

Product Sales Program for Non-Troop Girls

Overview

Girl Scouts of Greater Los Angeles' (GSGLA) Product Sales Program for Non-Troop Girls creates an opportunity for Girl Scouts who are not part of a troop to participate in the Annual Girl Scout Cookie Program. Girls can experience the program, make new friends, gain new skills, and earn funds to achieve their goals just like any troop-based girl.

Cookie Program

As the Cookie Program has historically been implemented through the Troop Pathway, the Product Sales Program for Non-Troop Girls creates an alternative structure to experience the program. Other pathways include a Series, Event, Travel or Camp. The program is designed to be as simple as possible and meets all GSGLA and GSUSA requirements.

All Non-Troop Girl Scouts are welcome to participate in the annual Cookie Program. A Mentor system provides girls with training and oversight of her Cookie Program experiences. The Mentor functions as a Troop Cookie Chair and can sometimes be staff-led, but is preferably from an adult volunteer for a Service Unit or Region. An important factor to consider is the longevity of the group. Journey Girls are perpetual and are not based on any particular girl's attendance. Hence, Journey Girls are the best candidates to organize for Cookie participation, but Independents and Series are equally welcome. Every girl must be registered. Please note that a Girl Scout cannot withdraw from a troop to participate in the Product Sales Program for Non-Troop Girls.

There are several groupings of girls who do not participate via a traditional troop setting. Definitions of each type is as follows:

Journey Girl – staff managed with volunteer support. Girls meet monthly or bi-monthly. Can be considered a hybrid of a troop and a Series. New Girl Scouts who do not join a troop immediately are invited to participate short-term or long-term as a Journey Girl. This provides a structured setting to deliver the Girl Scout Program. New troops may develop out of a subset of the Journey Girls.

Series – 4-12 sessions over a defined start and end period, and is staff led. Used to recruit and retain girls with the goal of moving into another Series or preferably a new or existing troop.

Independent – These girls are truly individual Girl Scouts with no affiliation. Her Mom is usually a member and is her mentor for Girl Scout experiences. Independents can develop out of former troops who have disbanded, but the girl wants to stay engaged in Girl Scouts.



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The Business of Cookies

Launched in 1917, the Girl Scout Cookie Program has grown into the leading business and economic education opportunity by and for girls. The Girl Scout Cookie Program has helped make Girl Scouting America's premier leadership development experience for girls. Girls learn the **"5 Skills for Girls"** that are the foundation of the Girl Scout Cookie Program:

1. **Goal Setting** - helps girls set and meet deadlines of all kinds
2. **Decision Making** - girls learn critical thinking and how to prioritize to reach objectives
3. **Money Management** - girls learn the practical side of how to live within a budget
4. **People Skills** - girls learn real world examples of customer service
5. **Business Ethics** - girls develop positive values of being honest, reliable and trustworthy

The benefits of these 5 skills cannot be underestimated and should not be undervalued. We have witnessed thousands of girls over the years who are transformed by the Product Sales Program. Every girl deserves this opportunity and we happily invite every Girl Scout to participate.



Program Basics

- Each Independent Girl works with the Product Sales Manager (PSM), who functions as her Troop Cookie Chair (TCC).
- Journey Girls will work with a staff member or a dedicated volunteer mentor who functions as the girl's cookie chair and reports to the PSM. The PSM functions as the service unit chair.
- Mentors are volunteers, usually with extensive experience in product sales, who manage girls on the cookie program. The mentor works with the girl to teach her about the cookie program, guides her in developing her personal goals, coaches her progress, and celebrates her successes.
- Parents or guardians must give written permission for their girl to participate and to assume financial responsibility for their girl's product.
- In addition to the skills learned, girls who participate in the program can experience aspects such as attending Cookie Kick-Off and Cookie University and earning rewards. They are eligible for proceeds (see Troop Proceeds section) and can place initial orders and host booth sites. Journey Girl groups are invited to sign up for corporate and special sporting event booths as well.

Journey Girls

Designated Journey Girls sell like a regular troop and may booth. Journey Girls may not have their own bank account. Sale revenue (\$4) is remitted on an ongoing basis for deposit. Girls should not have a large volume of cookies for which they have not submitted payment at

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any one time. A pay-as-you-go system (not pre-paid) best describes the model. Journey Girls earn all Rewards including per box proceeds. Council retains the proceeds which is paid out upon the request and direction of the Mentor. Proceeds are utilized for a group goal, or for the enhancement of future Journey Girl programs.

Series

Series girls do not participate in Cookies in the form of a Financial Literacy Series at this time. Series girls that are ongoing in the January-March timeframe may opt to participate as an individual based on the Independent Girl model.

Independent Girls

Girls sell individually at all times and choose from the Booth Scheduler as any other participant. She earns Rewards and her Program Credit (\$15 for 20 boxes) is held by the Service Unit Treasurer for safekeeping and future distribution. Service Units are trained to track Individual Girl funds. The girl can utilize these funds for any Girl Scout Program, including camp, Destinations, and her Gold Award project. SUs should make every effort to pay suppliers directly and not use the funds as reimbursement to parents.

For girls that are mentored by an adult volunteer, sales are deposited to the SU bank account, and Council is paid via ACH Debit. If an Independent Girl is mentored by staff, funds are remitted to Council (Service Center) and acts as custodian until the Program Credits will be paid to the SU treasury to be managed on behalf of the girl.

Program Delivery

- Mentors will meet with their girls and parents on a regular basis during the program to provide important information, collect orders, deliver product, receipt payments, etc.
- Mentors are encouraged to utilize the age-specific program curriculum from GSUSA and her personal knowledge as part of the cookie program experience.
- Girls may choose to earn the Awards and Patches from the many financial literacy curriculum available as well as the annual *Cookie Activity Pin*.

Order Taking

- Non-troop girls are provided a cookie order card to take orders from family, friends and neighbors.
- Mentors will collect the cookie orders from their girls and submit them as part of the initial order, which is the first phase of the cookie program.
- Mentors should also register their girl/group with the Cookie Club, available during cookie season at www.girlscoutsla.org. This is a GSUSA-approved safe email marketing system for girls to reach their potential customers online. Emails are sent to friends and families through the Cookie Club system, announcing the girl's participation in the cookie program. In response, customers make 'E-Promises' to purchase cookies. The girl then submits these as part of her initial order.

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- Gift of Caring is an important and vital component of any girl's Cookie Program. Girls will be taught this program's features as part of her cookie training. All GOC sales are paid for at the time of order.
- Initial orders are submitted online through eBudde, GSGLA's web-based product sales software. Initial order cookies are distributed to troops and non-troop girls about 10 days later, for further distribution to their customers who placed an order.
- Girls collect payment in full as cookies are delivered. All payments are given to the mentor, who will complete the receipting process. Girls or parents should never hold onto or deposit sale proceeds.
- Mentors keep track of sales and collections using eBudde.
- At any given time, an Independent Girl and each Journey Girl can have only a maximum of 50 cookie boxes for orders whose payments will be made upon delivery (a maximum 'credit limit' of \$200). Mentors may place lower credit limits if warranted. Non-troop girls must remit collections to the mentor immediately to facilitate a pay as you go structure. Boothing works a bit different. Mentors will sign out a logical quantity to have a successful booth without running out (in excess of 50 boxes), but all monies and leftover boxes must be remitted immediately after the booth back to the mentor (also see Boothing Opportunities and Cupboard sections).

Boothing Opportunities

Girls can participate in the extensive boothing opportunities that exist for the Cookie Program. Mentors can sign up their girls for open booths available through the eBudde Booth Scheduler.

Independent Girls can anticipate sharing a booth site with another Independent Girl. Together, they can set up the booth and share in customer interactions.

Also, girls may have specific opportunities at locations such as their church, school, local sporting event, etc. These must be approved by their mentor and a Service Unit Boothing Chair.

The mentor should review the relevant boothing-related Safety Activity Checkpoints in the *Volunteer Essentials* handbook (available at www.girlscoutsla.org) with her girl and her parents. One such safety guideline is that there must always be two adults (one of which must be female) at every booth location.

All girls and adults participating in a boothing opportunity are encouraged to be familiar with boothing etiquette, learned through the Cookie Program, and represent herself and Girl Scouts with honor (also see Order Taking and Cupboard sections).



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Cupboards

Mentors should place pending orders in eBudde for additional orders that a girl needs. These orders are at the girl level and indicate financial responsibility lies with the girl's parent/guardian. Product is issued to the mentor or other GSGLA staff member who in turn re-lays the product to the girl's parent/guardian. Parents may pick up directly from a cupboard if the mentor has approved and entered the parent into eBudde.

Mentors must be aware of the girl's outstanding balance due to GSGLA prior to placing a reservation. Girls must never have more than 50 boxes (\$200) owed to GSGLA at any given time.



Troop Proceeds (without the troop)

Troop proceed sharing is set up differently for the Product Sales Program for Non-Troop Girls. In a troop setting, troops receive \$0.75 per box as troop proceeds and use the monies earned for troop activities throughout the year, including service projects and larger plans such as travel and camping excursions. This structure allows for the troops to earn funds for each box sold.

Proceed sharing is different for the Product Sales Program for Non-Troop Girls because from a legal standpoint, the IRS views an individual girl as a commissioned salesperson if she receives proceeds on a per box basis. As such, GSGLA will provide \$15.00 in proceeds per 20 box increments. Proceeds are NOT on a per box basis.

Individual Girls' proceeds are held at the Service Unit level in trust of each IG. Funds can be used in the Council Shop, for membership registration, or program and camp events. Girls can also apply their proceeds to an approved "Destination" program. Journey Girls' proceeds are held by GSGLA, managed by the Mentor, and disbursed in response to that group's collective needs or directives.

Gift of Caring Program

Non-Troop Girls are strongly encouraged to consider the council-wide Gift of Caring (GOC) program as an important component of their overall sales strategy.

GSGLA sets a goal of 10 GOC boxes per girl. Girls will learn from their mentor how the GOC Program works and how easily it can be marketed to customers. The GSGLA cookie program advocates that every customer be asked to purchase at least one GOC box.

Girls will quickly discover that the public has a great appreciation for GSGLA's Gift of Caring partners and gladly supports their needs. Subsequently, this reinforces the girl's concept of public support for community and Girl Scouts.

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Money Matters & Record Keeping

Each Non-troop girl must have a signed *Parent/Guardian Permission & Responsibility Agreement* on file prior to receiving an order card. eBudde is used to record and track all sales, monies collected and remitted by girls, and any balances due for sales made.

Parents should remit funds promptly and frequently and never deposit into a personal account. Doing so violates IRS regulations surrounding GSGLA's non-profit status. Parents should also be aware that product cannot be returned; even exchanges are allowed only during specific dates, and within defined circumstances. All transactions should be re-ceipted for the complete documentation of product and money.

Type of Non-Troop	Mentor	Remit to	Trustee
Independent Girl	PSM	PSM/Council	Service Unit Treasurer
Journey Girl	Volunteer/Staff	Council	Council
Series	Staff	Council	Council

Rewards

Each year, GSGLA expends considerable time and effort to develop a comprehensive selection of girl recognitions that are designed to inspire and motivate girls. Non-troop girls participate fully in the rewards plan, which includes all patches, Initial Order recognitions and the Club 500 and Elite 1000 council-wide events. By definition, Non-troop girls are not part of a troop and are not eligible for troop level or service unit level recognitions. Mentors will be notified when the recognitions are available and will arrange for delivery to their girls as soon as practical.



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