



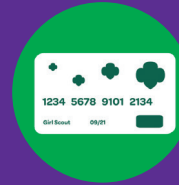
Troop Banking and Finance Guidelines

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Financial Policies



The Council abides by the policies and standards of Girl Scouts of the USA and complies with applicable IRS requirements.

Every Troop is required to have a bank account. The account must be established under the Council's federal tax ID. All bank accounts require a minimum of two unrelated adult signers who are currently registered members of Girl Scouts and have successfully completed the required background check.

All money collected, or earned, in the name of Girl Scouts must be deposited in the established bank account and thereafter used for the purpose of providing the Girl Scout Experience to girls in the troop.

All signers are responsible for safeguarding and maintaining sufficient funds to cover payments drawn on the account. As with any bank account, signers are legally responsible for all account transactions.

Volunteers who misuse or misappropriate funds will be released from Girl Scout Volunteer positions. The Council may file criminal and/or civil charges.

The Council allows up to two (2) debit cards for each account to be utilized for troop purchases. GSME prohibits troops and service units from applying for credit cards or utilizing PayPal and Venmo. Zelle, Apple Pay, and Google Pay accounts are acceptable.

Security of troop funds is necessary to safeguard troop assets. The bank account should be reconciled regularly, preferably monthly. It is best practice to have one signer use the checkbook and a different signer receive bank statements for review and reconciliation. Both signers should review the bank statement together. Authorized signers must have access to the bank account records. All bank statements, financial records and receipts should be kept for a minimum of three years.

Note: Troops may not solicit cash donations, if your troop receives a donation for more than \$200, send the donation with a note to the resource development department at GSME so that a letter of acknowledgement and tax receipt note can be sent to the donor. If the donation is less than \$200, have the troop send a thank you note to the donor. Please refer to the money earning section of Volunteer Essentials for more information regarding donations.

Annual Troop Finance Reports must be submitted to the Council through the VTK. This report is a summary of the troop's financial activity throughout the year and should be shared with girls and parents/guardians upon completion, please let parents know that they can log into the VTK to see your report.

When a troop disbands, leaders must close the troop account and send any remaining funds to GSME to be distributed back to the service unit or to any girls continuing as Juliettes or in a different troop.

Opening a Troop Bank Account



GSME Bank Account Procedures

- All troop funds must be deposited in a bank. Accounts may be either savings or checking.
 - Troop funds must never be combined with personal funds. Do not help the girls by lending them money.
 - All troop bank accounts must be opened in the name of: Girl Scouts of Maine Troop #_____
 - The troop bank account must be opened using Girl Scouts of Maine's employer tax identification number: 01-0269802.
 - Debit cards are permissible and require the same documentation and receipts as other expenses.
 - Two unrelated registered signers are required on the troop bank account.
- *Misuse of troop funds may be prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

GSME Preferred Banks

The unique structure of Girl Scout banking, coupled with a continually changing banking environment have made it necessary for Girl Scouts of Maine to work with preferred banks, our preferred banks are as follows:

Bangor Savings Bank
Bath Savings Bank
Camden National Bank
First National Bank
Gorham Savings Bank
Katahdin Trust
Kennebunk Savings Bank
Key Bank
Machias Savings Bank
Norway Savings Bank
Peoples United
Saco and Biddeford Savings Institution

Bank accounts are to be established with the banks listed above. Using preferred banks ensures that troop accounts are set up consistently.

Start the Process

1. Each signer must be a registered adult volunteer and have a current membership with GSUSA.
2. Staff of the Council are not authorized to be signers on a troop or service unit account.
3. Each signer must have a current approved background check on file with the Council.
4. The troop must reach out to Customer Care to let us know: What bank you will be using, which branch you will be opening your account at, and who your two signers will be.
5. Volunteer Support will review your bank information and send out a troop bank letter to the two signers to bring to the bank when you open your account.
6. When the account has been opened the troop leaders must complete and sign a bank information form and send it to GSME.

NOTE: GSME will fund each new troop account with \$25 which will be direct deposited into the troop account when the bank information form is received and approved by GSME.

Debit Cards and Statements

The troop may obtain debit cards to be used for deposits and payments. GSME authorizes a maximum of two (2) debit cards per troop. The debit cards will be in the name of two of the signers on the account. Please request that the bank mail copies of monthly statements to one signer monthly. Both signers should review the statement each month to ensure appropriate spending of troop funds. Any concerns about misuse of troop funds should be immediately brought to the attention of Girl Scouts of Maine. Please contact your Volunteer Support Specialist.

Ordering Checks

While troops are not required to have checks, they may be convenient for conducting troop business, including reimbursing volunteers.

Fund Management

Troop funds 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 separate individual girl accounts. All funds expended should benefit all girls in the troop.

All money received from parents or cookie customers should be deposited as soon as possible and should never be held in a personal checking account. For security reasons, we do not recommend keeping cash in a house or vehicle. It is critical that all authorized signers are in communication with the other signers before spending funds to prevent overdrafts on the account.

Cash withdrawals should only be made if absolutely necessary – i.e. cookie booth change, tips for taxis or hotel services. Be sure to keep receipts in these instances proving the funds withdrawn were spent for troop purposes. GSME recommends keeping your ATM receipt and purchase receipt together and writing the purpose and amount of the ATM withdrawal on the ATM receipt.

Each account signer should make sure that there are funds in the account to cover the amount of the transaction before writing a check or making a purchase with the troop debit card. All expenses should be paid for by troop check/debit card. Blank checks should never be pre-signed and debit cards should not be used by anyone other than the person they are issued to. If there is an instance where a signer paid out of pocket for troop supplies and needs to be reimbursed using troop funds, those reimbursements should be approved and authorized by a signer other than the payee. Receipts are required for reimbursement. Issue a check to the individual being reimbursed.

Paying for Product Program

GSME will initiate an electronic transfer from the troop's bank account to pay the Council for product program transactions (i.e. Cookie and Fall programs). It is important that adequate funds are available. The specific dates that GSME will draft the troop accounts are included in product sales calendars and training materials and the troop will receive reminder communications during the sale.

Accepting Check Payments

A troop can choose to accept checks as a form of payment from customers and parents. If a troop accepts checks as a form of payment, the troop may receive a check that is returned because of insufficient funds. Best practice would be to have a phone number for checks \$20 or more.

For product sales program

As part of the product sales program, girls in troops receive the majority of payments from their customers by check. Because GSME encourages this practice and asks that troops deposit these funds to their troop account, we will manage collection of any returned checks for the product sales program on your behalf. More specific guidelines are provided in GSME's product program documents received at your product program trainings about what to do if you have a check returned to you for the product programs.

For national membership dues

As part of the process of registering girls in a troop, you may, from time to time, receive a check payment from a parent for membership dues. In the event that a check for membership dues is returned to the troop, we will manage collection of these returned checks on your behalf. Submit the original information received from your bank about the returned check (copy of the check, statement showing any fees charged, etc) to:

GSME
ATTN: Finance Associate
138 Gannett Drive
South Portland, ME 04106

We will send a check payable to your troop for the full amount of the check and the amount charged by your bank so that your troop does not suffer a loss accepting payments on behalf of GSME.

Retain copies of all information sent to GSME in the unfortunate event that your documents get lost in the mail....it can and does happen.

All other checks

Accepting checks for any other reason than product program or national dues is at the troop's own risk.

Tips for Collecting NSF Checks

Step 1: Immediately notify the payer to request re-payment as quickly as possible. It is sometimes best to request a cash payment or cashier's check.

Step 2: If you are redepositing an NSF check, first contact the payor's bank to ensure funds are available to cover the amount of the check.

Step 3: If funds are not available, send a letter to the payer requesting payment. A fee can be charged to the payee to cover bank service charges on the troop account. The fee should be the same amount charged on the troop bank statement.

Budget and Record Keeping



Each troop should collaborate in the preparation of an annual budget at the start of the program year. Girls should be included in this process, in an age appropriate manner, to enhance their financial literacy skills.

Questions to consider:

- What types of activities will be planned?
- What are the costs associated with these activities?
- How will the troop fund these activities?
- Will money earning activities be required?
- What are your goals for the cookie and fall sale?

Troops may need to create multi-year budget plans for costlier travel trips.

Troops may agree to charge members of the troop a nominal dues amount to support Girl Scout troop activities. This amount should be carefully thought out by the leaders and communicated and agreed upon with the parents and guardians.

All disbursements and deposits should be recorded in a checkbook, electronic spreadsheet or personal banking software. The bank statement should be reconciled to these records monthly. Financial checks and balances should be in place to help prevent misuse of troop funds. A person other than the one preparing the bank reconciliation should also review the reconciliation each month. Best practices provide that separate individuals manage the account and receive the bank statements.

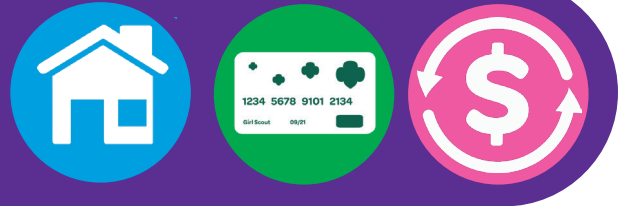
There must be a clear separation of personal and troop funds. No personal expenses should be paid from the troop account and no troop money should be deposited in personal bank accounts. Signers are responsible for any fees or charges for overdrawing the Troop account.

All cash payments should be receipted. A written receipt must be provided to the parents, guardians or other volunteers.

Under no circumstances should a check be written to and signed by the same person.

A file should be maintained with bank statements, all cookie records, and records supporting all financial transactions for at least three (3) years after the end of the program year. Troop financial records should be shared with and made available to girls and guardians throughout the year to maintain transparency.

Changing Signers



Troops must follow GSME's process for changing troop account signers. The troop leader should notify their Volunteer Support Specialist of changes on troop accounts in order to have a new bank letter issued. When changes are made to troop accounts a new bank information form needs to be submitted to GSME.

Each signer must have a current background check as well as a current Girl Scout membership.

IMPORTANT - The leader should collect and destroy debit cards/checks from any person(s) who are no longer involved with the troop or act as signers on the account and/or request that the bank discontinue access to the card.

Annual Reporting



Troops are required to submit the Annual Troop Finance Report directly to GSME using the Volunteer Toolkit. The report is on the "Finance" tab of the Volunteer Toolkit, and accessible by Troop Leaders. The annual report covers financial transactions which took place throughout the year. Troops established during the year should report their finances starting in the month organized. These reports will be reviewed by GSME to ensure policies are being appropriately followed and funds are being utilized to benefit girls.

Troop financial records should be shared with and made available to girls and guardians throughout the year to ensure there is transparency in the troop's financial activities.

Disbanding Your Troop



A troop may disband when there is a leadership change and there are no longer any leaders registered in a troop. If a troop disbands, it is important to make final decisions about the use of the troop's remaining funds after bills have been paid and have cleared the account. Considerations might include:

- Holding a final gathering to celebrate the troop's friendships and accomplishments.
- Donating funds to a charity based on the troop's area of interest. Funds can also be donated to the local Service Unit or the Council. Some common areas of need in Girl Scouting: financial assistance for girls for uniforms, registration fees for membership camp, travel, events, or for day camp, a favorite resident camp or Gold/Silver award projects.
- Transferring funds to another troop for the benefit of the girls continuing their Girl Scout experience.

After determining with the girls the best use for remaining funds. The troop leaders must close the disbanded troop account. Please submit a check with any remaining funds to GSME.

Funds remaining from disbanded troop accounts will be distributed as follows:

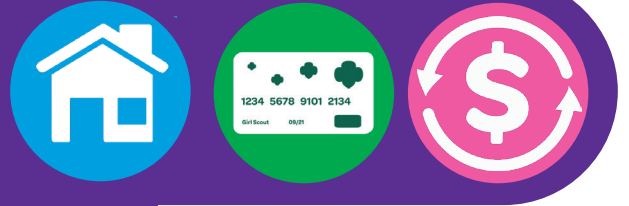
- For girls continuing with Girl Scouts in another troop, the funds will be transferred to the new troop(s).
- If no girls are continuing, remaining funds will be transferred to the local Service Unit.

Fraud



Unfortunately, fraud happens even within Girl Scouts. Please follow the practices outlined in these guidelines to help prevent unauthorized use of troop funds. The Troop funds belong to the girls and should be treated as such. If a leader or parent within the troop suspects that troop funds are being mismanaged, first discuss the matter with the Troop Leader, focusing on the facts and documentation. If there is a possibility that the leader has mismanaged funds, contact GSME. Please make every effort to be proactive and establish good financial procedures and controls. Good financial management allows the troop to focus its energies on the Girl Scout Experience.

Additional Resources



Refer Questions to:

Local Bank

- Not receiving bank statements
- Debit Card Issues
- Reset Debit Card Pin Number
- Errors on Bank Statements
- Check orders

GSME

- Status of new account/signature changes
- Unresolved issues with local bank
- Suspected fraud on account

Troop Banking Materials GSME

- M14 Bank Information Form