girl scouts
spirit of nebraska

Money Earning Activities – Basic Info, FAQs, and Ideas!

This chapter is meant to be helpful for your troop's financial planning and success. If you have any questions, need clarification, or want to brainstorm ideas, please contact the Fund Development team. We are here for you! And check out our quarterly blog to read about troops participating in successful money earning activities! Troops flex their financial muscles in two distinct ways:

- **COUNCIL-SPONSORED**
  Troops are encouraged to participate in council product programs as their primary money earning activity. The Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program are organized by the council. All girl members are eligible to participate in both council-sponsored product programs each year with volunteer supervision. And remember, girls participating in the Cookie and Fall Product Programs are part of the largest girl-run business in the world! In 2019, the average amount earned by an average troop of ten girls participating in both the Cookie and Fall Product Program was $1,400!

- **TROOP SPECIFIC**
  Money earning activities organized by the troop (not by the council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with volunteers).

Examples of Appropriate Troop Money Earning Activities

- Gift wrapping
- Garage sale
- Lunch box auction (prepared lunch or meal auctioned off)
- Restaurant "community night"
- Bake sale
- Babysitting for holidays (such as New Year's Eve) or council events
- Raking leaves, weeding, cutting grass, shoveling snow, walking pets
- Organizing a fall or international festival (accept donations or charge a small fee)
- Haunted house (accept donations or charge a small fee)
- Selling a handmade bird feeder or bird house
- Facilitating a badge/patch workshop for younger troop
- Themed car wash
- Craft sale (handmade jewelry, artwork, scarves, cards, bookmarks, candles, etc.)
- Hosting a game booth at an event, like a Back-to-School night
- Read-a-thon
- Walk/Run/Bike/Swim-a-thon

Participation Guidelines

Adults are permitted to ask for cash donations to support Girl Scout activities. Girl Scouts are not permitted to ask for cash donations other than to support Take Action or Gold Award projects. Girls' participation in money earning activities is based upon the following:

- Voluntary participation by the girl.
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed.
- An understanding that money earned should not exceed what the group needs to support its program activities.

- Observance of local ordinances related to involvement of children in money earning activities as well as health and safety laws.
- Vigilance in protecting the personal safety of each girl.
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money.
- Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals.

Important Dos and Please Don’ts

Many of these items are required by the Internal Revenue Service. Familiarizing yourself with this information ensures that money earning activities are conducted with legal and financial integrity. We tried to make this list as comprehensive as possible, but if you have any questions, just contact us!

DOS:

- Complete the **Money Earning Activities Eligibility Quiz** prior to conducting the activity.
- Select money earning activities that are **suited to the ages and abilities** of the girls and are consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- **Feel free to support another organization through Take Action projects**. If your troop is supporting another organization but not completing a Take Action project, please do not wear anything that officially identifies you or your girls as “Girl Scouts.”
- **Report the funds earned through money earning activities** in your Troop Finance Report (due June 30 of every year).
- Be sure at least two registered **adults will be in attendance** at all times during an approved troop money earning activity.
- Be respectful when collaborating with **religious organizations**. Girl Scout troops must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice.

PLEASE DO NOT:

- Solicit money on **behalf of another organization** when identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts by wearing a uniform, a sash or vest, official pins, and so on. Certain exceptions can be made if the troop is working on earning their highest awards.
- Schedule your money earning activity to **compete** with the Girl Scout Cookie Program or the council’s Fall Product Program.
- Participate in **games of chance** including raffles and Bingo. More information can be found online.
- Permit girls to **directly solicit** (ask for) cash donations, as per the Girl Scouts’ *Blue Book* policy.
- Conduct **product demonstration parties** where the use of the Girl Scout trademark increases revenue for another business, such as in-home product parties (i.e., kitchenware, handbags, or jewelry). Any business using the Girl Scout trademark or other Girl Scout intellectual property must seek authorization from GSUSA.
- Participate in **political fundraisers or engage in political campaigns** of any kind. Girl Scouts Spirit of Nebraska is a non-partisan, non-profit organization. When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your troop may not participate, directly or indirectly, in any political campaign or work on behalf of or in opposition to a candidate for public office. Letter-writing campaigns are not allowed, nor is participating in a political rally, circulating a petition, or carrying a political banner.
- **Sell or endorse commercial products**. A commercial product is any product sold at a retail location. Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or sell such products.
- **Permit Daisies to participate in money earning activities** other than the Girl Scout Cookie Program or Fall Product Program.

Different Types of Donations

MONETARY DONATIONS

Any cash donations from a foundation, corporation, government entity, or individual given to a troop, service unit, or Gold Award applicant must be "passed through" the council for proper record keeping of the donation. Here are some quick tips:

- The council will retain a **standard $25 donation** for our financial assistance fund (unless the total donation is less than $100, then $0 is retained). Each $25 donation enables another girl to participate in Girl Scouts! All remaining funds from the donation will be directed back to the troop account through ACH.
- The council **will not retain** funds if the donation intent is for Bronze, Silver, or Gold Award projects. Please coordinate these project donations with the council prior to applying for highest award donations. More information about fundraising for highest awards is available on our website.
- Formal gift acknowledgements (**thank you letter** for tax purposes) will be sent by the council, but we recommend that your troop also sends a personal thank you to the donor. Encourage your girls to celebrate the donor's contribution by inviting them to a meeting or ceremony or working together on a Take Action project.

IN-KIND DONATIONS

Instead of giving money to buy needed goods and services for your troop, the goods and services themselves are given ("donated"). In-kind donations are not the same as gifts of cash, however, they do have an estimated value. Troops may seek in-kind donations to support a troop or service unit activity, Highest Award Project, or Take Action project. For information on working with a specific organization in your community, contact the council to see if we already have an established relationship. The council can also advise if there are any reasons why your troop should not collaborate with certain organizations.

Examples of in-kind donations include, but are not limited to:

- use of a room or venue for a meeting or event
- flowers
- craft supplies
- sample size toiletries
- fleece or fabric

If an in-kind donor requests a gift receipt, please send the following information to Member Support, and the Fund Development team will generate a formal gift receipt:

- An itemized list of products or services donated
- Contact information for the donor, including mailing address
- Full contact information for the troop.

VOLUNTEER HOUR MATCH PROGRAM

Many employers "match" their employees' volunteer hours with cash contributions. Girl Scout volunteers may apply for their company's volunteer hour match program to receive monetary donations for their troops. Here's a quick guide to completing the process:

- Volunteers who apply for a match through their company must be registered Girl Scout members with active background screening on record.
- Any funds received through a volunteer match program will be processed by the council as a "pass through" donation (detailed above).
- Give us a heads up! If you are planning to participate in your company's volunteer match program, let us know so we can keep an eye out for the funds.

CROWDFUNDING AND PEER TO PEER MONEY EARNING RESOURCES

- **Girls pursuing their Gold Award** may secure funding via online avenues such as Facebook and other reputable crowd sourcing sites with advance notice given to the council. For these projects, the council will co-sponsor Facebook events and promote the Gold Award applicant's crowdfunding page through social media. The Gold Award applicant must notify the council of their intent to use a crowdfunding site before they activate their page. Visit our website for more specific rules and regulations on fundraising for the Gold Award.
- Girl Scout adults and troops **may not solicit funds** via crowd fundraising sites like GoFundMe or Kickstarter.