



2024-2025 Welcome to the Service Unit Orientation

We are thrilled that you have decided to partner with the best leadership development organization for girls – Girl Scouts! – by serving as a Troop Leader or Troop Admin!

The safe, nurturing, girl-led environment that you will create with your troop and parent/caregiver volunteers will have a lasting impact on the Girl Scouts you serve.

The information in this packet will help you navigate your new role. As a leader, you are helping girls become their best selves through a rich Girl Scout experience that allows them to discover their potential, connect with others with similar interests, and engage in Take Action Projects that reflect their potential to make a difference in their communities and the world.

Girl Scouts is designed to be girl-led. With your support and guidance, girls will take the lead in determining what they want to do as a troop—what badges and journeys they want to earn, details about their camping trips, what they want to do with their hard-earned cookie money and a host of other activities and adventures. Along the way you can encourage them to take smart risks and think creatively when they are presented with challenges. When girls have the chance to make decisions, they learn collaboration, teamwork, and how to advocate for their ideas. As a leader, this is one of the most important aspects of Girl Scouts that you can cultivate.

At Girl Scouts of North East Ohio (GSNEO), over 18,000 girls are served every year by more than 9,000 volunteers, throughout 18 counties. You are a special part of our Girl Scout family, and we welcome you!

Girl Scout Mission

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

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.

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.

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

What is a Service Unit?

A service unit (SU) is a community of troops in a geographical area that are led by a team of dedicated volunteers. The service unit team (SUT) promotes Girl Scouting and oversees activities within their community. The SUT works in partnership with the Volunteer Support & Services Department staff at GSNEO to support and grow membership in your area. The team promotes opportunities for new members to join, helps new members get started, and supports local members and families throughout their Girl Scout experience. If you need assistance, your first point of contact is the service unit team.

What do Service Units do?

Service units work together in their communities to provide support to troop volunteers, share ideas and resources, receive and facilitate training, and shares important announcements. Service units organize events like community-wide service projects, summer day camps, overnights, celebrations, ceremonies, and so much more!

Service Unit Meetings

Many service units hold local volunteer meetings that are a great place for all volunteers to find support. Volunteer meetings are important resources because they offer:

- Support from other leaders who may be experiencing the same challenges.
- Information on events and activities that are taking place locally and around the council.
- Round table discussions and mini trainings from local volunteers on a variety of topics.
- Collaboration between leaders to make service unit events and activities spectacular.
- Camaraderie shared with others involved first-hand in Girl Scouting.

Your troop is responsible for having a representative present at each meeting, preferably a Troop Leader or Troop Admin, but other volunteers from your troop are always welcome to attend. Consider the SU meeting schedule when setting up troop meetings at the beginning of the year, so they do not overlap.

Service Unit Name/Number: _____

Leader Meeting Frequency and Time*: (Example: 2nd Monday of month, 7 p.m.)

Meeting Location*: _____

Service Unit Facebook _____

Service Unit Rallyhood _____

**If your SU does not have a Service Unit Director, you may not have a local meeting every month.*

Meet your Service Unit Team (SUT) & GSNEO Staff

Each SUT is supported by a Community Support Coordinator, a Community Support Specialist, and includes several experienced volunteers who specialize in a specific area of support for leaders. Sizes of SUT's may vary but are compiled of individuals who support leaders within a specific geographical area. The most commonly filled SUT roles are outlined below, but your team may have other SUT volunteers in roles such as: Juliette Coordinator, Community Liaison, GSLE Coach, Startup Troop Coach, and Delegate.

	Name	Phone	Email
Community Support Coordinator *GSNEO Staff			
Community Support Specialist *GSNEO Staff			
Service Unit Director (SUD) *Volunteer			
Troop Mentor *Volunteer			
PR Coordinator *Volunteer			
Registrar *Volunteer			
Treasurer *Volunteer			
Product Sales Distribution Manager *Volunteer			

Customer Care

Have a question? GSNEO Customer Care is here to help!

During Business Hours:

- Give our **Live Chat** a try on gsneo.org
- Email us at customercare@gsneo.org.
- Call 1-800-852-4474.
- Fill out the "[Contact Us](#)" form at gsneo.org and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

After Business Hours:

- Check out the **Auto Answer** feature when Live Chat is not available.
- Fill out the "[Contact Us](#)" form at gsneo.org and we'll get back to you when we're in the office.

Required Resources

Visit: gsneo.org/resources

- **The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK)** is a comprehensive digital tool accessible via the web on your home computer, smartphone, and/or tablet to help you have a fun and successful year with your troop. It provides program content to complete badges and Journeys and other resources to manage your troop planning all year long, including meeting agendas, troop finances, and more! Sign into your [MyGS](#) account to access.
- **Volunteer Policies** are essential for the protection of all Girl Scout members. Adherence to policies, procedures, and standards ensures a consistent and safe quality volunteer experience, as well as outcomes-based program delivery for Girl Scouts.
- **Volunteer Essentials** is your encyclopedia for all things Girl Scouts. You will find information about managing your troop, planning your first meeting, girl/adult ratios, the four pillars of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, managing your troop finances, creating a safe space, product programs, and more!
- **Safety Activity Checkpoints (SAC)** provides the standard safety guidelines for Girl Scouts of the United States of America (GSUSA) and Girl Scouts of North East Ohio (GSNEO) approved activities.
- **New Leaders Guide to Success** is your go-to guide to help you effectively lead during your first year as a Girl Scout Troop Leader or Troop Admin.
- **Family Connection Guide** is an easy-to-use guide for all families, especially those that are new to Girl Scouts. The guide covers everything a family will need to know to get the most out of this year in Girl Scouts!

Required Forms

Additional forms you may need can be found at: gsneo.org/forms

- **Annual Permission Form** is an annual form for parents/caregivers to give permission for basic field trips, product sale program participation, photographs, and emergency medical treatment. *****Caregivers must complete this form annually***
- **Personal Health and Medical Form** is an annual form for all registered Girl Scouts and adult members. This form is required for troop meetings, overnights, and programs not exceeding 72 hours. Troop leadership will reference this form in case of an emergency.
- **Emergency Action Plan Card** provides important information to use when planning troop outings, emergency numbers, and a step-by-step action plan.
- **GSNEO Incident/Accident Report Form** is used to report conflicts, emergencies, injuries, bullying, infectious disease exposure, and more. The form must be submitted within 24 hours of the incident/accident.

Required Training

New Leader Orientation Webinar – visit gsneo.org/events (change dropdown to Adult Learning)

- Time: approx. 1.5 hrs. online– FREE
- This online, staff led webinar is for all volunteers that are new to a Troop Leader or Troop Admin role. You will learn about GSNEO policies, standards, guidelines, understanding your resources, and who to contact for help. You will also have the opportunity to ask questions and learn about important next steps for the upcoming months to help support you in your new leadership role.

Blended First Aid/CPR/AED – visit gsneo.org/events (change dropdown to Adult Learning)

- Time: approx. 3 hrs. online/3 hrs. in-person – \$27.00
- General first-aiders are required to be present for any troop activities beyond a regular troop meeting. GSNEO strongly encourages all troops to have a general first-aider present at all times and makes certification accessible and affordable. Additionally, troops must always have a first aid kit present. This Blended Learning class includes an online portion and in-person training to complete your certification and satisfies the requirements for becoming a certified first-aider.

gsLearn – Online Training - visit gsneo.org ([gsLearn](https://gsneo.org))

gsLearn gives volunteers access to online learning opportunities for all their training needs. Learning modules are available for new Troop Leaders and Troop Admins to get oriented and additional learning is available for all program levels of troop leadership. Learn at your own pace and track your accomplishments.

New Troop Training – Required for Troop Leaders and Troop Admins

- Time: approx. 3.5 hrs. on [gsLearn](https://gsneo.org)

GSUSA Girl Scout Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Course – Required for all volunteers who work with youth

- Time: approx. 40 minutes on [gsLearn](https://gsneo.org)

Money Matters – Required for volunteers who are bank account signers

(Troop Leaders, Troop Admins, Troop Treasurers, Troop Product Sales Managers)

- Time: approx. 3 hrs. on [gsLearn](https://gsneo.org)

Additional Volunteer Training

GSNEO provides volunteer training to ensure the safety and well-being of youth, as well as a successful Girl Scout experience for both girl and adult members. These opportunities will help you develop additional leadership skills and talents as well as enrich your volunteer experience.

Highly recommended trainings:

- **A.L.E. (Adult Learning Experiences)** – visit gsneo.org/ALE
 - A.L.E is the place where GSNEO volunteers go to learn more about everything Girl Scouts! With classes brought to you by fellow volunteers and staff members, you will be sure to find something for yourself to enjoy and to enrich your troop's experience. Featured course categories include STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math), outdoor skills, personal development, ceremonies and traditions, and program certifications.

Trainings for camping and extended trips:

- **Outdoor Essentials** – *Required before taking girls camping* – visit gsneo.org (Events tab)
 - Time: approx. 8 hrs. (all day) - \$17.00
 - Is your troop ready to plan their first cabin campout experience? Discover how to guide your troop through planning and executing an outdoor experience. Gain essential resources and knowledge needed to take the girls on a simple hike, a camping trip, and overnights. This all-day, required training is lots of fun and covers everything from fire building, tying knots, campfire cooking, and more!
- **Outdoor Essentials and Outdoor Overnight Experience** - *Highly Recommended* – visit gsneo.org (Events tab)
 - **The completion of an Outdoor Essentials training is REQUIRED for this course. This course alone does NOT certify you.**
 - Put your Outdoor Essentials training into practice with this highly recommended course. When the sun goes down, the overnight fun begins ... but remember, things look much different in the dark! Learn from experienced volunteers before your first overnight experience with your girls. The course covers building a campfire, Girl Scout songs, night hikes, nature activities and more.
- **Overnight Trip and Travel** – *Required for extended (3+ nights) and international trips*
 - Time: approx. 2.0 hrs. on [gsLearn](#)
 - The "ins and outs" of troop trip planning are outlined in this informative course. Safety Activity Checkpoints, Girl Scout Insurance, and all required paperwork will be explained. National and International guidelines will be discussed.

Adult Training Incentive for Newly Formed Troops

Newly formed troops will receive \$20 in adult training codes to be used for additional GSNEO adult development/trainings once they have successfully opened a [troop bank account](#), have submitted the bank account numbers to the GSNEO finance department, and have a minimum of five registered Girl Scout members.

Troop Banking & Finances

Your Girl Scout troop should plan and finance its own activities, and you will coach your girls as they earn and manage troop funds. Troop activities are powered by proceeds earned through council-sponsored product program activities (such as the Girl Scout Cookie Program), group money-earning activities (council approved, of course!), and any dues your troop may charge.

Newly Forming Troop: Steps to Setting Up Your Troop Bank Account

Go to: www.gsneo.org and search: Troop Bank Accounts

It is important that all new troops open a bank account as soon as possible. Follow the steps as outlined below once you are ready to open your troop bank account.

① With your troop/group, the first step is to go to/call the bank branch where you wish to open a free business checking account for your troop.

We recommend that troops open accounts at Huntington, KeyBank or Fifth Third Bank or at another bank in your community. Troops may not open accounts at PNC or Chase Banks)

Get the name and email address of the banker with whom you spoke.

② Complete the "Open New Bank Account" form

Bank account signers must be authorized by GSNEO to handle finances and be active in one of the following roles: Troop Leader, Troop Admin, Treasurer, Product Sales Manager, or Service Unit Team position.

Once all volunteer roles and background checks are finalized, GSNEO emails the banker a letter authorizing the troop to open a business checking account using the EIN (Employer Identification Number) of GSNEO and includes a W-9 and corporate resolution. You will receive a copy of the authorization letter sent to the bank. Schedule an appointment with the banker to open the GSNEO troop/group/service unit bank account.

③ With authorization letter in hand, return to your banker and fill out signature cards and get your free starter checks (if available) and documentation of your routing and account number.

④ Submit your new bank account numbers to GSNEO using the online "Submit New Bank Account Numbers" form and complete the Bank Account Signer Agreement form.

Established Troops with New Leadership: Remember that if you leave the troop or are taking over a troop bank account that is already established you must complete the "Request to Change Bank Account Signers" online form prior to changing the signatures at the bank. You will also be asked to provide a copy of the new bank signatures card and complete the Bank Account Signer Agreement form.

Additional Troop Finance Information

Newly Formed Troop Loan

Go to www.gsneo.org and search: *How Your Troop Earns Money*

- To get your troop up and running, GSNEO is offering your newly formed troop a \$50 to \$300 start-up loan. Loan requests will be processed once you submit the account numbers of the newly opened troop bank account. The loan will be distributed to your troop bank account electronically. By applying for the loan, the troop agrees to participate in the next Magazine & Snack Program or Girl Scout Cookie Program, to have the loan balance automatically repaid from the product sale proceeds, and to only apply once for this loan.

Money Earning Activities

Go to www.gsneo.org and search: *How Your Troop Earns Money*

- Money Earning Activities refers to activities organized by the troop (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by Girl Scouts (in partnership with volunteers) and that earn money for the group. GSNEO policies require that the troop must participate in both council-sponsored programs before applying for additional money earning activities. Approval of the money earning application must be received before holding the event. (See Volunteer Essentials for full policy)

Troop Annual Financial Reporting and Additional Resources

Go to www.gsneo.org and search: *Troop Banking and Finances*

- All troops are required to file annual financial reports via the Finance Tab of the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). Finance reports are due annually by the second Wednesday in June.
- GSNEO Financial Management Volunteer Policies
- Treasurer Tracking Template & Expense Report Template

Your Year in Girl Scouts

Check out important council dates, then add your own service unit meetings, and events!

*GSNEO offices closed.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>October</u></p> <p>10/1: Official Start to the Girl Scout Year</p> <p>10/1: Founder's Day - Juliette Gordon Low's Birthday</p> <p>Magazine & Snack Program Sale in Progress</p> <p>International Day of the Girl</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>November</u></p> <p>Magazine & Snack Program (MSP) ends</p> <p>Thank-a-Thon</p> <p>Woman's Entrepreneurship Day</p> <p>*Veteran's Day</p> <p>*Thanksgiving</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>December</u></p> <p>Troop Cookie Training</p> <p>Cookie Sale Program Materials</p> <p>Ship to Troop Cookie Manager</p> <p>*Winter Holidays</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>January</u></p> <p>Girl Scout Cookie Program begins</p> <p>Cookie Rallies</p> <p>*New Year Holiday</p> <p>*Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>February</u></p> <p>Initial Girl Scout Cookie Orders Due</p> <p>World Thinking Day</p> <p>National Girl Scout Cookie Weekend</p> <p>*Washington's Birthday</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>March</u></p> <p>Girl Scout Cookies arrive!</p> <p>Girl Scout Birthday (3/12)</p> <p>Girl Scout Week</p> <p>International Woman's Day</p> <p>Woman's History Month</p> <p>Summer Camp Registration Begins</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>April</u></p> <p>4/1: Spring Renewal Opens</p> <p>4/22: Girl Scout Leader's Day (4/22)</p> <p>Volunteer Appreciation Month</p> <p>GSNEO Annual Meeting</p> <p>Volunteer Recognition Award Celebration</p> <p>Camp Open Houses</p> <p>Earth Day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>May</u></p> <p>GSNEO Women of Distinction Event</p> <p>Camp Open Houses</p> <p>*Memorial Day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>June</u></p> <p>Troop Finance Reports Due (2nd Wednesday)</p> <p>Girl Scout Day at Cedar Point</p> <p>Girl Scout Gold Award Celebration</p> <p>Summer Camp Starts</p> <p>*Juneteenth National Independence Day</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>July</u></p> <p>Summer Camp in session</p> <p>Shops Closed for Inventory (last week in July)</p> <p>*Independence Day</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>August</u></p> <p>Adult Learning Experience (A.L.E.) Event</p> <p>National S'mores Day</p> <p>Magazine & Snack Program Training</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>September</u></p> <p>Last Day of the Girl Scout Membership Year (9/30)</p> <p>Magazine & Snack Program (MSP) begins!</p> <p>Girl Scout Day at Cleveland Metroparks Zoo</p> <p>*Labor Day</p> <p>9/30: Last Day of Girl Scout Membership Year</p>

GSNEO New Troop Leader and Troop Admin Checklist

This checklist will keep you on track during the first four to six weeks of your new leadership role. Feel free to reach out to local volunteers (Service Unit Troop Mentor, Service Unit Director) and/or your staff person (Community Support Coordinator or Community Support Specialist) if you need help or clarification on any of the action items below.

Weeks 1-3

- Review the [Troop Leader or Troop Admin Position Description](#).
- Register to attend an upcoming [New Leader Orientation Webinar](#): Visit gsneo.org/events to register.
- Visit [gsLearn](#) and complete the **New Troop Training** and **GSUSA Girl Scout Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Course** modules.
- Read and become familiar with our [Volunteer Policies, Volunteer Essentials, and Safety Activity Check-points](#)
- Log into MyGS to view your troop roster and begin using the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) to plan your Girl Scout year.
 - **Newly forming troops that have not started meeting yet:**
 - New leadership should contact the families on the troop roster to introduce yourself and provide a timeframe of when meetings will start. Determine troop meeting time, day, frequency, and location– it’s your choice! Reach out to your local SU Team/GSNEO staff person for popular meeting location ideas in your area if needed.
 - Once you have secured your meeting location - Reach out to families and invite them to [a parent/caregiver meeting](#). Check out our *step-by-step guide* and “*Parents & Caregivers Meeting Outline*” on the VTK. Make sure to bring copies of the [Annual Permission](#) and [Personal Health and Medical](#) forms.

Week 2-4

- **Open your troop bank account (new troops) or update bank account signatures (established troops)**
 - **New Troops:** Review the steps on [how to open a troop bank account](#), and submit a [request to open your troop bank account](#). Once your request is approved by the GSNEO Finance Department via email, the signers will go to the bank and open the new account.
 - **Established Troops with New Leadership:** If your troop needs to update which volunteers are signers on the troop bank account, complete the [Request to Change Bank Account Signers Form](#) prior to going to the bank. The GSNEO Finance Department will approve the change via email and then the new signers can go to the bank.
- **Bank Account Signers:** Visit [gsLearn](#) and complete the **Money Matters** modules.
- **Optional for Newly Forming Troops:** [Submit a Loan Request for a Newly Formed Troop](#) after you have opened your troop bank account and submitted the account numbers to the GSNEO Finance Department.
- **Hold/attend your first troop meeting:** Make sure to use the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) when planning your meeting. Invite the Service Unit Troop Mentor or other local volunteer for additional support.

Week 4+

- Attend your local **Service Unit Volunteer Meeting and check your email for an invitation to the Welcome to the Service Unit Orientation (if your area has local Service Unit Team volunteer support)**.
 - Ensure that one or more adult members of your troop is trained in [First Aid/CPR](#).
 - Continue to welcome new members as they join and order supplies to [invite new friends to join your troop!](#)
 - Complete the [Troop Changes Form](#) to update your troops meeting information, desired number of girls, and more!

Ways to Stay Connected



Follow us on social media:



Resource Partners is your community resource for events and activities. Posts are by program age level and county and are created by community vendors that have partnered with GSNEO. www.pixieplusgsneo.org



Rallyhood is a group collaboration platform that streamlines communications among GSNEO volunteers, parents, and staff. To learn more about Rallyhood and create a rally for your troop visit gsneo.org/rallyhood

Thank you for volunteering with us and congratulations on your new leadership role!