

girl scouts
of central indiana



New Leader's Guide to Success





NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

A Note from your New Leader Managers

Welcome to the Girl Scouts of Central Indiana family and thank you for becoming a troop leader.

Volunteers like you are crucial in building girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. You're now part of a network of 750,000 adults who have decided to take on this commitment of leaving a lasting impact on the girls across their communities, and we are here to help.

You will be assigned a New Leader Manager to help you navigate your first year of leadership. We will help you with trainings, share resources, answer questions and be your support throughout your first year. We are available for a quick call, a zoom chat, or an in-person visit. We will discover what works best for your unique first-year leader needs. You will have a team of support within your local area, and together we will assist you with becoming a successful first year leader!

Wherever your girls lead, we can't wait to see the adventure you have together.

Yours in Girl Scouting,

New Leader Managers

Team 1 - Beth Floyd

Team 2 - Pam Grohman

Team 3 - Jenny Wright

Team 4 - Abby Borders

The Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:

To serve God* and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

The Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be

honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong, and
responsible for what I say and do,

and to

respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

Our Mission

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

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





NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

You—A Girl Scout Leader!

Being a Girl Scout troop leader is an incredible journey in which you'll shape the future by working with girls today.

In Girl Scouting, leadership is about more than “being in charge” or having a title; it's recognizing that you're part of a team and understanding that team's needs and interests.

Leadership is teaching girls:

- That they can do and be anything!
- That they are decision-makers who should own their decisions.
- How to live the Girl Scout Law by modeling it for them.

As a leader, see yourself as a coach who:

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

It's important to remember that:

- You can't expect to know everything the girls might want to learn.
- You'll explore and learn alongside your girls and grow your confidence in the process.
- You're not expected to know everything about Girl Scouting, but you should know where to go for information—and to ask for help when you need it.

- Log into your account in MYGS- explore and confirm your information is correct
- Complete your New Leader Learning Path in gsLearn
- Talk live with your new leader manager
- Log into the Volunteer Toolkit and begin outlining your year
- Set and host your caregiver meeting
- Host your first troop meeting
- Attend the next troop leader monthly meeting
- Set up your troop bank account by December
- Have Fun!

Managing your online member experience

MYACCOUNT is your Girl Scout home base and how you access other great tools to manage the Girl Scout experience for your family and troop. By logging into MYGS in the upper right hand corner of our website (girlscoutsindiana.org) you can manage memberships, find exciting events, access essential tools and find required trainings.

Your Digital Dashboard:



1

My Account

Provides a snapshot of your membership.

2

My Household

Provides a snapshot of your household, which includes girls and their caregivers. You can see the troops your girls are affiliated with and if they are currently registered. You can also edit and update information.

3

My Troop(s)

Troop roster of troops you lead. You can edit meeting details, girls' addresses, school and see all volunteers who are registered and approved. This is where you renew your troop's membership on April 1.

4

My Profile

Update your profile and personal details.

5

My Events

Snapshot of all events for which troop members have registered.

6

The Volunteer Toolkit

This fully customizable digital planning tool helps you plan and manage your entire Girl Scout year. It includes meeting plans, shopping lists, badge and patch requirements, and other resources. Accessible on any computer, tablet, or mobile device.

7

gsLearn

Online trainings designed for you to take in your first 30 days of being a leader.

THE GIRL SCOUT LEADERSHIP EXPERIENCE

No matter what excites your girls, they'll find engaging and fun activities in the four areas that make up the core pillars 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



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.

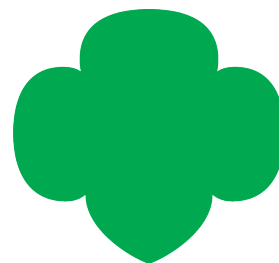
As girls go on Journeys, they'll earn awards to put on their uniforms.



Badges

What have your girls always wanted to do?

Make their own movie, cook food from a different country, go geocaching, sleep under the stars, write a book of short stories, 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.



Patches

Think of patches like collecting memories in Girl Scouts. They're often 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.



NEW LEADER'S GUIDE TO SUCCESS

What makes a successful troop experience?

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



Caregiver Meeting

Having a parent/caregiver meeting is critical for your success in leading the troop. It's a great opportunity to ask parents and other caregivers for their support throughout the troop year. It also gives you the chance to lay out your expectations for them and the girls. Be sure to review the parent meeting found in the Volunteer Toolkit.

Meeting Objectives

- Communicate troop dues, funds, and money earning plans
- Register girls and volunteers
- Complete blanket permission forms
- Find volunteers to help with the troop
- Get to know each other



Sample Agenda

1. Welcome and introductions
2. Complete blanket permission forms
3. Leader and caregiver expectations
4. Girl and volunteer registration
 - Build your volunteer committee
 - Co-leader
 - Troop Treasurer
 - Troop Cookie Manager
 - First Aider
 - Troop Helpers
5. Communication and meeting dates
 - Decide what days/times to meet as a troop
 - Make a plan for communicating with parents/caregivers
6. Program information
 - Discuss girl-led programming
 - Badges, Journeys, and awards
7. Troop finance and cost
 - Explain troop dues
 - Fall Product Program/Cookie Program
8. Closing

Discover

Find out what your parents/caregivers and girls hope to get out of their year in Girl Scouts, and what skills they bring to help you manage the troop.

Connect

Connect the hopes, dreams and skills with volunteer roles to strengthen your troop leadership team.

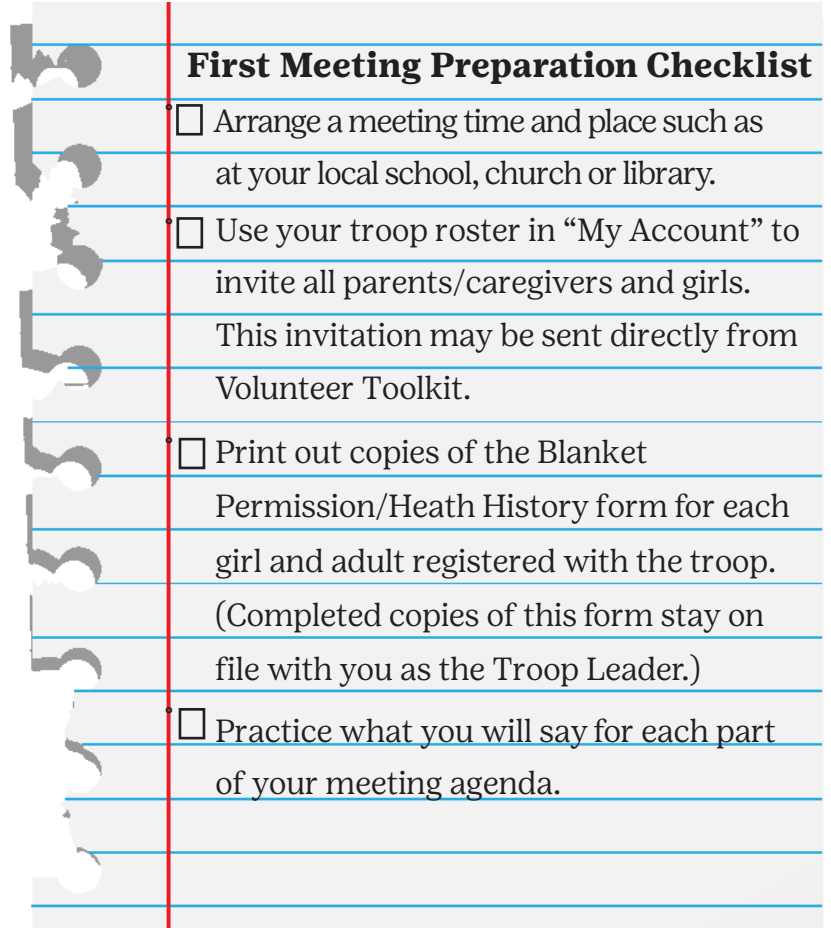
Take Action

Encourage parents/caregivers to sign up to help and invite other girls in the community to join the troop.

YOUR FIRST TROOP MEETING!

Your first troop meeting is a great chance to:

- Introduce the whole troop volunteer team to the girls and their parents/guardians.
- Get to know the girls.
- Introduce a Girl Scout tradition
- Provide an overview of the troop to parents/guardians.
- Review the troop structure, emergency communications (late pick-ups, cancellations, etc.), how you will communicate throughout the year and what you expect from them if you haven't already done so.
- Encourage them to volunteer if they want to help out.



First Meeting Preparation Checklist

- Arrange a meeting time and place such as at your local school, church or library.
- Use your troop roster in “My Account” to invite all parents/caregivers and girls. This invitation may be sent directly from Volunteer Toolkit.
- Print out copies of the Blanket Permission/Heath History form for each girl and adult registered with the troop. (Completed copies of this form stay on file with you as the Troop Leader.)
- Practice what you will say for each part of your meeting agenda.

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. **Start up** – Plan activities for girls as they arrive 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. **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)
4. **Clean up** – Girl Scouts should always leave a place cleaner than they found it! (5 minutes)
5. **Business** – Collect dues and make announcements, or plan an upcoming event or trip while parents/caregivers are present – this gives you a chance to keep families informed. (5 minutes)
6. **Closing** – Just like the opening, each troop can decide how to close – with a song, a game, or a story. (5-10 minutes)



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Keeping Girls Safe

Understanding how many volunteers you need

From camping weekends to cookie booths, adult volunteers must always be present to ensure girls have fun and stay safe, no matter their grade level.

Not sure how many adults you'll need for your activity? The chart below breaks down the minimum number of volunteers needed to supervise a specific number of girls.

Volunteer-to-girl ratio chart	Group Meetings		Events, Travel, and Camping	
	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:	Two unrelated volunteers (at least one of whom is female) for this number of girls:	Plus one additional volunteer for each additional number of this many girls:
Girl Scout Daisies (grades K-1)	12	1-6	6	1-4
Girl Scout Brownies (grades 2-3)	20	1-8	12	1-6
Girl Scout Juniors (grades 4-5)	25	1-10	16	1-8

Planning safe activities

When preparing for any activity with girls, check Girl Scouts' Safety Activity Checkpoints on our website for required guidelines on where to do the activity, how to include girls with disabilities, where to find both basic and specialized gear for the activity, and the specific steps to follow on the day of the activity. Safety Activity Checkpoints will also note if a first-aid kit is required.

If a safety activity checkpoint doesn't exist for an activity you and your girls are interested in, contact Customer Care at customercare@girlscoutsindiana.org before making any definite plans.

What to do in an emergency

Although we all hope the worst never happens, you should know and follow our council's procedures for handling emergency incidents. Remember, at the scene of an incident, safety is your first priority.

- Care for the injured and call 911 if necessary.
- Secure the immediate surroundings and account for all girls and volunteers.
- Contact your campaign manager.
- Refer all media inquiries to the chief executive officer or chief membership and marketing officer.

Make no statements to the media or post on social media. Do not discuss the incident, place blame, or accept liability.

- Complete the accident form found in the Forms and Documents section under Members. 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 telephone numbers of our council office, parents/caregivers of your girls, and emergency services such as the police, fire department, and hospital.

GIRL SCOUT YEAR AT A GLANCE

This sample troop year shows ideas for trips, traditions, and activities you can add to or customize based on the interests of the girls in your troop. Each troop is different since the plans, activities, money earning (and more) should be planned by the girls!

Fall (September–November)

- Caregiver meeting with an investiture/rededication ceremony. This is a great way to share Girl Scout traditions with parents and other caregivers and get them engaged as a volunteer.
- Regular troop meetings (weekly, bimonthly, or monthly depending on girl schedules), that focus on plans for the year such as:
 - Choose a Journey to use and badges the girls would like to earn.
 - Identify trips to make their Journey and badge work come to life.
 - Implement a service project based on their new skills.
- Register to attend community and council-sponsored Girl Scout events.
- Participate in Fall Product Program to earn troop funds.
- Celebrate Juliette Gordon Low's birthday (Oct. 31).

Spring (March–May)

- Continue with regular troop meetings
- Girl Scout Week—Celebrated each March, starting with Girl Scout Sunday and ending with Girl Scout Sabbath on Saturday. It always includes the Girl Scout birthday (when Juliette Gordon Low officially registered the first troop) on March 12.
- Girl Scout Sunday and Girl Scout Sabbath—Provides an opportunity to attend a place of worship and be recognized as Girl Scouts. Ask your service unit manager for more information.
- Court of Awards ceremony—Celebrate awards with a girl-designed ceremony. Ending the troop year with a gathering is a great way to reengage parents and share the girls' successes.
- Renewal Begins April 1 - Late spring is a great time to register for the coming year. Incentives associated with early registration are on our website.
- Leader Day April 22
- Host final caregiver meeting to recap year

Winter (December–February)

- Continue regular troop meetings implementing the girl-led plans.
- Participate in the Girl Scout Cookie Program. It's a great way to earn money and develop financial skills.
 - Each troop must have an approved, trained, and registered troop cookie manager
 - Host your 2nd parent/caregiver meeting to discuss cookie program goals and expectations
- Register for Summer Camp! There are lots of ways girls experience the fun of camp including: day and resident camp (girls attend alone with a buddy, or with their troop).
- Participate in Girl Scout World Thinking Day on February 22. Girls honor our sister Girl Guides and Girl Scouts by taking time to give thanks for their international friendships and remember that GSUSA is a part of a global community. Patch requirements available in the Volunteer Toolkit

Summer (June–August)

- Submit your Troop Annual Report by June 30.
- Take a break! Many troops take the summer off, but that doesn't mean you have to! Take advantage of the time off of school to go on trips.
- Attend camp! Girls can attend summer camp as a troop, on their own, or with a friend!
- Update your training by taking a grade-level training or enrichment.
- Renew your registration if you haven't already.
- Hold your parent/caregiver annual meeting to kick off the year.

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT INFORMATION

Resources and Support

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 guidance outlined in this resource. Volunteer Essentials is updated annually, and the latest version can always be found on our website.

Safety Activity Checkpoints

This guide has everything you need to prepare for and keep your girls safe during a range of activities outside the normal Girl Scout troop meeting. It can be found in the Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Tips for Troop Leaders

When you're looking for real-world advice from fellow troop leaders who've been there, this volunteer-to-volunteer resource on the Girl Scouts of the USA website has the tips you need for a successful troop year.

Kaleidoscope (an adult day of learning and fun!)

October 7 at Founders Lodge Event & Conference Center and Camp Dellwood

Troop Monthly Webinar

1st Mondays September – June – a 30 minute webinar sharing upcoming events and offer ideas for a fantastic year

Service Unit Name _____

Service Unit Manager _____



Camp Sycamore Valley



Camp Dellwood



Camp Ada



Camp Gallahue



Camp Na Wa Kwa

New Leader Manager Name: _____

Email/Phone: _____

Council Contact Information

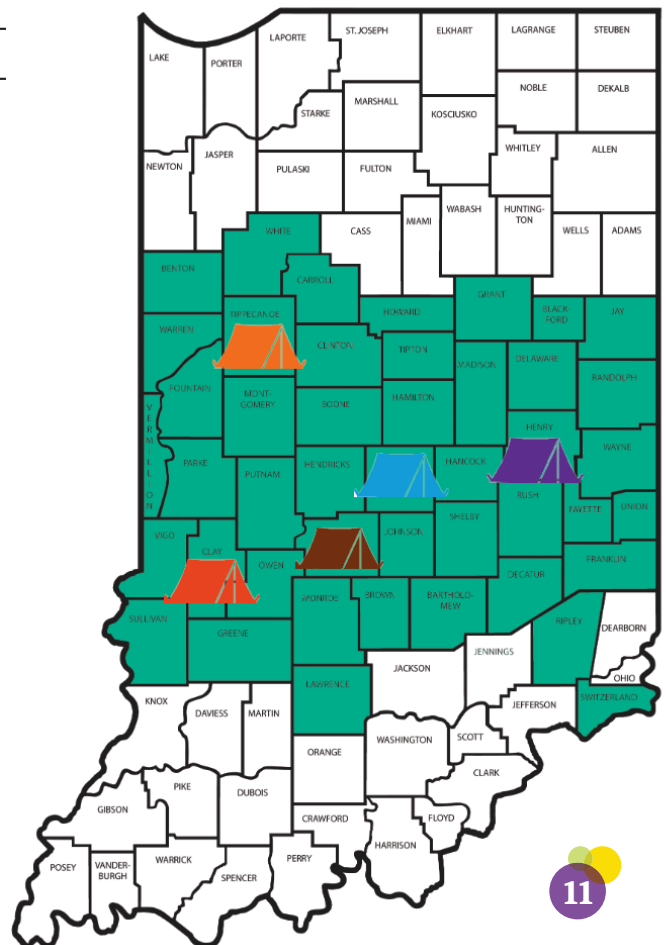
Make sure to check our website for the most up-to-date shop and office hours.

Or shop online 24/7 at

www.girlscoutshop.com/CENTRAL-INDIANA-COUNCIL

Need help? Have questions?

Contact Customer Care at 317.924.6800





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Hopes & dreams for this year...

Questions...
