



## 2022-2023 Welcome to the Service Unit Orientation

We are thrilled that you have decided to partner with the best leadership development organization for girls by serving as a Troop Leader, Admin, or Program Guide! The safe, nurturing, girl-only environment that you will create with your troop and parent/caregiver volunteers will have a lasting impact on the girls you serve.

The information contained in this booklet will help you as 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, approximately 17,000 girls are served every year by more than 7,000 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 a Community Membership Executive (CME), an employee of Girl Scouts of North East Ohio (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 & 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, Admin or Program Guide but other volunteers from your troop are always welcome to attend. You will want to 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: 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of month, 7 p.m.)

Meeting Location\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Service Unit Facebook Group \_\_\_\_\_

*\*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 Service Unit team is supported by a Community Membership Executive (CME) 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. There are five primary SUT roles as outlined below but your team may have other SU team volunteers in roles such as Treasurer, Juliette Coordinator, Community Liaison, GSLE Coach, Startup Troop Coach and Delegate.

*\*\*If any of the roles below are vacant, your CME fills the vacancy until a new volunteer is identified*

		Name	Contact Information
Community Membership Executive (CME)	GSNEO employee who provides oversight and support to your SU		
Service Unit Director (SUD)	Provides a friendly, welcoming environment to support leaders in your community through SU meetings and mentoring		
Troop Mentor	Provides ongoing coaching and support to new leaders throughout their first year		
PR Coordinator	Promotes Girl Scouts in the community and recruits new members		
Registrar	Maintains an updated roster and assists with member registrations and renewals		
Product Sales Distribution Manager	Assists with the council-sponsored product sales (Magazine & Snack Program; Girl Scout Cookie Program)		

## Customer Care

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

### **During Business Hours:**

- Give our **Live Chat** a try!
- Call 1-800-852-4474.
- Fill out the "[Contact Us](#)" form at [gsneo.org](https://gsneo.org) and we'll get back with 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](https://gsneo.org) and we'll get back with you when we're in the office.

## Required Resources

Visit: [gsneo.org/resources](https://gsneo.org/resources)

- The **[Volunteer Toolkit \(VTK\)](#)** is a comprehensive digital tool accessible via the web on your home computer, smartphone, and 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!
- **[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 girls.
- **[Volunteer Essentials](#)** is a reference guide to use as needed. It includes information about starting a troop, important safety reminders, and guidance on managing troop finances.
- **[Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)** This goes hand-in-hand with Volunteer Essentials. The checkpoints ensure the safety of our girls during Girl Scout activities and outings.
- **[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, Admin or Program Guide.
- **[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](https://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 should complete this form annually*
- **[Personal Health and Medical Form](#)** is an annual form for all registered girls and adults. 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. *\*\*Parents/caregivers should complete this form annually*
- **[Emergency Action Plan Card](#)** gives 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](https://gsneo.org) (Events tab)

- Time: approx. 1.5 hrs. online– FREE
- This online, staff led webinar is for all volunteers that are new to a Troop Leader, Admin, or Program Guide 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 keep your new troop active, supported, and informed.

### Blended First Aid/CPR/AED – visit [gsneo.org](https://gsneo.org) (Events tab)

- Time: approx. 3 hrs. online/2 hrs. in-person – \$25.00

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-aiders 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 part and in-person part to complete your certification and satisfies the requirements for becoming a certified first-aiders.

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

gsLearn gives volunteers access to online learning opportunities for all their training needs. Learning modules are available for new Leaders, Admins, and Program Guides 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, Admins, and Program Guides

- Time: approx. 3.5 hrs. on gsLearn

#### **GSNEO Youth Protection Training** - Required for all volunteers that work with girls

- Time: approx. 20 minutes on gsLearn

#### **Money Matters Training Modules** – Required for volunteers who are bank account signers (Troop Leaders, Admins, Program Guides, Troop Treasurers, Troop Product Sales Managers)

- Time: approx. 3 hrs. on gsLearn

### **Other highly recommended trainings on gsLearn for volunteers new to a troop leadership role:**

**GSUSA Volunteer Toolkit – Troop Leader View:** *The Volunteer Toolkit is your official source for delivering easy, fun troop meetings year-round! With this step-by-step guide, you can start your troop year strong and spend more time adventuring in Girl Scouts!*

**GSUSA Grade Level Essentials:** *These grade level essential courses are designed for troop leadership to take as they move through Girl Scout program levels with their troop.*

**GSUSA Delivering Inclusive Program:** *In this course, you will practice using inclusive and equitable language to support the identities of all Girl Scouts and foster a cohesive troop environment.*

## Additional Volunteer Training

Girl Scouts of North East Ohio provides volunteer training to ensure the safety and well-being of girls, 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](https://gsneo.org) (*Events tab*)
  - Girl Scout Camp for Grown-ups. A.L.E. classes are offered throughout the year in mini sessions throughout the GSNEO footprint and during an extended weekend every August at Camp Ledgewood.

### Trainings for camping and extended trips:

- **Outdoor Essentials** – *Required before taking girls camping – visit [gsneo.org](https://gsneo.org) (Events tab)*
  - *Time: approx. 7 hrs. (all day)*
  - 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, 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](https://gsneo.org) (Events tab)*
  - *Time: approx. overnight - \$25.00 (meals are included)*
  - Take Outdoor Essentials during the day and then stay for the night to put your training into practice. 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.
- **Trip Planning** – *Required for extended and international trips – coming soon to gsLearn!*
  - *Time: approx. 2.0 hrs. online– FREE*
  - 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. This workshop is required for any troop planning an extended trip (3 or more nights) or international trips. 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 after they have completed the following criteria:

- Successfully opened a [troop bank account](#) and have submitted the bank account numbers to the GSNEO finance department
- Have a minimum of five registered girl members
- Have completed the New Leader, Admin, Program Guide Checklist (below)

## **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](http://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 the following banks which have proven they work well with Girl Scout troops. (*Troops may not open accounts at PNC or Chase Banks*)

- Huntington
- KeyBank
- Fifth Third Bank

*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, Troop Program Guide, 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. You will receive a copy of the authorization letter sent to the bank.

③ With authorization letter in hand, return to your banker and fill out signature cards and get your free starter checks 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.

**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.



## Additional Troop Finance Information

### Newly Formed Troop Loan

Go to [www.gsneo.org](http://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 request 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 MSP or Cookie Sale, 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](http://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 girls (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](http://www.gsneo.org) and search: *Troop/Group Financial Reporting*

- 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 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday in June.
- GSNEO Financial Management Volunteer Policies
- CFO (Chief Financial Officer) Patch Activities for each age level
- Additional tools to manage your troop finances:
  - Treasurer Tracking Template
  - Expense Report Template

## Ways to Stay Connected



Follow us on social media:



**Pixie Plus** 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](http://www.pixieplusgsneo.org)



## Calendar of Events

Here are some important council dates and Girl Scout holidays:

\*GSNEO offices are closed.

<p><b><u>October</u></b>  <i>Official Start to the Girl Scout Year (10/1)</i>  <i>Founder's Day - Juliette Gordon Low's Birthday (10/31)</i>  <i>Magazine &amp; Snack Program Sale in Progress</i>  <i>International Day of the Girl</i></p>	<p><b><u>November</u></b>  <i>Magazine and Snack Program (MSP) ends</i>  <i>Thank-a-Thon</i>  <i>Woman's Entrepreneurship Day</i>  <i>*Veteran's Day</i>  <i>*Thanksgiving</i></p>	<p><b><u>December</u></b>  <i>Troop Cookie Training</i>  <i>Cookie Sale Program Materials Ship to Troop Cookie Manager</i>  <i>*Winter Holidays</i></p>
<p><b><u>January</u></b>  <i>Girl Scout Cookie Program begins</i>  <i>Cookie Rallies</i>  <i>*New Year Holiday</i>  <i>*Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service</i></p>	<p><b><u>February</u></b>  <i>Initial Girl Scout Cookie Orders Due</i>  <i>World Thinking Day</i>  <i>National Girl Scout Cookie Weekend</i>  <i>*Presidents Day</i></p>	<p><b><u>March</u></b>  <i>Girl Scout Cookies are here!</i>  <i>Girl Scout Birthday (3/12)</i>  <i>Girl Scout Week</i>  <i>International Woman's Day</i>  <i>Woman's History Month</i>  <i>Summer Camp Registration Begins</i></p>
<p><b><u>April</u></b>  <i>Spring Renewal Opens (4/1)</i>  <i>Volunteer Appreciation Month</i>  <i>Girl Scout Leader's Day (4/22)</i>  <i>GSNEO Annual Meeting</i>  <i>Volunteer Recognition Award Celebration</i>  <i>Camp Open Houses</i>  <i>Earth Day</i></p>	<p><b><u>May</u></b>  <i>GSNEO Women of Distinction Event</i>  <i>Camp Open Houses</i>  <i>*Memorial Day</i></p>	<p><b><u>June</u></b>  <i>Troop Finance Reports Due (2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday)</i>  <i>Girl Scout Day at Cedar Point</i>  <i>Girl Scout Gold Award Celebration</i>  <i>Summer Camp Starts</i>  <i>*Juneteenth</i></p>
<p><b><u>July</u></b>  <i>VTK System Update</i>  <i>Shops Closed for Inventory (last week in July)</i>  <i>*Independence Day</i></p>	<p><b><u>August</u></b>  <i>A.L.E. (Adult Learning Experience) Event</i>  <i>National S'mores Day</i></p>	<p><b><u>September</u></b>  <i>Last Day of the Girl Scout Membership Year (9/30)</i>  <i>Magazine and Snack Program (MSP) begins</i>  <i>Girl Scout Day at Cleveland Zoo</i>  <i>*Labor Day</i></p>

# New Troop Leader, Troop Admin, Troop Program Guide Checklist

This checklist will keep you on track during your first four-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 Membership Executive - CME) if you need help or clarification on any of the action items below.

## Weeks 1-3

- Review the [Troop Leader, Admin, or Program Guide Position Description](#).
- Register to attend an upcoming [New Leader Orientation Webinar](#): Visit [gsneo.org/events](https://gsneo.org/events) to register.
- Visit [gsLearn](#) and complete the **New Troop Training** and **GSNEO Youth Protection Training** modules.
- Read and become familiar with our [Volunteer Policies, Volunteer Essentials, and Safety Activity Checkpoints](#)
- 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!

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