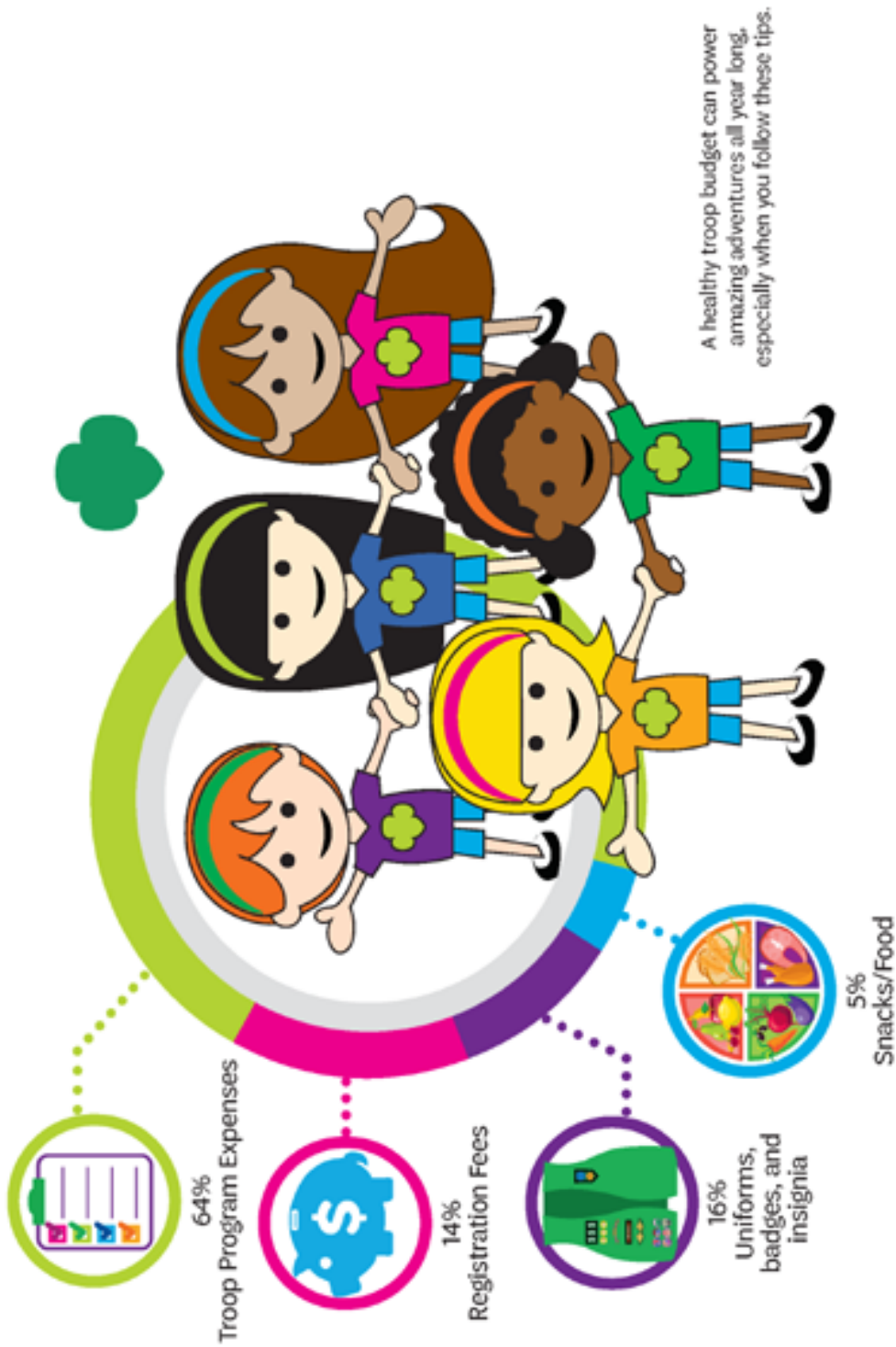
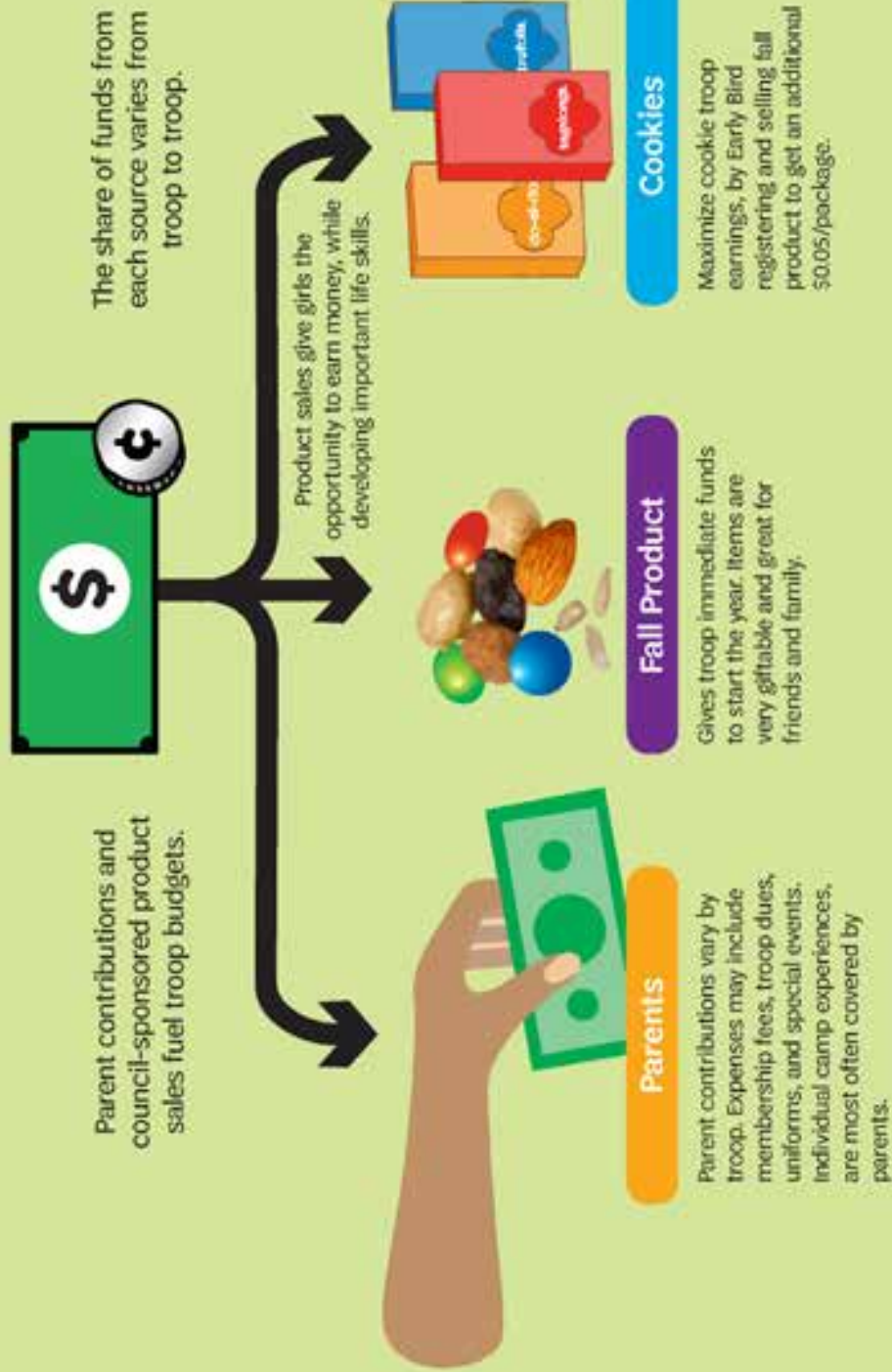


# TROOP FINANCES

## AN ESSENTIAL GUIDE



# WHERE THE MONEY COMES FROM



## TOP TROOP EXPENSES



### Membership Fee

Annual fee paid to our national organization to cover cost of fundamental services and accident insurance.



### Meeting Supplies

Markers, paper, scissors, tape, glue sticks, snacks



### Uniforms

A simple sash, insignia, and badges earned throughout the year



### Events

Thinking Day, Cookie Rallies, Community- and Council-Sponsored Events



### Service Projects

Girls do service projects meaningful to them, like baking holiday treats for kids in homeless shelters



### Overnights

Troop Trips, Troop Camping, Troop Adventure Camp

As girls get older, they may pursue additional money-earning activities to support their troop plans.

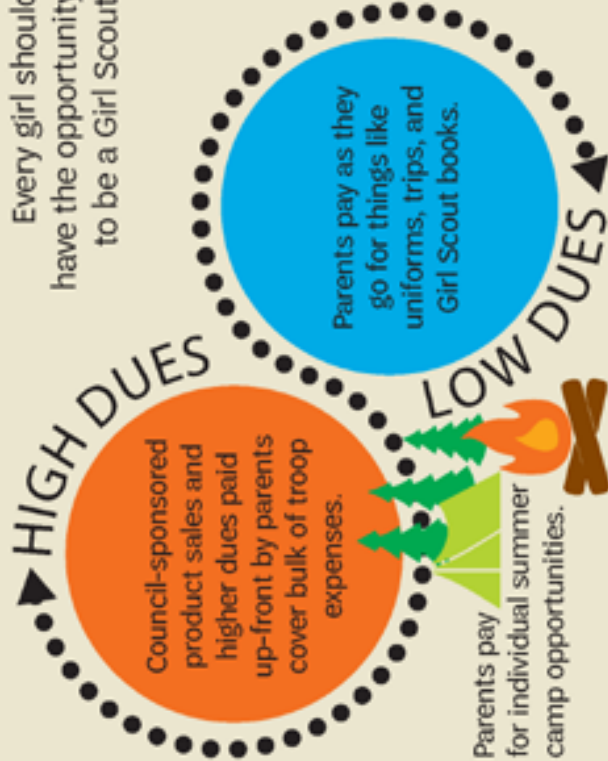


## AVERAGE TROOP DUES

between  
**\$30 & \$100**

Members decide the amount of troop dues, after considering troop plans, girls' ages, and income levels of all families. No girl should be denied membership in a troop or have her participation restricted by her inability to pay.

Every girl should have the opportunity to be a Girl Scout!



**What if a girl can't pay her membership fee?** Her membership fee can be waived! Call 888.350.5090 for more information.

**What if a girl can't cover the cost of camp or an event?** She can apply for a campership or request financial assistance for an individual activity. Visit [gswo.org](http://gswo.org) for more information.

**How should troops manage finances when a girl can't pay dues?** Work with her parents to determine what the family can pay, and plan to absorb the remainder with your troop budget. **Note:** This may impact the dues you charge to the overall group and goals you set for product sales.

When more than half of the girls in your troop face financial challenges, your overall troop budget should lean heavily on product sales and less on troop dues.



# 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 (keeping copies of all receipts in a binder or folder), and all income and expenses are tracked. (Income Examples: Dues, troop proceed from Product Sales Program. Expense Examples: earned recognitions, troop meeting activities, field trips, events, and troop trips.) For older girls, your job is to oversee their work, as they learn to keep impeccable 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 and should never be held in a personal checking account.
- Anytime the troop spends or receives money, a receipt should be provided and kept on record.
- It is critical that all authorized signers are 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.
- 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 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.
- Funds acquired for money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the troop, while following all Council policies and procedures.

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**Note: Troops should consistently share troop financial information with parents and girls and Council may request to see financial records at any time.**

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- 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 should misuse/mismanagement of funds be suspected or occur. Please know that Girl Scouts of Western Ohio will make a decision based on the best outcome for the girls and this can take up to 4 weeks. This may result in the responsible volunteers being determined ineligible to serve as a volunteer.

## Earning Troop Funds

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 (GSLE). Your Girl Scout troop/group plans and finances its own activities, with your guidance. At the same time, the girls learn many valuable skills that serve them throughout their lives.

Girl Scout groups are funded by a share of money earned through Council-sponsored product sale program (such as the Girl Scout Cookie Program), Council approved group money-earning activities (and any fees (dues) your group may charge. (This is in addition to the \$25 annual membership dues that go to the national organization.)

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.

Girl Scout Troops are funded by money earned or collected in:

1. Product Sales Program- Cookie Program and Fall Product Sale
2. Troop/Group Money-earning Activities
3. Troop Dues
4. Collaborating with Sponsors and other Organizations

# Troop Financial Management

## Making Decisions about Managing Money with Girls in the Troop

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.

Consider the questions above to help determine the best way to manage the troop funds. Below are two common troop money management techniques utilizing a troop checking account.

**1 The Common Pot:** (This technique is used mostly with younger troops, however will work with all grade levels.) The Common Pot technique is when all earned money goes into the troop’s “common pot” and the funds will be 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 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.

## Money-Earning Basics:

Groups earn money for their troop in two distinct ways:

- 1 Product Sales Program**—Girls can participate in two Council-sponsored product sale programs each year: the Girl Scout Cookie Program and the Fall Product Program. All girl members, including Girl Scout Daisies and Juliettes (individually registered members), are eligible to participate in Council sponsored product-sales programs with volunteer supervision. Please remember: volunteers and Girl Scout Council staff don’t sell cookies and other products—girls do.
  - A troop’s primary money-earning activity should be the Girl Scout Cookie Program (however it is not a requirement).
- 2 Troop/Group Money-earning**—Activities organized by the group (not by the Council) that are planned and carried out by girls (in partnership with adults) and that 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).
  - Troop money-earning projects need written approval from the Council before a group money-earning activity. Submit the Troop/Group Money-earning Project form ([gsw.org/formsanddocs](https://gsw.org/formsanddocs)) to the Community Development Manager.

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*The best way to earn money for your group is to start with Girl Scout Cookie Program and Fall Product Sale, from there, your group may decide to earn additional funds on its own. It's great for girls to have opportunities, like the Girl Scout Cookie Program, to earn funds that help them fulfill their goals as part of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. 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!*

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# Troop Financial Management

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 (see Chapter 4, Safety-Wise for guidance)
- Arrangements for safeguarding the money

## Money Earning Guidelines:

There are a few specific guidelines—some required by the Internal Revenue Service—that ensure that sales are conducted with legal and financial integrity. To that end, consider the following reminders and cautions:

- All rewards earned by girls through the product-sale activities must support Girl Scout program experiences (such as camp, travel, and program events, but not scholarships or financial credits toward outside organizations).
  - Rewards are based on sale ranges set by Councils and may not be based on a dollar-per-dollar calculation.
- Girls cannot participate in games of chance, the direct solicitation of cash (including walk-a-thons), and product demonstration parties.
  - Any activity which could be considered a game of chance (raffles, contests, bingo, etc.) must be approved by Girl Scouts of Western Ohio and be conducted in compliance with all local and state laws.
  - Girl Scout Blue Book policy forbids girls from the direct solicitation of cash. Girls can collect partial payment towards the purchase of a package of Girl Scout Cookies and Girl Scout Fall Product Program products through participation in Council approved product sale donation programs e.g. Operation Cookie. [https://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/about-girlscouts/facts/GSUSA\\_BlueBook\\_Feb%202019-E.pdf](https://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/about-girlscouts/facts/GSUSA_BlueBook_Feb%202019-E.pdf)
- Girl Scouts forbids the use of the Girl Scout trademark to increase revenue for another business (for example: In home product parties). Any business using the Girl Scout trademark must seek authorization from GSUSA.
- Troop/Group Money-earning activities need to be suited to the age and abilities of the girls and consistent with the principles of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.
- Money earned is for Girl Scout activities and is not to be retained by individuals. Girls can, however, be awarded incentives and/or may earn credits from their Girl Scout product sales. Funds acquired through group money-earning projects must be reported and accounted for by the group, while following Council procedures.
- Decisions about how money will be earned and spent should be made by the girls in the troop and communicated in writing to parents.
- No account may be set up in a girl's name that is replenished through troop funding efforts or donations. No matter what accounting method is used, money earned by girls in Girl Scouting is the property of the troop.
- Money donated to the troop may not personally benefit one member of the troop.

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*For ideas about additional money-earning, review the Finances section in Volunteer Essentials or brainstorm ideas with your Service Unit or Community Development manager.*

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# Troop Financial Management

## Troop Dues

Troop dues are an option for costs of snacks, supplies, and other materials used by the girls at regular meetings and at girl activities. 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. 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.

## 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.

When collaborating with any other organization, follow these guidelines:

- **Do not participate in fund raising for other organizations:** Girl Scouts are not allowed to solicit money on behalf of another organization. This includes participating in a walkathon or telethon while in uniform. You and your group can, however, support another organization through Take Action projects or by making a donation from your group's account. Girl Scouts as individuals are able to participate in whatever events they choose, as long as they're not wearing anything that officially identifies them as "Girl Scouts."
- **Do not participate in political fundraisers:** When in an official Girl Scout capacity or in any way identifying yourselves as Girl Scouts, your group 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.
- **Be respectful when collaborating with religious organizations:** Girl Scout groups must respect the opinions and practices of religious partners, but no girl should be required to take part in any religious observance or practice of the sponsoring group.
- **Avoid selling or endorsing commercial products:** A "commercial product" is any product sold in a retail establishment or by direct sales (home parties, demonstrations etc.). Since 1939, girls and volunteers have not been allowed to endorse, provide a testimonial for, or resell products made by another company.

## Donations & Grants

As a not-for-profit organization, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio must follow all IRS guidelines for a 501c3 organization. All Girl Scout groups (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 Girl Scouts of Western Ohio. In order to ensure compliance with IRS and audit guidelines, Girl Scouts of Western Ohio has the specific policies regarding donations and grants from individuals and organizations to Girl Scouts groups or service units. Please refer to Volunteer Essentials for more information.



# Troop Financial Management

## 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 including new troops must complete a final Troop Financial Report and submit a copy of their bank statement by June 30 each year. The Troop Financial Report form can be accessed, completed and submitted online at the Council website using the VTK Finance Tab. A paper form can be submitted to GSWO at [finance@gsw.org](mailto:finance@gsw.org). The paper form is found at [gsw.org/formsanddocs](http://gsw.org/formsanddocs).

Having a Troop Financial Report on file that includes names of two registered and approved volunteer signers is required for:

- Reappointment of the troop leaders
- Approval of troop trip forms
- Participation in the Girl Scout Product Program
- Access to financial assistance

In addition, all financial transfers to troops/groups or service units, including refunds, financial assistance and cookie proceeds will be made electronically, using the bank account information on the GSWO Finance Information Form.

### NEW TROOPS

- New troops are required to submit a GSWO Finance Information Form within 30 days of opening a checking account.
- Troop Financial Reports should include all financial information up to the date of your last bank statement.

### RETURNING TROOPS

- At the beginning of each Girl Scout year troop leaders are responsible for making sure their account is up to date and the GSWO Finance Information Form is completed with that information.
- The Troop Financial Report should begin on the date your previous report ended and include information up to the date of your last bank statement.



#### **GSWO Finance Information must be completed:**

- Within 30 days of opening a new checking account.
- Annually when submitting the Troop Financial Report
- When there are changes to the troop account, i.e. new signers

#### **Annual Troop Financial Report is due:**

- By June 30 of each year
- Within 30 days of disbanding a troop

The Volunteer Toolkit is the primary resource to submit the troop finance report via the Finance tab. The GSWO Finance Information form is accessible under the forms section on the website, [gsw.org/forms](http://gsw.org/forms), or under the Resources tab in the Volunteer Toolkit. A PDF version of the troop finance report is also available under forms on the website.

