

Getting Started as a Girl Scout Troop Leader

Are you looking for the perfect opportunity to be a role model for girls? Do you want to help girls discover the possibilities within them? As a Troop Leader, you will partner with other volunteers to help plan and lead troop meetings and bring the Girl Scout program to life for the girls in your troop! Volunteers in this role will facilitate meetings and events while encouraging a girl-led environment. Other responsibilities include maintaining accurate troop records, ensuring effective communications between troop and parents, and completing annual membership renewal for the girls and volunteers in your troop.

Role Requirements

Register as a Member

The very first step in getting started in your new leadership role is to register yourself as a member of Girl Scouts Heart of Central California. If you already have a specific troop in mind, choose that troop's number during the registration process. If you are interested in getting a new troop started and do not have a troop number, please choose Unsure in the registration process and write in New Troop when prompted, our experienced staff will contact you to assign you a new troop number and help navigate your next steps. If you have questions about registration, please contact customercare@girlscoutshcc.org or 800.322.4475.

Complete a Background Check

To ensure the safety of our Girl Scouts, all Troop Leaders and volunteers must have eligible Live Scan electronic fingerprints on file with Girl Scouts Heart of Central California (GSHCC). If you have already completed Live Scan electronic fingerprinting for another organization, you will still need to complete Live Scan electronic fingerprints for GSHCC. Once you have selected your volunteer role you will receive an email with details on how to complete the Live Scan process.

Complete Required Training

Troop Leaders are required to complete a series of online training which review Girl Scout basics, how to get started, resources available to you, troop finances and state required mandated reporter training. It takes leaders three to four hours to complete training. Once you have selected your role you will receive information on accessing the training.

Troop Requirements

- A minimum of two unrelated troop leaders who have completed all requirements, one of which is female.
- Troops must have a minimum of two unrelated girls registered in the troop.



New Girl Scout Troop Leader FAQs

Do I have to be a parent to be a troop leader?

No. We welcome all interested adults, ages 18 and older, to apply as Girl Scout volunteers. Girl Scouts is volunteer-driven, and we need all hands on deck. We currently have Girl Scout leaders who are community leaders, senior citizens, college students, and others who don't currently have daughters who are Girl Scouts.

How much time does it take to be a leader?

A typical troop leader devotes an average of 5-10 hours per month to Girl Scouts. Enlisting the help of families from the beginning allows the troop to be more active while sharing work among many volunteers. The troop, with the leader's guidance, decides how often and when meetings will take place. Troops can meet weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly; after school, in the evenings, or on weekends.

How long will I be serving as a Girl Scout leader?

A leader is appointed for one year. We encourage leaders to extend that year if they desire.

I wasn't a Girl Scout, what do I need to know?

Training is provided to help all new leaders understand the Girl Scout philosophy, policies and procedures. Training covers materials and information needed to begin troop meeting and activities.

Is volunteer training provided?

Yes! Web-based, self-study and live virtual trainings are available throughout the calendar year and council geography.

Will someone be helping me start a Girl Scout troop?

As a volunteer, you can count on help from a variety of people. Staff from your area will be available to answer questions and to help recruit girls, if needed. Local volunteers from your community, organized into a service unit, are also key to getting your troop off the ground. Regular service unit meetings are held throughout the school year, so there are many opportunities to meet other Girl Scout volunteers in your area.

How much does it cost to join Girl Scouts, and where do finances come from to start a troop?

The annual membership fee for Girl Scouts is \$25/person. The membership fee goes directly to Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) at our national headquarters, where it is used for program development, activity insurance and management to support councils. The annual fall product program and Girl Scout Cookie program support troop finances, and all troops are strongly encouraged to participate in these programs to generate troop funds.

Who decides how many girls are in a troop?

A healthy troop size is typically at least 10-12 girls. These troops tend to continue from year to year and have enough families to support a fulfilling Girl Scout Leadership Experience for the girls. However, troop size is often determined by the size of the meeting space and the number of adults working with a troop.

Are volunteers required to complete a background check?

Yes. Protecting our girl members is a top priority, and screenings and background checks are integral parts of our due diligence process and procedure.

Do I have to become a registered Girl Scout to volunteer?

Yes, all adults who work directly with girls on a regular basis must register as Girl Scout members. Registration is easy with our online system. Limited financial assistance is available for adults who serve in key volunteer roles.

Where can I find information and materials on what to do with girls?

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is a great place for girls to plan their Girl Scout experience. "Girl led" is one of our core values that makes Girl Scouts unique. Using the VTK, girls are empowered to choose their own activities and programs with the guidance of their adult leaders. GSUSA publishes nationally consistent materials for troops to use. These materials help troop leaders direct troop activities, while also ensuring that girls get the full benefit of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

What help will families give?

There are many roles that adult family members can play in assisting troop leaders. Adult volunteers can help with regular meetings, organize the fall product or cookie sales, drive girls to and from field trips, serve as First Aid/CPR trained adults on trips, manage the troop treasury, etc. If you can ask, families will help! We recommend that at least one adult from each family register as a Girl Scout member and volunteer.

Why do I have to take Mandated Reporter Training?

Under the California's Child Abuse Neglect and Reporting Act (AB 506) any volunteer that works "more than 16 hours in a month or 32 hours in a year" is required to be a certified mandatory reporter. Since we do not track volunteer hours we have decided that all GSHCC volunteers must complete this requirement. If you have completed training within the last two years you will be able to upload proof of that training for review. Instructions on how to complete the requirement will be sent via email after you have selected your role.