



  
girl scouts  
of greater south texas

# *Troop Advisor Passport*

YOUR GO-TO GUIDE FOR STARTING YOUR GIRL SCOUT TROOP



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## 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.

Our council spans a 26- county region made up of nearly 17,000 girls and 4,000 volunteers. Together, we are Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas.

As a volunteer, you'll introduce girls to new experiences and help them unleash their inner **G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)**<sup>™</sup> to take the lead and change the world. You'll be their cheerleader, guide, and mentor, helping them develop crucial skills and confidence to launch them into a lifetime of leadership. Imagine the excitement, the memories made, and the *impact*—this is what you'll share as a Girl Scout volunteer.

No matter where or how you volunteer, you'll make a difference in girls' lives. This 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 resources and people to help support you through each step. You are now part of our team. We can't wait to see the impact you'll make this year!



## **YOUR STEPS TO SUCCESS!**

- Sign up to be a volunteer at [gsgst.org](https://gsgst.org) ->volunteer.
- Complete your background check online within 3 days.
- Log in to MyGS member community. View the GSUSA welcome video.
- View the 3 New Troop Advisor Training videos and complete the knowledge check or sign up to attend the training in person. (page 13)
- Invite girls and parents to join your troop. You can access your troop roster through your Volunteer Toolkit.
- You'll get notified any time a girl join your troop. As additional girls join, make sure to contact parents and welcome them.
- Check out the Volunteer Toolkit tutorial video and begin planning your Girl Scout year.
- Plan and host a parent/caregiver meeting for your troop. Remember to set the date, time and location for troop meetings! (pg. 9)
- Our troop support team will assist you in opening a Girl Scout Bank Account. Submit a Troop Bank Account Request form found in the forms section at [gsgst.org](https://gsgst.org) to get started.
- Connect with your local service unit team for additional support.

### **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 allow you to manage your member experience online. It can also be accessed from the link in the header of any page at [gsgst.org](https://gsgst.org).

# THE VOLUNTEER TOOLKIT: YOUR DIGITAL TROOP ASSISTANT!

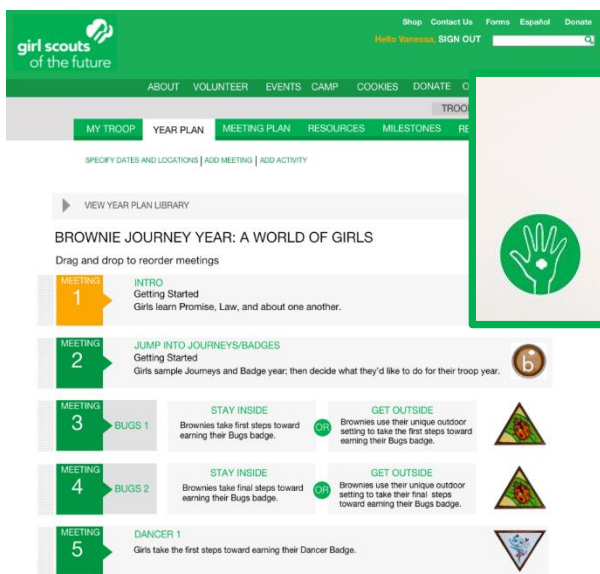
The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) give you program content and other resources to manage your troop planning all year long- and keep it going smoothly!

You can:

- Access Journey, petal, and badge troop meeting plans
- See step-by-step activity guides for each troop meeting
- View and edit your troop roster
- Manage renewals for both girls and adults
- Email parents with a single click
- Share troop meeting activities with parents
- Log girls' petal/badge and Journey achievements
- Add events and your own troop activities



The Volunteer Toolkit now offers multi-level troop access- and will include new program content for STEM and outdoors, plus Welcome to the Daisy Flower Garden!



WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE  
VOLUNTEER TOOLKIT? DETAILS AVAILABLE AT  
[GSGST.ORG](https://GSGST.ORG)

The Volunteer Toolkit contains program and meeting plans for K-5 (Daisy, Brownie, Junior, and K-5 multi-level). Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador troops have access to features including the troop roster, national resources, and all k-5 content (if needed for working with younger troops).

# GIRL SCOUT LEVELS



**DAISIES**  
K & 1st

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 their communities- and so much more. Girl Scout Daisies can also earn Learning Petals and receive participation patches.



**BROWNIES**  
1st & 2nd

Girl Scout Brownies work tougher, 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!



**JUNIORS**  
4th & 5th

Girl Scout Juniors are big-idea thinkers. They’re explorers at camp, product designers when they earn their innovation and story telling badges or even their Bronze Award. Every day, they wake up ready to play a new role.



**CADETTES**  
6th-8th

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.



**SENIORS**  
9th & 10th

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 the 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.)



**AMBASSADORS**  
11th & 12th

Girl Scout Ambassadors know that small acts create big change. While they get ready for life beyond high school, Girl Scouts help 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. Girl Scouts may choose to purchase a vest or sash to display their badges and patches. Use your family meeting to discuss which uniform elements your troop wants to purchase. Troop leaders may collect money from parents and purchase sashes, vests and insignia from any GSGST shop, or ask parents to purchase their own.

**Visit one our shop locations to purchase uniforms, starter kits and more. Or shop online 24/7 at [girlscoutshop.com/greater-south-texas-council](http://girlscoutshop.com/greater-south-texas-council).**

# GOVERNING STRUCTURE

## Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA)

A national organization supporting the work of more than 100 councils across the U.S. Headquartered in New York, New York.

## Girl Scouts of Greater South Texas (GSGST)

Independent 501(c) 3 nonprofit chartered by GSUSA operating under the direction of local board directors and overseeing all service units and troops within a given geographic area.

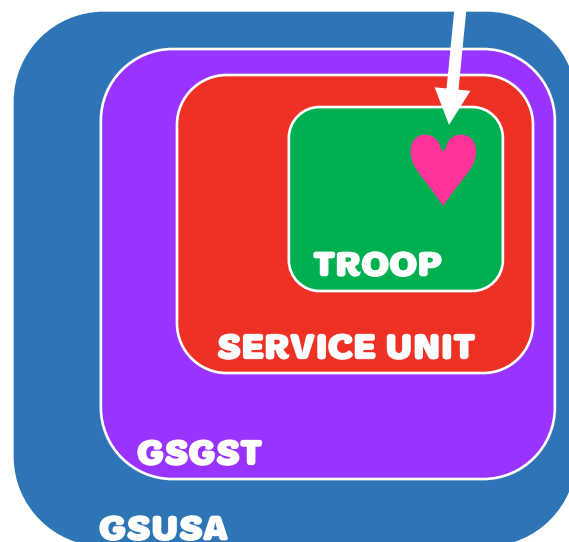
## Service Units

Comprised of volunteers who support the work of troop volunteers within a given territory.

## Troops

Volunteer-supervised groups of girls who participate in the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

**Girls are the heart of our organization!**



# WHAT'S THE GIRL SCOUT PROGRAM?

At Girl Scouts, girls have tons of fun, make new friends, and go on fantastic 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, and 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.

## Badges

What have your girls always wanted to do?

Make their own movie, cook food from a difference country, go geocaching, sleep under the stars, write a book or short story, plant a garden? Great news! They can learn to do all these thing and more while earning Girl Scout Badges. Badges are worn on the front of the vest or sash.

## Highest Awards



**Bronze. Silver. Gold.**

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

## Patches

Think of patches like collection of 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.

# SHAPING YOUR TROOP EXPERIENCE

Before you hold your first troop meeting, consider the support and resources you will need throughout the year. We recommend holding a friends and family meeting to rally additional parent volunteers.

## **Tips for structuring your troop:**

### **1. Troop Formation**

Troops may be assigned by grade level or leaders may choose to facilitate multi-level troops with girls of all ages combined in one troop.

### **2. Meetings**

Determine the frequency of your meetings and the meeting/activity schedule. Use the online Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) to help through this process.

-most troops meet twice a month but you can choose a schedule that works best for you.

-your meeting space should be somewhere safe, clean and secure that allows all girls to participate. Some great meeting space ideas include schools, churches, libraries, community centers.

### **3. Meeting Structure**

Girl Scouts is designed to be girl-led. Talk to the girls and parents about what they'd like to get out of Girl Scouts this year.

-Think about how you want to lead. Do you want to run every troop meeting? Consider rotating responsibility with the different members of your troop. Parent and girl can team up to lead one meeting each.

### **4. Cost**

Consider supply costs-does your troop need to charge monthly or annual dues to help off-set costs? Will you charge families per activity? It's important to talk with parents about financial expectations up front. Assign a parent volunteer to help manage troop finances.

### **5. Communication**

Keep everyone in the loop. Make sure parents know when and where your activities will be and how they can help.



**MAKE SURE YOU ARE HAVING FUN!**



# YOUR PARENT/CAREGIVER MEETING

## Hold a Parent/Caregiver Meeting as your chance to:

- Get to know your Girl Scouts and their families
- Ask for support and help at troop meetings and outings
- Set clear expectations for the troop including troop dues, meeting activity schedule, financial obligations, uniforms, etc.
- Brainstorm all of the exciting things your troop wants to do this year.

## Meeting Preparation Checklist

- Arrange for a meeting time and place such as a local school, church or library.
- Use your troop roster in MyGS (log in found in the top corner of [gsgst.org](https://gsgst.org)) to invite all parents and girls.
- Print out copies of the health history forms ([gsgst.org/forms](https://gsgst.org/forms)) for each girl who is registered with the troop. (Completed copies of this form stay on file with you as the troop advisor.)
- Arrange for another adult to do a craft or activity with the girls while you talk to the parents.
- Practice what you want to say and the information you want to share.
- Remember- this will be their first experience with Girl Scouts. Make sure you have fun!



# NOW YOU ARE READY TO MEET

## THERE ARE SIX PARTS OF A TROOP MEETING

Organizing your meeting is easy with the new Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)- your one-stop resource to planning your entire year a troop leader. This simple guide will give you the framework for how a typical meeting runs. The VTK will help you fill in the holes with specific activities and timelines.

***Most important your meetings should be fun!***

- 1. Start Up-** 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-** Girls decide and lead their meeting opening- most begin with the Girl Scout Promise and Law, a simple flag ceremony, song, game, story, or other activity. (5-10 minutes)
- 3. Activities-** Support your troop as they complete their pre-selected activities to work towards badges and journeys. This portion of the meeting should be heavily girl-led with the troop leader aiding on the side. (30-45 minutes).
- 4. Clean Up-** Girl Scouts should always leave a place cleaner than they found it. (5 minutes).
- 5. Closing-** Just like the opening, each troop can decide how to close- with a song, a game, or a story (5-10 minutes).
- 6. Business-** Collect dues and make announcements, or plan an upcoming event or trip while parents/ guardians are present- this gives you a chance to keep families informed (5-10 minutes).



# 5 GREAT THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT TROOP FINANCES

**Bank Account** – All troops should establish a bank account for collection of troop dues (optional), payment of troop supplies and activities and product sales revenue (Fall Product & Cookie programs). Each troop must submit a Bank Account Request form to open a Girl Scout bank account and ACH Authorization Form.

**Troop Dues** – Many troops decide to collect troop dues as a way to help provide start-up funds for troop activities and supplies. These could range from \$1-\$2 per meeting, to \$30-\$40 for the entire school year paid all at one time. It’s completely up to each troop to decide what works best for them to support the activities they want to do.






**Money-earning Activities** – The Fall Product and Cookie programs are the primary money-earning activities for a troop. If a troop participates in these programs, they may also opt to participate in a limited number of other fundraising activities, which must be approved by completing the Additional Money Earning Activity Request Form. All troops must have a Girl Scout Bank Account and submit an ACH Authorization form to participate in the Product Programs.

**Reporting and Receipts** – Girl Scout troops should report out to troop parents about finances at least three times per year. An annual financial report is due to troop support yearly.



## FUND THE FUN!

When Girl Scouts participate in the Fall Product & Cookie programs, their troops earn proceeds from each package or item sold. Troops can decide how their revenue is spent, from funding a troop camping trip to funding their Bronze Award. The GSGST Fall and Cookie programs ensure Girl Scouts are earning while they learn! What do they learn? The Girl Scout Fall Product and Cookie programs are designed to develop five critical skills:

				
<b>GOAL SETTING</b> how to develop a business plan	<b>DECISION MAKING</b> think critically and solve problems	<b>MONEY MANAGEMENT</b> directly handle customer money	<b>PEOPLE SKILLS</b> engage with members of the community and develop confidence	<b>BUSINESS ETHICS</b> develop positive values like honesty and integrity

Troop leaders receive more information about getting started in the Fall Product Program in early fall and the Cookie Program in late fall.

# GIRL SCOUT VOLUNTEER RESOURCES

## The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)

The Volunteer Toolkit is a digital planning tool that gives you resources and program content to get your year started—and keep it going smoothly with organization and communication tools! Fully customizable, Troop Leaders can:

- Explore meeting topics and program activities with their girls
- Print activity guides and shopping lists
- Update contact information
- Renew members
- Manage girl attendance and track achievements
- Communicate with parents
- Track and share financial information

**Learn more and access the VTK at [gsgst.org](https://gsgst.org).**



## Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting

This easy-to-use binder (one for each grade level) is full of great info on being a Girl Scout, Journeys and badge activities. It's part handbook, part badge book and all fun! [shop.gsgst.org](https://shop.gsgst.org).

## Safety Activity Checkpoints

These are online lists containing everything you need to know to be prepared and keep your girls safe during a number of different kinds of activities outside of the normal Girl Scout troop meeting. These can be found in the Volunteer Resources section of [gsgst.org/forms](https://gsgst.org/forms).

## GSGST Volunteer Policies & Procedures

GSGST creates and maintains policies and procedures to guide our volunteers and staff and to ensure that the Girl Scout program is delivered in a safe, consistent manner for girls across our council. By agreeing to be a Girl Scout volunteer, you're agreeing to follow the items laid out in this resource.

## GSGST Social Media

Want to know what other troops are doing? Interested in new activities for your girls? Like sharing photos and videos? Stay connected and help us share the Girl Scout love on social media! Be sure to like us on Facebook, and follow us on Twitter. Find all the links at [gsgst.org](https://gsgst.org).

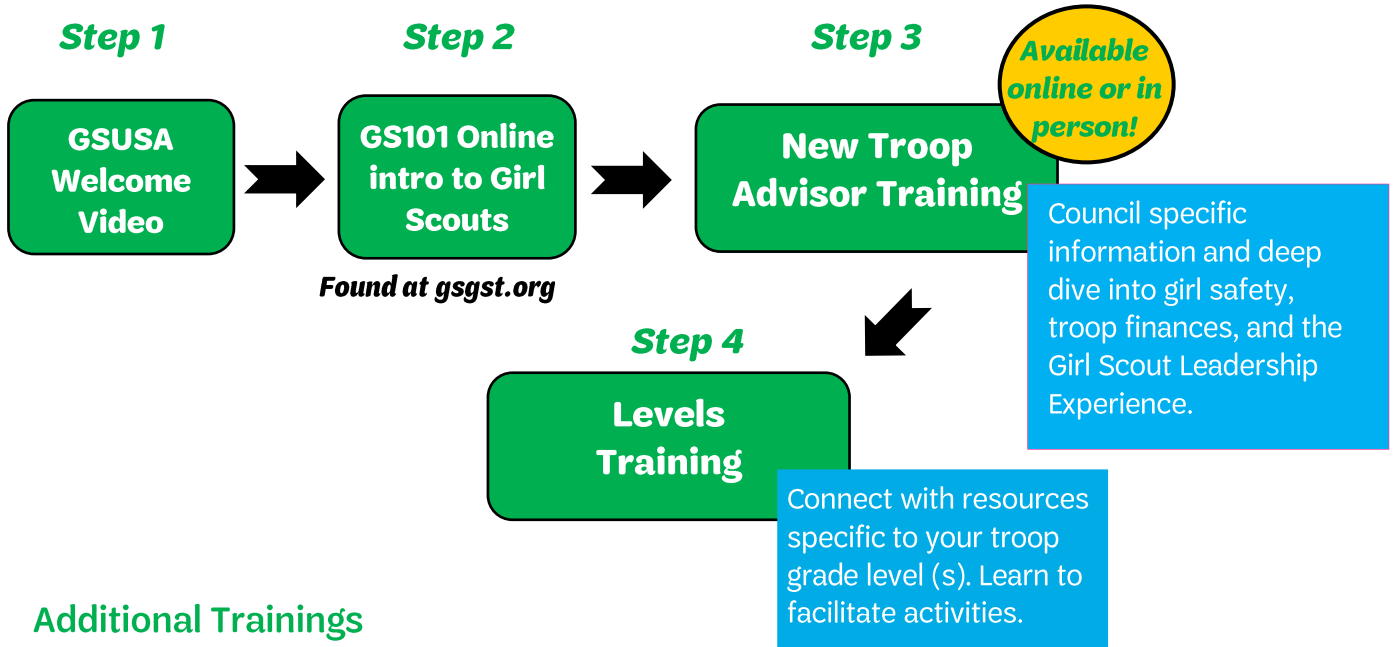
## Customer Care

Serving our volunteers is a top priority. Reach out anytime by either clicking on the "Contact Us" form at [gsgst.org](https://gsgst.org) or email [info@gsgst.org](mailto:info@gsgst.org). During business hours (Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.- 5 p.m., Friday, 9 a.m.-2:00 p.m.), you can reach a customer care representative by calling 800-477-2688. The team looks forward to resolving your needs and inquiries quickly.

# Training Opportunities

In order to build our girls into great leaders, we have to start with ourselves. We offer training and workshops to meet your needs as a new troop advisor.

## New Troop Advisors (Required Training)



## Additional Trainings

### First Aid & CPR

This 5 hour course will get you certified as a “First Aider”. Each troop must be accompanied by at least one certified first aid registered adult on troop activities.

### Step Into Bronze Workshop

This workshop is for Junior Troop Advisors and girls who wish to earn the Bronze Award.

### Silver and Gold Workshops

This workshop is for Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors who are wanting to learn more information about the requirements to earn your Silver or Gold Award. Parents and Troop Advisors are welcome to attend so that you too may have the tools you need to guide girls on their way to Silver and Gold.

### Troop Camp Training

This course is a must if you plan to take your troop camping, do cook-outs or sleep outs. Learn Out-door skills, fire building and camp cooking, the Girl Scout way.

### Program Aid (PA) & Volunteer In Training (VIT)

Program Aid is for Cadettes and VIT is for Seniors and Ambassadors. Cadettes should have already earned 1 LIA award. See Page 30 of Cadettes Girl Guide.

**Find a complete list of training opportunities online at [gsgst.org](http://gsgst.org) on the [events listing](#) and [Volunteer Training page](#)**

# WHERE WE'RE LOCATED AND HOW TO CONNECT



  
**girl scouts**  
of greater south texas

**gsgst.org**

Contact us at 800-477-2688 or  
[info@gsgst.org](mailto:info@gsgst.org)

## Offices

### Harlingen Office

202 E. Madison  
Harlingen, TX 78550

### Corpus Christi Office

2410 Bevecrest  
Corpus Christi, TX 78415

### Deborah F. Branch Office

104 W. River St  
Victoria, TX 77901

### Laredo Office

701 N. Stone Ave.  
Laredo, TX 78040

### McAllen Office

5317 N. McColl St  
McAllen, TX 78504

All offices includes a GSGST shop.

## Office & Shop Hours:

### Offices:

Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-5 p.m.  
Friday 9 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

### Shops:

Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m.  
Friday 8:30 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

*Shop online 24 hours a day at  
[girlscoutshop.com/greater-south-texas-council](http://girlscoutshop.com/greater-south-texas-council)*