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Troop/Group Banking Guide for Volunteers

Helping girls decide what they want to do and coaching them as they earn and manage money to pursue their goals is an integral part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. With your guidance, your Girl Scout troop plans and finances its own activities. At the same time, the girls learn many valuable skills that serve them throughout their lives.

Questions? Please reach out to troopbanking@gshpa.org!

Troop Financial Management Training

The first step to Troop Banking is to complete the Troop Financial Management training. All troop checking account signers must complete pre-recorded webinar, review this handbook and then complete the knowledge check. These 3 steps must be completed before being added to the checking account as a signer. They can be found on our website under Volunteer Essentials – Troop Finances.

Managing Troop Funds

Managing troop funds includes:

- Being a signer on the troop checking account
- Deciding with the girls how to spend the troop money
- Managing or helping a troop's participation in the Fall Product Program and/or Cookie Program
- Handling troop money and financial records in any way

All Girl Scout troops are required to have a troop checking account, and troops cannot share bank accounts. All funds in the troop checking account are to be used **only** for delivering Girl Scout programs and services. Those assuming stewardship of any Girl Scout monies within the jurisdiction of Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania are accountable to the council for those funds.

Type of Groups to Open a Checking Account

The following checking accounts within the council are authorized:

- Troops/Service Units
- Day and Resident Camps

Who Manages Funds and Troop/Group Checking Account

- Troop leaders and troop assistants: Registered and approved volunteers in these roles can handle or manage funds
 - At least one checking account signer needs to be a troop leader
 - All checking accounts must have a minimum of 2 signers
 - The account signers CANNOT be related or living in the same household

- All account signers are required to be currently registered GSHPA members
- All account signers must have all background checks on file with GSHPA
 - More information regarding background checks can be found [here](#).
- All signers must complete the online Troop Financial Management training before being added to account
- Account signers cannot have any financial restrictions on their account
- Girls: Involve the girls as much as their grade level and skills/abilities allow. After all, it's their money!

When to Open the Troop/Group Checking Account

- The troop/group bank account should be opened within 30 days of the first troop meeting. This will allow troops/groups to be prepared when there is money to deposit from troop dues, product sales or troop money-earning activities.
- Be sure to open the account before any money is received, earned, or spent and prior to receiving Girl Scout Cookie or Fall Product selling materials.

Where to Open a Troop/Group Checking Account

GSHPA strongly suggests that troops/groups open their checking account at either **Members 1st Federal Credit Union, First National Bank, or Orrstown Bank**.

Benefits of banking with Members 1st Federal Credit Union, First National Bank, or Orrstown Bank include: no monthly service fees, no minimum opening deposit requirement, free debit cards, electronic monthly statements, starter checks, and ATM usage. Our partnership with these financial institutions allows us to manage financial resources more efficiently and provide assistance to troop leaders.

If you choose a different financial institution, GSHPA cannot guarantee assistance or services.

How to Open Troop/Group Account

- Submit the request to your Volunteer Support Coordinator.
 - If you choose one of our partner banks, you will receive information regarding next steps from the Member Services Specialist (Troop Banking) via email.
 - Be sure to fill the request out in full as the bank needs the information to open the account.
 - You will not need to go to the bank in person.
 - If you choose another financial institution, you will receive documents from the Member Services Specialist (Troop Banking) via email that that you will need to take to the financial institution to setup the account.
 - Be sure to take a photo ID, council EIN and your social security number to the bank.
 - Please ensure the account is setup with council EIN and not your personal social security number.

- If a bank has a specific requirement that the forms provided by the Council do not meet, please find out specifically what else is needed and provide that information to the Member Services Specialist (Troop Banking) or the Troop Banking & Finance Specialist at GSHPA.
- **Both signers** will need to go to the bank and take the necessary documents.

Account Setup

- Account Name: "Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania Troop/SU 12345".
- The check heading should read "Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania Troop 12345". No volunteer names should be printed on checks.
- Account should be under the EIN of the Council: 24-0795960. Please do not use your social security number.
- The account address should be the mailing address of one of the authorized signers.
- Electronic statements or e-statements are allowed but must be available for printing.

ACH Authorization Form

Completion of an ACH Authorization Form is required by every troop/group. This will allow GSHPA to electronically deposit funds into a troop account for such items as financial assistance and refunds. Product Program payments will be collected by ACH from each troop/group. If signers on the troop/group bank account change, the ACH Authorization form should be updated and sent to the Troop/Group Banking Specialist. The form can be found on our website.

Update Authorized Signers on Checking Account

If a signer needs to be removed or a new signer added to the account, please email your Volunteer Support Coordinator to start the process to update signers on the checking account. The process to update signers is similar to opening an account. Once the form is submitted, the Member Services Specialist (Troop Banking) will reach out to you regarding next steps.

ATM/Debit Card

Troops/groups may have debit cards as part of the troop/group account. This will make it easier for troops to be able to pay for program, membership, and training fees or make purchases on the Council's online service.

- Debit cards may only be issued to signatories on the account.
- Different banks have different requirements for debit cards. Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania cannot override the banks' requirements for debit cards.
- Receipts should be obtained for all debit card purchases and purchases should be recorded immediately in the banking records.

- In the event a card is lost or stolen, the bank should be contacted immediately. Timely notification to the bank will provide for limits on any losses sustained due to unauthorized use of the card.

Tax Exemption

Troop/group, Service Unit and council level events may use Pennsylvania's sales tax exemption when purchasing supplies. When using the tax exemption, volunteers will sometimes be called upon to complete an exemption certificate for the supplier from whom a purchase is being made. It is important that the certificate be properly completed in order to comply with regulations pertaining to the exemption. Charitable exemption numbers will not be issued to individual troops/groups.

A copy of the Pennsylvania Sales Use and Tax Exemption Certificate may be obtained by contacting your Volunteer Support Coordinator.

Record Keeping

One critical task for each troop is to keep excellent records and establish a clear accounting system for all money earned and spent. As a troop leader or troop assistant, you're in charge of making sure money is spent wisely, excellent records are kept, and all income and expenses are tracked. For older girls, your job is to oversee their work as they learn to keep impeccable records.

As a standard practice, one signer should hold the checkbook and/or the debit card while the other signer should receive the bank statements for reconciliation purposes. This is an internal control to demonstrate transparency of the troop/group finances to all volunteers, parents/guardians, council staff and girls.

How to Keep Records

- All troop money earned and received needs to be appropriately secured and should be deposited into the troop account within **three** days of receipt
- Each troop should have one checking account and cannot share an account with another troop.
- Multiple or interest-earning accounts are not permitted.
- Troop money should never be held in a personal checking account.
- Anytime the troop spends or receives money, a receipt should be kept on record.
- All authorized signers need to be in communication with the other before spending funds in the account to cover the amount of the transaction before writing a check or making a purchase with a debit card. This will safeguard against overdrawn accounts and bouncing checks.
- The purpose for writing a troop check should be noted in the memo line on the check. This is good practice as it helps reconcile receipts with the monthly bank statements.
- No check should ever be signed with the payee left blank
- No check should ever be made payable to cash.

- If cash is needed a check should be written, payable to the troop, and the purpose for the cash noted in the memo line. The check should be signed by one authorized signer and cashed by the other authorized signer.
- Take into consideration delays in posting transactions to the account in the banking system.
- All troop expenses should be paid for with a troop check or the troop debit card.
- Blank checks should never be pre-signed and debit cards should never be used by anyone other than the person they are issued to and only for troop expenses.
- Cash withdrawals should only be made if absolutely necessary—i.e. cookie booth change, tips for taxi or hotel services.
 - Anything paid or purchased with cash must be documented with a receipt.
- Volunteers who have paid out of pocket for troop expenses cannot reimburse themselves. Reimbursement may only come from the other signer on the account when a receipt is provided showing the expense.
- Overdrafts are the responsibility of the adult accountable for the charge. The troop should be reimbursed by that person with cash or money order.
- Funds acquired for money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the troop, while following all Council policies and procedures.
- It is required to keep records (receipts, bank statements and finance reports) a minimum of two years.
- Council has the right to audit troop accounts and request statements and proof of receipts at any time.
- Troops should consistently share troop financial information with parents and girls and Council may request to see financial records at any time.
- Personal use of any troop/service unit funds at ANY TIME is illegal and considered theft.
- An individually registered member is not permitted to have a checking account, even if there is more than one signer on the account.

Failure to comply with the policies listed above may result in appropriate council action including but not limited to, staff oversight, termination from volunteer position, and/or restrictions on further troop/service unit fundraising activities.

Fraudulent Activity

Troop leaders and troop assistants are responsible for the proper accounting and management of troop funds. Should mismanagement be reported or suspected, a troop financial audit may occur and the adults responsible for troop/group leadership and/or troop/group banking may be held accountable for any lost or stolen funds as well as any overdraft fees. Please know that GSHPA will make a decision based on the best outcome for the girls and this may result in the responsible volunteers being determined ineligible to serve as a volunteer.

- Monthly reconciliation should be done in order to catch errors made or any fraudulent activity within the account.
- Suspected fraudulent activity should be reported to council immediately using [GSHPA Troop/Group Suspected Misuse of Funds Form](#).

Individuals may be subject to legal action up to and including criminal prosecution by Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania for mishandling funds.

Earning Troop Funds

Money earned by the girls are for the benefit of all girls in the troop and should be spent in the year the funds are earned unless the troop has a long-range plan for spending the funds.

It is important to note that the funds belong to the troop as a whole. Per IRS guidelines for charitable organizations, troops are prohibited from keeping individual girl accounts. All funds expended should benefit all girls in the troop.

Ways to Earn Money for a Troop/Group

1. Product Program: Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Program
2. Troop/Group Additional Money Earning Activities
3. Troop Dues
4. Collaboration with Sponsors and other Organizations

As a volunteer, try to help girls balance the money-earning they do with opportunities to enjoy other activities that have less emphasis on earning and spending money. Take Action projects, for example, may not always require girls to spend a lot of money!

Girls' participation in both council-sponsored product sale activities and troop money-earning projects is based upon the following:

- Voluntary participation
- Parent/caregiver permission to participate
- An understanding of (and ability to explain clearly to others) why the money is needed
- An understanding that money-earning should not exceed what the group needs to support its 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

Product Program

A troop's primary money-earning activity should be the Girl Scout Cookie Program however, it is not a requirement.

- All girl members, including Girl Scout Juliettes (individually registered members), are eligible to participate in Council sponsored product programs with volunteer supervision

- Please remember: volunteers and Girl Scout Council staff don't sell cookies and other products—girls do.

Additional Money Earning

Additional money earning opportunities are Council approved activities organized by the group (not by the Council) that are planned and carried out by girls in partnership with adults, to earn money for the group. Any troop/group money-earning projects cannot take place during Council-sponsored product programs (Fall Product Sales and Cookie Program).

1. Volunteer completes and submits the Additional Money Earning Form to the Volunteer Support Coordinator one month prior to proposed additional money earning project.
2. Troop Leaders obtain [written permission](#) of each girl's parent or guardian prior to girl's participation in any money earning activity.
3. Volunteer ensures the money-earning activity meets federal, state and local laws and regulations and obtains any necessary permits.

For more information regarding Additional Money Earning, please review [Troop and Service Unit Money-Earning Guidelines for Volunteers](#).

Troop Dues

Troops may charge dues to cover the cost of supplies until the troop earns money via product programs. When setting the amount of troop dues, the fees should be decided on by all members and consideration given to the income levels of all of the girls in the group.

- Troop dues are in addition to the \$25 annual membership dues that go to the national organization.
- Troop dues are meant to supplement cookie and fall product sale activities.
- NO girl shall be denied membership in a troop, or have her participation restricted based on her lack of ability to pay troop dues.
 - GSHPA offers financial aid for troop dues and girls are encouraged to apply.

Collaborating with Sponsors and other Organizations

Sponsors help Girl Scout Councils ensure that all girls in the community have an opportunity to participate in Girl Scouts. Community organizations, businesses, religious organizations, and individuals may be sponsors and may provide Girl Scout meeting places, volunteer their time, provide activity materials, or loan equipment. The Council or your troop or service unit may already have relationships with certain organizations, or may know of some reasons not to collaborate with certain organizations.

Volunteers must obtain permission before seeking financial support from a sponsor. If your group or service unit has a sponsor, the sponsor's contribution can be recognized by sending thank-you cards composed by the girls, inviting the sponsor to a meeting or court of awards, or working together on a service project. The contribution should also be reflected in the troop's financial records and report.

Please refer to our website: [Troop Finances](#) - Working with Sponsors and Other Organizations for more information.

Donations & Grants

As a not-for-profit organization, Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania must follow all IRS guidelines for a 501c3 organization. All Girl Scout troops and service units are an extension of the council, including the council IRS not-for-profit status. Therefore, all group and service unit finances are considered assets of GSHPA. In order to ensure compliance with IRS and audit guidelines, GSHPA has the specific policies regarding donations and grants from individuals and organizations to Girl Scouts groups or service units.

Please refer to [Troop and Service Unit Donation Guidelines for Volunteers](#) for more information.

Managing Money with Girls

Teaching girls about money management and empowering them to make good financial decisions is part of troop financial management. Since girls are choosing their own Girl Scout journey, they can also make decisions on the resources that support their Girl Scout adventure. Consider the following as you guide them in the best management of their troop funds:

- What is the grade level of the troop and how much understanding do they have of money and bank accounts?
 - Girl Scout Daisies will have adults handle their troop finances; Girl Scout Brownies understand that things cost money and will begin to have an understanding of what is needed to achieve their goals.
- What are the goals of the troop?
- What are the girls learning by the way that the troop funds are managed? What do they need to learn?
- What if girls join the troop or leave the troop, how will the funds be managed?
 - If a girl leaves Girl Scouts, the funds remain property of the troop.
 - If a girl transfers to another troop, a portion of the funds may follow her at the discretion of the troop.

Below are two common troop money management techniques:

1. The Common Pot:

- This technique is typically used with younger troops however, it will work with all grade levels.
- All earned money goes into the troop's "common pot" and the funds are drawn from equally for all girls. This is often how a new troop begins in their money management and then progresses to a more complicated management system.

2. Tracked Money with a Common Pot:

- This technique is used by troops that are planning more complicated, expensive activities like a trip to Savannah, attending Troop Adventure Camp or if girls have individual goals as well as troop goals.
- This technique allows for a percentage of the money earned going into the troop “common pot” for troop activities and an additional percentage to be tracked for each girl to individually save for a long-term troop activity or a council sponsored activity. The troop as one body still makes decisions about how the money should be spent.

*The money, even when tracked for individual girls, is never the property of an individual girl.

Debt

Adults who owe a debt to the Council that is past due and not resolved within 30 days will be removed from all volunteer positions. A debt is defined as: A check written for insufficient funds, unpaid product sale funds to the organization or troop, nonpayment of fees promised, and any other amounts owed to the organization for products or services.

A volunteer who repays a past due debt may be reappointed as a volunteer, but will not be allowed to hold a money handling or leadership position. GSHPA will review debts and volunteer roles on a case by case basis. Debts to the Council which become past due will be processed for collection.

Past due is defined as follows:

- Insufficient fund check – 30 days from receipt of bank notice
- Unpaid product sale funds – 30 days from the deadline for the report
- Unpaid fees/goods purchased – 30 days from the occurrence

Parent Debt Form

In the event a troop is unable to collect monies due from a parent after three failed attempts, please complete the [Parent Debt Form](#) and submit to council prior to the troop deadline for Product Program Sales. After submitting this Parent Debt Form, troops cannot accept money from the parent for any further debt collection. Council will take care of collecting the funds from the parent.

Annual Reporting

All Girl Scout troops are required to submit information regarding the troop’s finances annually as part of the appointment and reappointment process. All troops must complete a Troop Participation Form and the GSHPA Volunteer Toolkit Annual Troop Finance Report.

- The Troop Participation Form can be accessed, completed and submitted online. You will receive the link in an email from your Volunteer Support Coordinator in the spring.
 - The TPF is due by July 1st.
- The GSHPA Volunteer Toolkit Annual Troop Finance Report can be accessed, completed and submitted on the Volunteer Toolkit under the finance tab.

- You will only be able to submit the Annual Troop Finance Report once therefore, do not submit before July 1st.
- The Troop Finance Report is due by August 1st.
- Annual Troop Finance Report is only to be used for troops and not for Juliettes.
- You will need to attach the troop's most recent bank statement when you submit the report.
- We suggest working on the Finance Report throughout the year to track your income and expenses. It will automatically save for you to return to VTK and add more information. Please do not submit before July 1st.
- A guide is available to assist in filling out the report and can be found [here](#).
- If you prefer a paper copy of the report, a fillable Troop Finance Report has been provided on the last page of the guide to assist in tracking your troop finances. However, please be sure to submit the electronic version online. GSHPA will not accept paper copies of the finance report.

Year-End Balances

Acceptable uses for the balance in a troop/group checking account include:

- Payment of individual GSUSA registration fees for returning or new members
- Gifts to bridging girls, such as grade-level materials or uniform components such as sashes or vests
- Tokens of appreciation for those who helped with troop/group activities
- Troops taking large or extended trips which cross over multiple years

It is recommended that troops retain enough money to begin troop/group activities in the fall.

Disbanding Troops

Prior to disbanding, the group may decide to donate any unused funds to a worthwhile organization, to another group, or for girl activities. Any remaining balance left in the account will then become property of the council to be held in a custodial fund until such time as the disbanding troop/group can be reorganized. Should more than 6 months elapse without reorganizing the troop/group, the Board of Directors, or a committee of the board so charged, shall have the power to determine the appropriate use of the custodial funds.

Closing a Troop/Group Checking Account

Please email your Volunteer Support Coordinator to start the process to close the account.

- As when closing a personal account, be sure all checks and other debits have cleared the account before you close it, and realize that you may have to close the account in person.
- Turn remaining funds over to the "Girl Scouts in the Heart of Pennsylvania, Attn: Troop Banking" by sending a check to the council headquarters. Please be sure to let the Troop Banking & Finance Specialist know you are sending the check.

- In the event of the dissolution or disbanding of a troop or other circumstances by which the signatures on record are unavailable, the Chief Executive Officer or one of her/his designees shall be authorized to sign checks transferring the funds from the troop account or other account to the custodial account of the council.

Questions: Please contact troopbanking@gshpa.org.