

Volunteer Policies

An operational volunteer performs specific functions over a period of time, on a regular schedule, such as but not limited to a troop Leader, an Area Manager, a day camp volunteer, a trainer, etc. She/he works with the council's employees to reach the council's goals and objectives and to forward the Girl Scout Movement.

These policies apply to all adults serving in appointed operational volunteer positions in Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. These policies are ongoing and subject to review and revision by the council Board of Directors.

Affirmative Action for Volunteers

The Council does not discriminate (or "condone discrimination", "condone harassment", etc.) on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, sexual expression or any other classification protected by federal, state or local law." In addition, to ensure full equality of opportunity in all operations and activities of the organization, affirmative action policies and procedures shall be utilized in the recruitment, selection, training, placement, and recognition of volunteers. Special emphasis shall be placed upon securing representation of underrepresented population groups.

Membership Registration

All girls and adults participating in the Girl Scout movement shall be registered as members with Girl Scouts of the United States of America and individually pay the annual membership dues, except those adults who are lifetime members or who are working in a temporary advisory or consultative capacity.

—*Blue Book of Basic Documents*

Recruitment

The recruitment process consists of a number of methods to attract qualified volunteers who will be matched to appropriate open or newly created positions. Written position descriptions that define specific responsibilities and clarify expectations will be completed prior to recruitment and used in the search.

Each prospective volunteer will be required to:

- complete an application;
- provide references;
- undergo a criminal background check; and
- participate in a formal interview; prior to selection.

Selection

Each volunteer is selected on the basis of ability to perform the volunteer position, volunteer and council need, ability and willingness to attend training, and qualifications for membership in the Girl Scout movement. The Council does not discriminate (or "condone discrimination", "condone harassment", etc.) on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, sexual expression or any other classification protected by federal, state or local law." Volunteers will receive some type of interview prior to selection.

Membership

All volunteers participating in the Girl Scout movement shall meet GSUSA membership standards, be registered through the council as members of the Girl Scout Movement, and shall agree to abide by the policies and principles of GSUSA and the Girl Scout council.

An appointed operational volunteer may not serve concurrently in any employed staff position or, as a member of the Board of Directors for Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Placement

Every attempt will be made to place volunteers in positions that meet both their needs and the needs of the council. In instances where this is not possible, the needs of the council will take precedence over the needs of the individual. Individuals not placed in a position for which they applied may be recommended for other positions, and they may request reassignment.

Appointment

Operational volunteers shall be appointed for a term not to exceed one membership year. (See "Reappointment" for additional information.)

All operational volunteers shall abide by the ethics expressed in the Girl Scout Promise and Law and sign an agreement for the position(s) that they are fulfilling each membership year of appointment. Either party may terminate the agreement at any time.

Training

All volunteers will receive basic training for their position and will also be required to complete additional training that is designated as mandatory for the position within a specified time frame. Training will ensure that each volunteer has the knowledge and skills needed to be successful in her or his work.

Failure to complete required training will result in removal from the position or not being reappointed.

Welcome to Girl Scouting

Each volunteer is provided with an overview of the Girl Scout purpose and organization, local council information, and the support systems available to help them in their work.

Benefits

Benefits to volunteers include support in their position, training, and other learning opportunities. Volunteers are encouraged to enhance and develop their skills while serving with the council. As appropriate, the council will assist volunteers in broadening their skills through assignment to new volunteer positions involving additional and/or greater responsibilities. Other benefits for volunteers include council publications; tools for recording volunteer experience; references upon request; liability insurance; and supplementary accident insurance, as part of national and/or council membership.

Supervision and Performance Appraisal

Supervision should include periodic verbal and written performance evaluation based upon position expectations outlined in the Volunteer Agreement and Position Description.

Each operational volunteer will have an annual review and appraisal of their performance. The performance appraisal should include both a review of the volunteer's performance of position responsibilities and a discussion of any suggestions that the volunteer may have concerning the position or project with which the volunteer is connected. The performance appraisal session should also be utilized as an opportunity to ascertain the mutual interest of the council and volunteer in the volunteer's continued service in her or his position. It shall be the responsibility of the supervisor to schedule and conduct the performance appraisal.

The position description and standards of performance for a volunteer position should form the basis of the performance appraisal. These standards should list the responsibilities of the position, measurable indicators of whether responsibilities were accomplished, and appropriate timelines for accomplishment of responsibilities. A copy of the standards should be provided to the volunteer along with a copy of the position description at the beginning of her or his assignment.

Following a satisfactory annual performance evaluation the operational volunteer will be considered for reappointment to the same position and/or rotation to another position.

Reappointment

Prior to the completion of her/his one membership year term, each volunteer shall receive notice of reappointment to, non-reappointment, or rotation (reassignment) from their current position. Reappointment is based on past performance, adherence to council and GSUSA policies and standards, support of the Girl Scout purpose, values, and council goals, as well as positive relationships with the community, parents, other volunteers, and employed staff. There will be mutual acceptance of position accountabilities, expectations, and time commitments.

Uniforms

A uniform is not required for participation in Girl Scouting. Purchase of a uniform is at the volunteer's expense and is encouraged. Volunteers are encouraged to wear the Girl Scout Membership Pin(s) when they are not in uniform.

Formal Problem Resolution

A formal problem resolution process may be initiated by an appointed operational volunteer without fear of jeopardizing her or his appointment status

Procedure

Any conflict should be resolved at the lowest level of supervision as possible. A volunteer should contact his/her immediate supervisor for help in resolving conflicts between himself/herself and girls, other volunteers or parents. If an irresolvable conflict exists between the volunteer and their immediate supervisor, the volunteer should contact the immediate supervisor's supervisor.

The following steps will be incorporated during Formal Problem Resolution:

1. Identify the point(s) of conflict between the parties. This may include fact-finding sessions with both parties involved in the dispute, witnesses to the alleged event, and reference to policies, procedures, and guidelines of the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan and the Girl Scouts of the USA.
2. Investigate the facts of the conflict until the real problem leading to the conflict has been identified. Keep all information gathered confidential. The actual source of the conflict may be disguised by other factors. Investigate until the "real" source of the conflict is identified.
3. Identify as many solutions as possible for resolving the conflict. These solutions should come from the conflicting parties as well as the mediator.
4. Select a solution that all parties in the conflict can agree upon. Selection of a solution should involve all parties in the conflict and the mediator.
5. Implement the solution and monitor the results. Once the solution has been selected and implemented, the immediate supervisor should monitor the results to ensure satisfactory resolution of the conflict.

The CEO of the council is last in the chain of command and has the final word on the resolution of any problem situation. Consult the Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staffing structure chart to determine the number of levels of appeal possible for any situation.

Recognition

Recognition for volunteer service shall range from informal expressions of gratitude to formal acknowledgment at the council level and will be consistent with Girl Scouts of the USA's plan for Adult Recognitions in Girl Scouting.

Release

Either the council or the volunteer may initiate a release from a position. A volunteer is requested to give as much notice as possible when resigning. A minimum of two weeks is requested.

Situations may arise that make it necessary to release an individual from a position. The council may release an individual because of, among other things, restructuring of positions, elimination of the volunteer position in which the individual serves, the volunteer's inability or failure to complete the requirements of the position, or the refusal to comply with council or Girl Scouts of the USA policies. Release from the position does not cancel membership with Girl Scouts of the USA unless it is determined that she or he is unable to meet the membership requirement.

A volunteer who leaves in good standing may be considered for reappointment at a future date.

An up-to-date record of released volunteers will be kept by the council.

Anti-Harassment

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan is committed to an environment in which relationships are characterized by dignity, respect, courtesy, equitable treatment, and free from all forms of unlawful or unwelcome harassment.

The Council does not discriminate {or "condone discrimination", "condone harassment", etc.} on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, height, weight, marital status, sexual orientation, sexual expression or any other classification protected by federal, state or local law."

Any volunteer who feels that she or he has been subjected to harassment of any type, whether by another volunteer, council staff member, or any agent of the organization, should promptly report the incident to a supervisor or to the chief executive officer/executive director or his/her designee.

Sexual Harassment/Misconduct

Sexual harassment is unlawful. It continues to be the policy of the council that any form of sexual harassment is unacceptable conduct that will not be tolerated.

Sexual harassment occurs when a person is subjected to severe or pervasive conduct and/or comments because of that person's sex. Such conduct or comments need not be sexual in nature. It may include one or more of the following: sexual advances or propositions; requests for sexual favors; verbal abuse of a sexual nature, including sexually explicit or degrading references to another person or similar language; unnecessary touching; the display of sexually suggestive objects or pictures; sexually explicit or offensive jokes or physical assault.

No volunteer will engage in unwelcome sexual conduct. No volunteer will threaten or insinuate, either explicitly or implicitly, that another volunteer's refusal to submit to sexual advances will adversely affect that person's volunteer status, evaluation, advancement, assigned duties, or any other condition of volunteer development. No volunteer will, by unwelcome sexual conduct, create a hostile environment for any volunteer.

Any volunteer who feels that he or she is a victim of sexual harassment—including, but not limited to, any of the conduct listed above—by any supervisor, management official, other volunteer, customer, client or any other person in connection with the council is expected to bring the matter to the immediate attention of his or her supervisor. The supervisor should then immediately report the incident(s) to the council. A volunteer who is uncomfortable for any reason in bringing such a matter to the attention of his or her supervisor, or is not satisfied after bringing the matter to the attention of his or her supervisor, should report the matter to the council. Also, any questions about this policy or potential sexual harassment should be brought to the attention of these persons.

The council will promptly investigate all allegations of harassment in as confidential a manner as possible.

The council reserves the right to dismiss or suspend any volunteer who, in conducting Girl Scout program, advocates, solicits, or promotes sexuality/homosexuality so as to create substantial risk that such conduct will be detrimental to the proper role model for girl members or to the Girl Scout environment.

The council will consider violation of any of the above policy stipulations as grounds for disciplinary action up to and including dismissal or separation from the council. Retaliation against anyone who has reported an allegation of harassment or sexual harassment is expressly prohibited and, if it occurs, will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Anti-Child Abuse

The council supports and maintains environments that are free of child abuse and neglect. The Michigan Child Abuse and Neglect Act ("CANPA") defines "child abuse" as "harm or threatened harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for the child's health or welfare, which harm occurs or is threatened through nonaccidental physical or mental injury; [or] sexual abuse." It defines "neglect" as "harm to a child's health or welfare by a person responsible for the child's health or welfare which occurs through negligent treatment, including the failure to provide adequate food, clothing, shelter, or medical care."

Further, the Michigan Child Protection Act ("CPA") includes sexual abuse and sexual exploitation in its definition of child abuse. "Sexual abuse" is defined by the CPA as "engaging in sexual contact or sexual penetration as those terms are defined in section 520a of the Michigan penal code, with a child." "Sexual exploitation" is defined as "allowing, permitting or encouraging a child to engage in prostitution, or allowing, permitting, encouraging, or engaging in the photographing, filming, or depicting of a child engaged in a listed sexual act as defined in section 145c of the Michigan penal code."

Child abuse and neglect are unlawful acts. It is against the council's policy for any volunteer, male or female, to physically, sexually, or mentally abuse or neglect any girl member.

All states require certain professionals and institutions to report suspected child abuse. Failure to report suspected child abuse can result in criminal and civil liability. All states require the report to be made to some type of law enforcement authority or child protection agency. Reporting to a parent or relative will not satisfy the reporter's legal duty under the statutes.

In accordance with this policy, the council will neither condone nor tolerate:

Infliction of physically abusive behavior or bodily injury upon girl members;

Physical neglect of girl members, including failure to provide adequate safety measures, care and supervision in relation to Girl Scout activities;

Emotional maltreatment of girl members, including verbal abuse and/or verbal attacks; or

Excessive restraint.

Any volunteer who suspects that any of the above named situations exist or who suspects that a member has been subjected to abusive conduct or neglect, either within or outside the council, should make a report to his or her immediate supervisor, the CEO or the CEO's designee. A telephone report will be made to the Department of Health and Human Services, and a follow-up written report will be filed if requested by that agency.

Following a timely and thorough investigation of any allegations of child abuse, the offending volunteer may be subject to disciplinary action that can include dismissal. Local laws that are more stringent than Girl Scout policies always supersede these policies.

Volunteer Philosophy

The Girl Scout Movement is dependent upon volunteers. Because Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan recognizes the value of its volunteers, it continuously seeks to maintain a personnel system that supports, enhances, and rewards the role of the volunteer.

The work done by Girl Scout volunteers is immeasurably important to the organization. In addition, it may relate to, or move the volunteer toward, a career goal. In any event, beyond fulfilling an organizational need, a volunteer's contribution should provide satisfaction and a feeling of accomplishment.

Substance Abuse

The council is committed to establishing and maintaining safe, healthful, and efficient working conditions. This includes establishing and maintaining an environment free of substance use and abuse. Participation in any activity with Girl Scouts at a location whose primary business is the sale or distribution of alcohol is not permitted.

Volunteers who engage in any of the following activities at any time in any facility occupied or vehicle in use for Girl Scouts including personally owned vehicles that are parked in any Girl Scout area will be subject to discipline up to and including discharge:

Use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation, or sale of illegal drugs or alcohol, on council premises or during the performance of a volunteer's duties. Also prohibited is the illegal use, possession, manufacture, distribution, dispensation, or sale of legal prescription drugs or the use of legal prescription drugs that impairs judgment or otherwise endangers other volunteers or program participants;

Being under the influence of an illegal drug or alcohol on council premises or during the performance of Girl Scout program. "Being under the influence" of alcohol is defined as having a blood alcohol content of .04; "being under the influence" of an illegal drug is testing positive at a specified level;

Being under the influence of legal prescription drugs that impair judgment or otherwise endanger other volunteers or program participants;

Refusing consent to testing or refusing to submit urine, blood, breath, or other samples when requested by the council;

Refusing to submit to a search of one's personal property or the property of the council in use by the volunteer upon reasonable suspicion of possession of alcohol, illegal drugs or prescription drugs used illegally or that impair judgment or otherwise endanger other volunteers or program participants;

Failing to adhere to the requirements of any drug or alcohol treatment or counseling program in which the volunteer is enrolled;

Conviction under any criminal drug law;

Failure to report any conviction of a criminal drug law; or

Conviction of any operating under the influence of alcohol law.

All volunteers are encouraged to report suspected violations of this policy to the council. The council will handle the matter in a timely and discreet manner, although it is understood that an investigation will normally require the involvement of third parties. Further, the council will not permit any retaliatory conduct against any volunteer who reports a violation of this substance abuse policy.

Child Discipline

In the Girl Scout environment, some behavior problems are bound to occur in any troop. Even so, discipline in Girl Scouting must always be constructive and/or educational in nature and appropriate to the age of the child and circumstances. Children will not be subjected to physical harm, fear or humiliation.

All operational volunteers have an obligation to see that such an environment is maintained at all times. In accordance with this policy Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will neither condone nor tolerate that any child engaged in a Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan program or activity be:

Deprived of food or sleep,

Left alone without adult supervision, observation, and interaction,

Subjected to ridicule, threat, corporal punishment,

Subjected to excessive physical exercise or excessive restraint.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan will consider any of the above-mentioned prohibitions as the basis for disciplinary action that can include release from an operational volunteer position.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest exists when the interests or concerns of any operational volunteer member or any member of their family or any party, group, or organization in which the operational volunteer is actively involved may be seen as competing with the interests or concerns of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Operational volunteer members or any member of their family, acting individually, or on behalf of any group, organization or business to which they have allegiance or obligation should not utilize their position at Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan for personal, professional, political, or monetary gain.

Operational volunteers should not use for personal advantage or for the advantage of any private business or other business organizations confidential information or material acquired in the discharge of their duties (such as rosters, mailing lists, telephone directories, and the like).

Neither operational volunteers nor any member of their family should accept any gift, entertainment, services, loans, or promises of future benefits from any person who personally or whose employer might benefit or appear to benefit because of the operational volunteer's connection to Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Weapons in the Girl Scout Environment

Handguns, shotguns, rifles, pellet guns, bows and arrows, and knives with blades over three (3) inches long are not permitted at any Girl Scout activity or on any property owned or leased by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan. Exceptions to this policy are made for knives used only for kitchen duties, weapons approved by the Board of Directors for presentation of a certified skill program, weapons stored in the private residence on Council Properties, and those weapons in the possession of law enforcement personnel who are required to carry such weapons while on or off duty.

Under the policy, prohibited weapons include any form of weapon or explosive that is restricted by local, state or federal law. This includes all firearms, even if licensed, illegal knives, or other weapons covered by the law.

Violation of the council's policy regarding weapons in the Girl Scout environment may result in immediate disciplinary action up to and including release from appointment without notice.

Hostility in the Girl Scout Environment

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan strictly prohibits hostility in any form against not only another operational volunteer but also girl members, staff members, visitors, and anyone else having some involvement with the council. Hostility under this policy is considered to include physical violence as well as harassment, intimidation, stalking, coercion, display of weapons, threats, and talking or joking about hostility whether in person or through some other means of communications such as writing, telephone, voice mail, or electronic mail. This policy applies to all operational volunteers at all facilities occupied by the council or off premises if involved in activities for the council.

If it is determined that an operational volunteer has violated this policy, immediate and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken, up to and including release and the involvement of appropriate law enforcement authorities, as needed. Furthermore, retaliation against anyone who has reported a possible or actual violation of this policy is strictly prohibited and, if it occurs, will be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including release.

Smoke Free Environment

In the interest of the health, safety, and welfare of girls, no smoking is allowed in the presence of girls. In compliance with Michigan State Law, there will be no smoking by anyone under the age of 18 years.

No smoking is permitted during Troop/Group meetings or activity.

No smoking will be permitted during adult meetings. The person in charge of the meeting will schedule breaks to accommodate personal needs. Smoking regulations at each site will be followed.

No smoking is permitted in a vehicle while transporting girls.

No smoking is allowed on council-owned properties including the regional centers, lodges or camps, and grounds except in outdoor areas designated by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

No smoking is permitted in tents.

Designated smoking areas must be out-of-doors where girls are not present. The presence of non-smoking adults should be considered.

When planning field and extended trips, a Leader will, in advance, take into consideration site regulations, safety, and health concerns, and will determine designated smoking areas and breaks.

All evidence of smoking must be removed from the activity site.

Solicitation of Contributions

Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. Adults may engage in combined fund-raising efforts authorized by the Girl Scout council and in which the local council is a beneficiary. Girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money.

Control of Funds

All money raised, or earned, and other assets received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting must be authorized by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan or Girl Scouts of the United States of America and used for the purposes of Girl Scouting.

Such monies and other assets become the property of and are administered by Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan or Girl Scouts of the USA. Such assets are not the property of individuals, geographic units, or communities within a Girl Scout council.

Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan staff are prohibited as signors on unit or troop accounts. All account signors shall be operational volunteers.

Bad Debt

Any Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan operational volunteer who has outstanding debts to the council and/or its subunits for products and service rendered, has non-collectible checks, or has misused troop funds, may be permanently released of all volunteer responsibilities.

Any volunteer, either appointed or elected, who is referred to an external collection agency for financial restitution for any debt related to a Girl Scout activity shall be permanently released from any and all of their Girl Scout position(s).

Financial Aid/Scholarship

To the extent that financial resources allow, financial barriers to membership in Girl Scouts of the USA and/or participation in the Girl Scout Program will be eliminated for members within Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan.

Criminal Background Screening

Criminal background investigations will be conducted prior to selecting staff members/volunteers. Such investigations will be conducted regardless of the position sought and without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, height, weight, marital status, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law. Each staff member/volunteer, as a condition of continued service, consents to future criminal background investigations as deemed appropriate by the CEO and upon request will be required to complete criminal background consent forms authorizing Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan to conduct such investigations.

No prospective staff member/volunteer will be permitted to work with a minor until the criminal background investigation is complete.

For the purposes of this policy the term "volunteer" will be defined as any person applying for or currently serving in the following capacities:

Leaders and Co-Leaders

Day Camp Adult Volunteers

Mackinac Island Governor's Honor Guard Volunteer Director and other MIGHG Adult Volunteers

Area (Service Unit) Managers and Area (Service Unit) Management Team Members
Board Members
Nominating Committee Members
National Council Delegates/Alternates (girls excepted)

Automatic disqualification or termination of any persons covered under this policy will occur whenever it is found that he/she has committed a crime against a child or dependent adult, has been convicted of driving while intoxicated or under the influence in the past ten years, or has committed any violent crime in the past ten years.

The CEO shall have the absolute and exclusive discretion to make decisions for any other questionable behavior or criminal offenses, regardless of whether the crime is classified as a felony or as a misdemeanor. These incidents will be evaluated on the basis of consultation with appropriate professionals and the following factors:

The relationship between the incident and the type of employment or service that the applicant will provide.

The applicant's employment or volunteer history before and after the incident.

The applicant's efforts and success at rehabilitation.

The likelihood that the incident would prevent the applicant from performing his or her responsibilities in a manner consistent with the safety and welfare of the members served by the agency.

The circumstances and/or factors indicating the incident is likely to be repeated.

The nature, severity, number, and consequences of the incidents disclosed.

The circumstances surrounding each incident, including contributing societal or environmental conditions.

The age of the individual at the time of the incident.

The amount of time elapsed since the incident occurred.

Or any other factors deemed relevant.

Volunteers are required to report to the Membership Department any arrests that occur while serving as an appointed operational volunteer for Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan

Access to Records

Current operational volunteers have access to their volunteer record file. They also have the right of prior consent regarding information released to external sources, except for the release of information required by law.

Sponsorship

All sponsors of Girl Scout troops/groups shall be recognized institutions, businesses, organizations, or individuals whose ideals and objectives are known to be in accord with those of the Girl Scout Movement.

Safety-Wise

Safety-Wise is a GSUSA publication that covers all aspects of and sets standards for the safe operation of all Girl Scout activities. *Safety-Wise* is Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan's minimum policy and all activity checkpoints must be observed by all GSHOM Girl Scout troops/groups and programs at all times.

Funding Your Girl Scout Troop

Troop income comes from a variety of sources: dues, council product sales programs and approved money-earning projects. Troop funds belong to the troop as a whole and not to individual members of the troop, therefore, they should not be prorated by girl. However, Cadette, Senior and Ambassador Girl Scouts may designate money earned by individuals for special activities such as a trip or service project. At the end of the program year, or upon completion of the activity, this record-keeping system must be dissolved into the troop treasury from which it was generated.

Troop Dues

Troop dues are fees collected from each family to support troop program and activities. Troop dues should be based on the troop's planned activities. It is important to get parental input when assessing the contributions of troop members. Dues should be kept as low as possible so that all families are able to participate. Dues are collected on a regular basis, usually weekly or monthly. Girls should help set the dues as they participate in planning the troop budget.

Troop Money-Earning Projects

All troop money-earning projects should meet the criteria below:

All of the girls in your troop benefit from the profit of this money-earning project.

A majority of the girls in the troop will participate in this money-earning project.

The money-earning project conforms to local ordinances.

The project protects the name and good will of Girl Scouts.

Approved by the membership staff.

Product Sales Programs

Product sales programs are council-wide sales of authorized products such as nuts, magazines or cookies in which all girls can participate. Council-sponsored product sales program activities are not considered fund-raising. The selling of council-sponsored products is a valuable program experience for girls and enables them to raise money for troop activities, service projects and programs.

GSHOM currently holds two council-wide sales, QSP (a magazine subscription program)/Nuts and the Girl Scout cookie sale program. Dedicated volunteers coordinate participation in the council-wide sales at the Area (Service Unit) and troop level. Area Managers and Area Product Program Managers provide training to volunteers at the troop level. The Troop Cookie Managers and the Troop Nut/QSP Managers, in turn, provide information about the sale. Leaders coordinate the sale and assist girls and their families.

Product sales programs teach girls goal setting and provides an opportunity for girls to see how individual and group efforts help in reaching goals. In addition, council-wide sales fund the maintenance and improvement of GSHOM's camps, programs for 28,000 girls and adult trainings for volunteers. For more information about programs see the council website.

Family Partnership

Of course, Girl Scouting is much more than troop activities! Because your troop is part of Girl Scouts Heart of Michigan, your girls will also enjoy council programs and our 10 beautiful camps. The Family Partnership campaign is an opportunity for the families in your troop to financially support Girl Scouting. Donations to the Family Partnership campaign make it all happen. When you give the families of your Girl Scouts the chance to participate in Family Partnership, you are helping them ensure that programs, camps and service centers will be available for your girls. Family Partnership donations also provide financial assistance so Girl Scouting is available to every girl who wants to join.

Managing Troop Funds

How to Open a Bank Account

All troops are required to have a bank or credit union checking account. Troop funds must not be commingled with personal accounts.

All accounts will be designated "GSHOM Troop #_____." Bank accounts remain the property of GSHOM. Leaders' names should NOT be printed on the check.

The account requires the names/signatures of two registered and unrelated adults on the signature card. Any adult who handles money for a troop must submit a volunteer application and background check for approval, and be a registered Girl Scout adult. This includes Leader, Treasurer, Co-Leaders, product sales program coordinators and any Troop Committee members who may handle troop funds.

According to banking and IRS regulations, every troop account must have a tax identification number. Contact your Troop Organizer or membership staff for a Troop Bank Account letter.

Budgeting

Learning to make decisions, planning and budgeting are invaluable life skills. Girls and Leaders work together as partners in all aspects of program planning and decision-making. This includes budgeting. Girls should determine the type of activities they would like to pursue during the program year. Leaders work in partnership with girls to develop a budget, taking into account available resources; girls practice decision-making skills and learn from their successes and failures.

The troop budget should be determined early. Within the first two months after the troop is registered, girls and Leaders work together to plan the troop program. A Troop Budget Form can be found on the GSHOM web site. Estimate the troop's income for the year. Include dues, income from product sales program, and fees for activities. Consider cash flow. Plan your calendar to ensure funds are on hand to pay for planned activities. If your cash flow does not cover anticipated costs, make necessary changes in activities.

Budget funds so that some money carries over to the next program year.

Accountability

In conjunction with the Troop Treasurer, the Leader is responsible for the safekeeping of funds and accurate financial records. Signers on the troop checking accounts are liable in case of fraudulent use of the account. Therefore, record all transactions, channel all funds through the troop checking account, and keep all receipts in case questions arise.

The Leader or Troop Treasurer completes an Annual Troop Financial Report and submits it to the Troop Organizer or Area Manager. The forms needed to complete the Annual Troop Financial Report can be found on the web site.

If the troop is planning activities during the summer that will require funds, include estimates of the anticipated expenses in your Annual Troop Financial Report and submit actual expenses to your Troop Organizer or Area Manager upon completion of the activities. In the event leadership changes in the fall, all financial activity that occurred from May 1 until the time of new leadership must be reported to the Troop Organizer.

The Troop Organizer or Area Manager may review troop finances at any time and is expected to review them at least once a year. The Troop Treasurer should provide an accounting of troop funds to girls and parents at least once a year. However, information regarding troop funds should be accessible to all throughout the year.