

Early Bird 2010-2011

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

1. What is Early Bird?

A: Early Bird registration is an opportunity for the current members of GSNEO to renew their membership for the next membership/program year.

2. Why should my troop Early Bird?

A: Early Bird allows for no lapse in membership tenure and gives troops/groups the opportunity to hit the ground running for the 2010-2011 membership/program year – with girl planning, adult preparation and fall product sale.

3. What if I have less than 5 girls and 2 adults?

A: GSNEO and GSUSA recognize 5 girls and 2 unrelated approved adults as the minimum number of members in order to be a troop. Therefore in order to receive early bird troop incentives you need to have 5 girls and 2 adults. Sometimes a troop may struggle to attain the 5 girl minimum but if a troop is willing to put work with their membership specialist to put together a recruitment plan and then work their plan, the troop may still be eligible for the early bird troop incentives. For more information contact your membership specialist for the recruitment template to get started. Membership specialists are GSNEO staff members and can be reached by contacting the local service center or dial 1-800-852-4474.

4. Does this mean the product sales programs are changing their policies about troops with less than 5 girls?

A: No. The information about what we're doing for Early Bird incentives has no effect on the product sales policies regarding troops with less than 5 girls.

To qualify as a troop for the product sales profits, Daisy, Brownie, and Junior troops must have at least 5 registered girl members. Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador troops must have at least 2 unrelated registered girl members.

5. Do our adults need to be approved?

A: GSNEO's primary concern is always to safeguard the safety and best interests of its members. Therefore, background screenings must be conducted on all operational volunteers regardless of their position.

For all the information regarding the approval or screening process of GSNEO volunteers please see the **Girl Scouts of North East Ohio, Operational Volunteer Policies** which can be found at www.gsneo.org or by contacting the council office.

What about parent helpers?

Parents who attend a Girl Scout function or troop meeting from time to time, who are not counted into the required minimum trained and approved adult to child ratio, and are not the adult responsible for the girls are not considered GSNEO volunteers and do not have to have a background screening.

All adults who attend an overnight program with girls are considered GSNEO volunteers, and need a background screening. The only exception is in the case of a parent/child event where each girls parent/guardian is in attendance with and responsible for their own child. In this case, if one particular parent is unable to attend then the required 2 minimum trained and approved adults are required.

How often do we need to repeat the background screenings?

GSNEO does not intend to redo background screenings annually, unless it become mandated by law and with the exception of summer camp staff and volunteers. GSNEO will decide how often background screenings should be redone, and the process for doing so, once we have an automated system in place.

GSNEO will continue to do background screenings on all new operational volunteers regardless of their position.

6. Do volunteers have to have their background check done again?

A: Not yet. Once you are an approved volunteer you do not have to redo your background screening for 3 years. If it has been 3 years since your last background screening, you will be notified about the re-screening process during the 2011 program-year.

7. When will we get our incentives?

A: The Early Bird incentives for all qualifying troops (paperwork complete and on time) will be given to your service unit registrar when your service unit registrar submits the paperwork to the membership specialist. This process will take place between April and June. The service unit registrar will then pass out the incentives to the troops in the service unit. Most likely this will take place in your community during a leader meeting.

If you are a service unit registrar please be sure that you communicate to the troops when they can expect to receive their incentives. Keep in mind that the \$10 gift certificates expire on Sept. 30, 2010.

8. Can we give our \$10 gift certificate to another troop?

A: No. Gift certificates should not be transferred.

9. Does the Service Unit get the .15 rebate for all members, what about lifetime members?

A: Service Units will receive a membership rebate of 15¢ per each member that re-registers during Early Bird, including girls and adults. The 15¢ rebate will also be given to the service unit for each lifetime member that returns their information update form by June 30, 2010.

10. What is a qualifying troop?

A: A qualifying troop is a troop that has a minimum of 5 girls and 2 adults, and turns in all their paperwork for Early Bird by June 30, 2010.

CAUTION: Do not wait until the last minute. Leave enough time to correct any problems so you don't miss out on the incentives for your troop.

11. Which forms have to be turned in to make my paperwork complete so we can receive our incentives?

A: The following forms must be turned in with Early Bird packet in order to get incentives:

REQUIRED forms:

- Troop/Group Dues Summary form
- Troop Roster
- Troop check payable to GSNEO
- Finance Report & bank statement
- Girl Diversity and Pathway Interest form

If needed forms:

- Product Sales Financial Responsibility forms (if participating in the 2010-2011 product sales)
- Girl Membership forms (if needed)
- Adult Membership forms (if needed)
- Financial Assistance Summary & individual applications (if needed)

12. What do I do with the Girl Diversity and Pathway Interest form?

A: This form was created to capture each girls race and ethnicity. It is very important that the membership of GSNEO reflect the population of North East Ohio, to be sure that Girl Scouts is welcoming and available to all girls in North East Ohio. Last year GSNEO moved from individual membership forms to a roster format. The roster does not capture the race and ethnicity and therefore a new form was created.

The Pathway interest indicator is a way for GSNEO and GSUSA to capture the interest of the girls in various Girl Scout Pathways. This information can be uploaded into our new membership database and will aid us in future planning.

13. What is a visual survey?

A: A visual survey is when a leader looks at a girl and then checks off the race and/or ethnicity of the girl based on what she believes to be true. A visual survey should be completed by the troop leader if the girl (or her parent/guardian) does not check off her own race and/or ethnicity information on the Girl Diversity and Pathway Interest form.

14. What if I don't want to complete a visual survey or what if there are blanks on my race/ethnicity form?

A: Reporting race and ethnicity is not required. It does however go a long way in helping GSNEO be responsible for being available to all girls. A lot of times funding is available to help reach all segments of our population, but first we need to know who we are currently serving.

Although it is not required that this form be complete in its entirety, it is required that this form be turned in with your Early Bird packet in order to receive any incentives.

Please be sure to complete the Pathway interest indicator even if all the race and ethnicity is not reported.

15. What about the race and ethnicity of the adult members?

A: The race and ethnicity of our adult members is very important as well, next year the form will be updated to include a place for adults. This year you may list your adult members under the girl members. If you need more room you may make a copy of the form or obtain another copy of the form from your registrar, your membership specialist, or the website www.gsneo.org.

16. What is a Pathway?

A: Girl Scout Pathways are the ways that girls and adults participate in Girl Scouting. Girl Scouts is all about being flexible to meet the needs of today's girl. Through pathways, girls will still benefit from the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) but will have the flexibility needed to participate for both the short- and long-term. The pathways of your choice are as follows:

- **Camp** - Girls participate in day or resident camps with a focus on the out-of-doors and/or environmental education
- **Events** - Girls participate in events. Different girls each event. (e.g., Advocacy Conference)
- **Series** - Girls participate in a series of programs with the same group of girls relating to a specific theme or purpose (e.g., high-adventure teen group, completion of the “uniquelyMe!” self-esteem program over a six-week period)
- **Travel** - Girls plan, earn money, prepare, and participate in regional, national, and international trips
- **Troop** - Girls participate in a series of programs with the same group of girls over the course of a school year
- **Virtual** - Girls participate in interactive, high-quality program activities in a safe, secure, online environment (coming soon).

Girls can choose any one, all, or some of these pathways within a single year. The Girl Scout community nationwide continues to develop a new approach to ensure that girls and adults can participate in Girl Scouting in the ways they want to!

17. Can I turn my paperwork into the service center directly?

A: In order to best serve all 50,000 GSNEO members we *strongly encourage* you to submit your paperwork through your volunteer service unit registrar. If your service unit does not have a registrar, ask your service unit director or your membership specialist who you should turn your paperwork into.

If you do bring your paperwork directly to the council please make an appointment with your membership specialist beforehand. This way you will know that she will be in the office that day and not in the community and can spend the time it takes to go over your paperwork with you to be sure it's complete, and then give you your incentives (if your troop qualifies). Turning in your paperwork at the service center will take approximately 15-30 minutes of your time for each troop.

Service Unit Registrars: If paperwork is received at the council service center, you will be notified via email (or USPS mail if you do not have email).

18. What if we are missing documentation or if we lose a form?

A: You can obtain additional copies of your troop roster by contacting your membership specialist. The other documents in the Early Bird packet are available on the forms section of the website: www.gsneo.org.

19. When does the \$10 troop certificate expire?

A: The gift certificate expires Thursday, September 30, 2010. The sooner registration is submitted the sooner troops will have access to their gift certificate.

Gift certificates may be used when shopping online at www.gsneo.org, by entering the coupon's code.

20. Why did we switch from using the GSUSA forms to using the troop roster?

A: Last year GSNEO began piloting the use of a troop roster vs. using the pre-printed GSUSA forms for three reasons;

- Timeliness – GSUSA does not provide the pre-printed forms in a timely way.
- Reduction in paper – Utilizing the troop roster should use less paper than having 2 sheets of paper per girl the way the GSUSA forms do.
- Making it easier for the leader – troop leaders have asked for a troop roster instead of all the forms to make it easier for them to process.

We have had a lot of positive feedback, and therefore will be using the rosters again this year.

21. What if someone is missing from my roster?

A: If a current member is not listed on the troop roster, submit a completed GSUSA Membership Registration form with your troop roster. Check the “renew” box on the registration form. Include the member on the troop/group dues summary form. (see page 4, item #2, in the Troop/Group Instructional Packet).

22. What if one of the adults on my roster wants to purchase their lifetime membership?

A: Anyone wishing to purchase a lifetime membership needs to complete a GSUSA Adult Registration form. Blank forms were included in your packet, and can be obtained at your local service center or on the GSNEO website, www.GSNEO.org, keyword: forms.

23. We are a brand new troop what do we do with Early Bird?

A: New troops will need to complete GSUSA Membership Forms for each member. These forms can be obtained through your local volunteer service unit registrar, your membership specialist at the service center, stop by any local service center to pick them up or find them on the GSNEO website, www.GSNEO.org, keyword: forms.

Since the new program year is on the horizon, we encourage you to collect membership dues for both the current year and for the 2010-2011 year (\$24). Just write “2 YEARS MEMBERSHIP” on top of the GSUSA forms for each member and on top of the membership dues summary form. These forms may be turned into your local volunteer service unit registrar or your membership specialist at the service center.

New troops who pay for both years will qualify for Early Bird and be eligible to receive Early Bird incentives. New troops will receive their incentives when all the other troops receive their incentives for Early Bird (see Question #6 above).

Service Unit Registrars: If paperwork is received at the council service center, you will be notified via email (or USPS mail if you do not have email) and incentives will be given directly to the volunteer who submits the paperwork at the time they turn it in.

If the paperwork for new troops that are paying for 2 years is turned into you, you need to submit it to your membership specialist immediately. Do not wait for your appointment so that the new troop is registered for 2009-2010 ASAP. The incentives for their 2010-2011, if they qualify, will be given to you at your Early Bird reconciliation appointment.

24. Other adults help with my troop but they aren't leaders or co-leaders, which position code should I use to register them?

A: An adult helper who does not have a specific position should be coded as #14.

Position Codes:

Leader 01	Co-Leader 02	Troop Committee Member/Product Sales Chairperson 03
Trainers 12	Delegates 19	Service Team Members 11 Member no position 14

Note: If you do not see the position code you need, please call Registration at 1-800-852-4474.

25. How does a leader who has multiple troops register?

A: If an adult is registered with more than one troop, her/his name will show up on both troops rosters. In order to avoid confusion, cross out her/his name on the roster of the troop s/he is not paying with and write “paying with troop ____” . On the troop she is paying with be sure to list all troops with position codes s/he will be associated with on the roster s/he is paying.

Example:	Leader Name	02 Asst Troop Leader
	123 Street Ave.	<u>02</u> Troop # <u>90001</u>
	City, Ohio 44555	<u>14</u> Troop # <u>90003</u>

26. Who should I call if I have questions?

A: You can call your local volunteer service unit registrar or your membership specialist at the service center 1-800-852-4474.