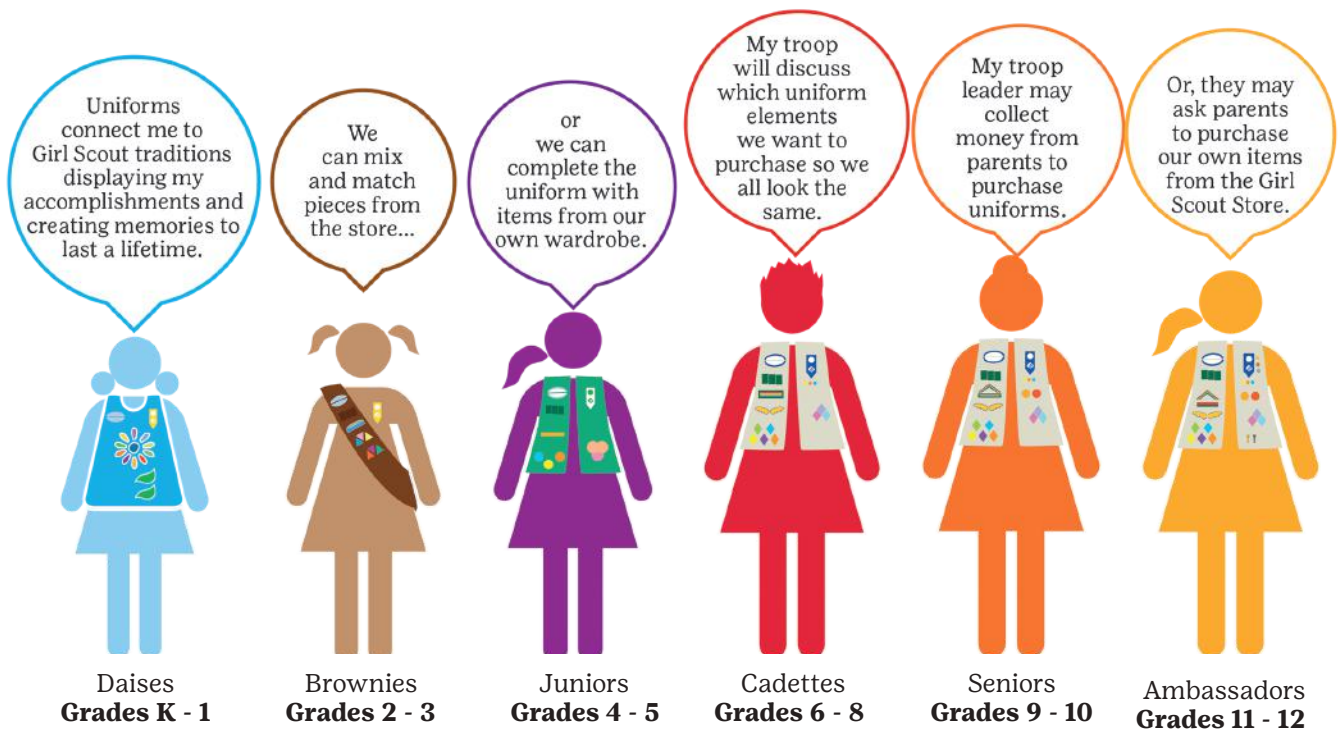
Snacks are optional, but if your troop has chosen to include snacks, guide families to provide healthy snacks and always share any food allergies the girls in your troop may have. Include snack time as part of your troop meeting.

THE GIRL SCOUT UNIFORM

The Daisy Scout uniform is a great way to introduce your girl to the basics of what it means to be a Girl Scout. Troop numerals, the Girl Scout patch, her council's patch, and, of course, her first membership stars will all be items she will carry forward with her as she progresses through Girl Scouts. Daisies get to add their Petal and Promise badges for Daisy specific milestones and experiences. Daisies also have the style option of wearing the [Daisy tunic](#) instead of the [vest](#).

Uniforms are an important part of the Girl Scout experience. They connect girls to Girl Scout traditions, display their accomplishments, and create memories that last a lifetime. Girl Scouts at each level wear one element (tunic, sash, or vest) to display official pins, patches, and badges. Use your friends and family meeting to discuss which uniform elements your troop wants to purchase.

This item is required when you participate in ceremonies or officially represent Girl Scouts. You can wear your sash, vest, or tunic over official Girl Scout gear or over a white shirt and khaki pants or skirt. Depending on grade level, official uniform items may be blue, brown, green, or khaki.



WHAT DO YOU INVEST IN GIRL SCOUTING?

- One to four meetings per month with your troop and committee.
- Time spent communicating with families in your troop.
- One meeting each month attending the Service Unit meeting.
- Time spent in reviewing troop meeting plans in the volunteer toolkit and gathering materials.
- Time spent in new leader training.
- Cost of the Girl Scout Leader Uniform.
- Membership fee.

This adds up to a small investment, compared to the dividends you will receive. The more you invest, the more you can expect to receive in return.

WHAT DO YOU RECEIVE IN RETURN?

- The opportunity to help youth learn good citizenship and shape them into young adults who have courage, confidence and character to help make the world a better place.
- The opportunity to create the foundation for a strong, lifelong bond with other volunteers and Girl Scouts.
- Make new friends with families in your community.
- Gatherings of fun and fellowship with troop families, sharing their pride in their child's accomplishments.
- A sense of pride as you watch the Girl Scouts receive recognition for their accomplishments.
- An opportunity to share your ideas and experiences with other adults who share your interest in and concern for youth.
- Watching Girl Scouts grow and mature as they strive to live up to the Girl Scout Promise and Law.
- Take pride in being part of a global organization dedicated to building girls of courage, confidence, and character.

You will discover many other dividends that will enrich your life as you dedicate your time, talent, and enthusiasm to Girl Scouting.

All leaders bring to Girl Scouting their own talents, skills, backgrounds, and interests. Your key to becoming an effective leader is to use your own abilities and interests, along with what you learn about Girl Scouting, to plan and conduct the best possible program for the families in your troop. What happens in the life of each girl during the formative years will determine to a great extent the kind of adult they will become.

What a tremendous opportunity and we look forward to partnering with you in this work!

Welcome to the Nest.



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