

Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast Council—Costa de Oro Service Unit

Troop Finance Policies and Procedures

Girl Scout Troops must follow certain policies and procedures related to troop finance. Here are a few things you should know in order to comply with those policies and procedures and keep your troop in good standing.

Girl Scouts of the USA and our Council (Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast) have policies which are included in Volunteer Essentials that all troops and service units have to follow. In addition, our Service Unit has procedures that help to implement those policies.

Council has agreements with three banks from which we can choose. All of the troops in the Costa de Oro Service Unit have their bank accounts at Union Bank. Council must approve the signers on the accounts and provide a Certificate which is brought to the bank in order to open the account under the Council ID number.

All banking materials—monthly bank statements, debit cards, checks, and bank notices—come to our Service Unit mailing address and are distributed to the troops by the Service Unit Treasurer. Please do not attempt to change the mailing address as the Service Unit Treasurer is required to review all the bank statements. The Service Unit Treasurer is a signer on every account and, in addition, each troop bank account is required to have two non-related adults to be the signers. Those related by blood or marriage cannot be signers together on the account.

Both signers do not have to be leaders—one can be your troop treasurer or cookie chair— but all signers must be currently registered with Girl Scouts and background checked prior to obtaining the Certificate from Council.

Only one signature is required for checks under \$1,000 (two signatures required for \$1,000 and more). Do not pre-sign checks and do not sign checks made out to yourself. You should always fill in the memo line indicating why the check was written and keep all receipts.

Once your account is opened, the troop can request one Debit Card to be held by the troop volunteer who manages the checkbook. The Debit Card is for troop purchases and on-line registrations only.

Keep all financial records, including bank statements, for seven years.

Once you form a troop, you and your girls act as a unit. You make troop decisions by discussion and, if old enough, by asking the girls what they want for their troop and by girl voting.

Troop funds come from troop dues, product sales, and money earning activities. You can ask troop families to pay dues to help support your troop activities and the girls are encouraged to pay a small dues amount at troop meetings. This gives them a sense of participating in their troop finances. If you meet right after school, have younger girls bring whatever you are willing for them to lose.

When funds enter your troop bank account, they become the property of Girl Scouts. All girls have an equal vote in how that money should be spent (no matter how many boxes of cookies they each sold :). You cannot require a minimum amount of sales although you can discuss goals. Each girl shares equally in the funds through voting. Girls who sell more cookies do not control a larger share of the spending of the funds and all the girls receive equal access to opportunities paid for by troop funds whether they participated in the sale or not. There is no individual girl money in a Girl Scout troop.

Some troops vote to spend their cookie money by saving a third for fall activities, donating a third, and spending a third. For the donation, you can set up a visit to the organization where you can present the check so the girls see firsthand where their money went. Other troops use cookie sales to completely fund their troop. They do not ask families to pay dues after their first cookie sale, having the annual earnings pay for all the troop expenses from then on. These are choices to be made by the girls with support from their leaders.

If the troop votes to participate in an activity, and all the girls in your troop are offered the same opportunity to attend, your troop participates even if all the girls cannot be present because it is a troop activity. You should not compensate the girls who could not participate as that would break the individual girl money restriction.

Councils fundraise while troops participate in money earning activities. This means your troop cannot hold a Pizza night where you arrange for your troop families or the general public to buy food and your troop receives a percentage of those sales. You also cannot support other organizations, such as Pampered Chef and Tupperware.

Money earning is done by the efforts of the girls themselves. First, your troop must participate in both Council product sales—nuts/magazines and cookies. Next, you need to complete a Money Earning Application and submit it to Council for approval. Then plan your activity—a car wash, rummage sale, bake sale, collect donated books and hold a book sale, make items to sell at a boutique, etc. You should have a specific goal for earning this money, such as a big trip or funding your troop to go to Kaleidoscope or attending a summer camp.

Cash donations made to troops is not recommended as this is contrary to the money-earning format. Since all troop accounts are under the Council tax ID number, donations can affect the Council non-profit status. You should not accept donations of more than \$250 (small amounts at a cookie booth is fine). If you do have someone who really wants to support your troop, accept in-kind donations such as glue sticks, craft supplies, gift certificates—as long as it does not run through your troop bank account.

Again, once funds enter your troop bank account it becomes the property of Girl Scouts. When a troop disbands, they can spend the balance of their funds on final activities but all girls who participate must be currently registered. Therefore, you can't hold final activities after Sept. 30 without re-registering the girls. Girls can also vote to donate funds to non-profits of their choosing. You cannot return remaining funds to the families as this would be creating an individual girl money situation which is against Girl Scout policy. Any funds remaining in troop accounts after disbanding becomes the property of our Service Unit or Council and is used for local girl programs.

Council requires a Year-End Report for every troop and service unit account. The Year-End Report is due to the Service Unit Treasurer by Oct. 31. Sample record keeping forms are attached and can be used to identify sources of income (such as dues, product sales, money earning) and expenses (such as shop purchases and meeting supplies, event registrations, donations). Using forms like these will make it easier to fill out the Year-End Report. Of course, you are free to use bookkeeping programs.

You should try to spend troop money within the year it is earned so the girls who earned it are sure to have a vote on how it is spent and an opportunity to take part in the activities it funds. If your troop bank account enters the new Girl Scout year with a balance exceeding \$300.00 because your troop is saving for a big trip or participation in a major event, such as Kaleidoscope, indicate that in the Balance on Hand section of the Year-End Report.

We have been working with Union Bank for several years now trying to provide our troops with online access to their accounts. This has been an issue because of the way these accounts are set up under the one tax ID number. We had identified a process which overcomes these challenges but once again was blocked from success. We will continue working on finding a way around the bank structure preventing individual on-line access for each unique troop. Once we come up with a solution, the Service Unit Treasurer will work with each troop individually to provide online access, if requested, and your patience is appreciated.

Charlene Garfinkle, Costa de Oro Service Unit Treasurer
Service Unit Mailbox: 5662 Calle Real, #137, Goleta, CA 93117

May 2023

Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast Council – Troop _____

REQUEST FOR REIMBURSEMENT

Date: _____ Amount Requested: _____
[please attach receipt(s)]

Year-End Report Category: _____

Detail of Expenses: _____

Make check payable to: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Submit Request for Reimbursement form to:
[add Leader or Treasurer name and address]

Payment Information:

Date Paid: _____ Check #: _____ Amount Paid: _____

Girl Scouts of California's Central Coast Council – Troop _____

DEBIT CARD PAYMENT RECEIPT

Date: _____ Amount Requested: _____
[please attach receipt(s)]

Year-End Report Category: _____

Detail of Expenses: _____

Purchased from: _____

Purchase made by: _____

Submit Receipt to: [add Leader or Treasurer name and address]