



girl scouts
of central maryland



GIRL SCOUT TRAVELERS

Twenty-First Century Guidelines





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“Girl Guiding and Girl Scouting can be the magic thread which links the girls of the world together.”

– Juliette Gordon Low

Preface

How to Use this Toolkit

The audience for these standards is The Trefoil Adventure Committee, Council staff and Volunteer Travel Advisors. The introduction provides an overview and direction to committee members and Travel Advisors for assessing, planning and activating travel opportunities. Subsequent sections speak to girls and volunteers interested in Girl Scout Travel to define a consistent Traveler experience.

Note to Reader

Across our Council, Girl Scouts have enjoyed travel opportunities ranging from the simple over-night camping excursion to the multi-day international journey. No matter the duration or destination, travel is in an integral component of the Girl Scout experience. Some volunteers may already serve as travel advisors as an extension of their role as leader of a traditional troop, while others may serve as a travel advisor to a group of girls comprised of girl members from various traditional troops. These standards do not seek to limit travel experiences and opportunities offered to our girl members; rather, they serve to provide direction for those volunteers who are interested in participating in a collaborative program that aims to more closely align GSCM’s travel program with those of other councils and take our travel offerings to the next level, while ensuring that all council guidelines and procedures are administered in an equitable manner.



These guidelines have been adapted by GSCM from the GSUSA Domestic and Global guidelines. These guidelines are applicable to all troops, groups, or individuals within GSCM who desire to travel as part of the Girl Scout experience.



Introduction

Why Council-Led or Council-Sponsored Travel, Why Now?

Juliette Gordon Low loved to travel, experience different cultures and make new friends from around the world. Without her love of travel, Girl Scouts as we know it would not exist. Girls and adults who have participated in Girl Scout trips will eagerly share that traveling provided them with some of their most memorable experiences. GSCM strives to provide all of our girl members with a wide array of opportunities as we encourage each one of them to find her inner G.I.R.L. And what could be a better way to develop a girl's sense of adventure and leadership than travel? Traveling and embracing the opportunity to meet other Girl Scouts and Girl Guides from around the world truly is that magic thread that links the girls of the world together.

With the release of these standards, GSCM seeks to align its travel program with other councils across the nation. These changes will also expand our travel opportunities and ensure access to all girl members. To that end, GSCM has elected to form the Trefoil Adventure Committee (TAC). This committee will include girls and adults from each of the council's five counties and Baltimore City, who have an interest in furthering GSCM's Traveler, Trailblazer and/or Mariner opportunities. Our new travel program delivery aims to (1) provide a consistent and equitable experience for all girl members and (2) revitalize our council's Destinations program, while permitting, and encouraging girls to take the lead. Included in this document is direction on group composition and travel focused activities; safety considerations, direction on required certifications, ratio requirements and opportunities for girls to lead. Council does not seek to institute ridged or arduous standards. We recognize that our girl and volunteer membership is diverse and so too must be our travel opportunities. The primary goal of this movement is to encourage older girl retention and provide them with an opportunity to pursue adventures both near and far as Girl Scouts.

What is the Girl Scout of Central Maryland Traveler Program?

Effective October 1, 2020, GSCM will no longer endorse the fully-volunteer run program that is currently referred to as "Travel Pathways." In lieu of the prior program, GSCM will begin the establishment of a multi-pronged Traveler Program. Through this new program, girls will have expanded opportunities to travel in any of four (4) different ways – (1) council-appointed travel troops; (2) council-sponsored travel groups, (3) traditional troop travel and/or (4) Destinations.

Council-Appointed Travel Troop: A council-appointed travel troop is one in which a volunteer desires to lead a particular group of girls through a specific travel experience. This travel troop is similar to the prior pathway troop, with the primary difference being the way trip applications and additional money-earning requests are submitted to council for review. Additional information on the process is discussed in subsequent sections of this manual.

Council-Sponsored Travel Group: A council-sponsored travel group is one that is organized by the Trefoil Adventure Committee. Trips for council-sponsored travel will be selected by the girl members of the Trefoil Adventures Committee with the support and guidance of the adult members of the committee. In other words, travel experiences for girls, selected by girls. Once the council-sponsored trips are selected for the year, adult volunteers may apply to be Travel Advisors for these groups. Any Girl Scout in the council, who meets any age and progression requirements, may register to attend the trip. Generally, there will be at least two (2) trips planned each year. One trip will be primarily for our Juniors – Ambassadors who have experienced local field trips, day trips and overnights and are ready for regional trips. The other trip will be primarily for our Cadettes – Ambassadors who have travelled regionally and maybe even nationally or internationally and are ready to explore!



Traditional Troop Travel: Travel as the member of a traditional troop often serves as a Girl Scouts first experience with Girl Scout Travel. Travel through the traditional troop often satisfies the first three or four levels of Girl Scout Travel Progression – Local Field Trips, Day Trips, Overnights and maybe even Regional Day trips. However, traditional troops do not need to stop with regional travel, these troops can continue to travel nationally and even internationally. Regardless of how far or wide your traditional troop decides to travel, the guidelines that you need to follow are contained within this document.

Destinations: Girl Scout Destinations are the ultimate adventure program for girls ages 11 and older. With a ton of different trips to apply for every year – from surfing on the east coast to hikes out west, to the crazy-cool wonder of new cultures abroad – there is something for everyone to experience. What makes these trips the “ultimate adventure program”, simple – you make friends from all over the country as you travel with Girl Scouts from different states. These experiences are the ultimate independent travel opportunity. Each girl individually applies to these experiences. We hope to establish our own Destination offering in the Summer of 2022.

Who Can Become a Traveler?

All girls and adults participating in the Traveler program are required to be current Girl Scout members.

These are recommendations for Traveler participants and troop/group composition:

Age: Our youngest Girl Scouts, Daisies - Juniors will often travel as part of their traditional troop. We encourage our youngest girls to get out and about and enjoy all that field trips, day trips and overnights have to offer. Our Council-Appointed Travel Troops, Council-Sponsored Travel Groups and Destinations are primarily reserved for girls ages 11+ who have completed at least the first three (3) Girl Scout Travel Progression Levels - Local Field Trips, Day Trips, and Overnights.

Experience level: There are no prerequisites, for joining the Traveler program other than an interest in traveling and the willingness to abide by all Girl Scouts of Central Maryland travel safety standards.

Ability level: Girls of all ability levels can participate in the Traveler program with the appropriate accommodations. Including girls with disabilities (Open Doors Org and other resources): Girl Scouts is committed to making reasonable accommodations for any physical or cognitive limitations a girl may have. Communicate with girls of all abilities and/or their caregivers to assess special needs and accommodations. If you're not sure how to accommodate a girl with a disability in any aspect of travel, simply ask the girl and/or her parents or guardians what she needs to make her Girl Scout experience successful. If you are frank and accessible, it's likely they will respond in kind, creating a better experience for everyone. To learn more about the resources available, visit Disabled World, which provides general information about people with disabilities. On the site you can also find information and resources available for certain sports and activities—so always check when planning to include a girl with a disability that may impact her participation in a specific activity. A great reference for learning about travelling with disabilities is the Open Doors organization

Geography: Girls in every county and Baltimore City, will have an opportunity to participate in the Traveler program.

Traveler Troop versus Traditional Troop: Traditional troops must comply with the requirements set forth in this document regarding travel requirements and related additional money-earning requests. However, in all other facets (including participation in council-sponsored product sales) traditional troops will be overseen by their assigned Service Unit. All other troops, groups and girls traveling, including council-appointed travel troops, council-supported travel groups and girls participating in Destinations will be entirely overseen by the Trefoil Adventure Committee (TAC). The Traveler program will be based on both the traditional troop model and the open group model.



In furtherance of the Traveler troop model, each council-appointed travel troop and council-sponsored travel group will be provided two (2) GSCM appointed (registered and criminal background checked) adults (additional adults may be appointed as necessary to fulfil ratio and safety needs as determined by GSCM) and offer a regular meeting schedule.

These troops will participate in the product program and practice traditions and ceremonies. The development of council-appointed travel troops and council-sponsored travel groups in no way seeks to limit a girl's participation in her traditional troop. Rather, the program is intended to enhance the Girl Scouting experience of those girls who belong to traditional troops, while providing a troop experience to those girls who do not already belong to a traditional troop and desire a specialized program.

Volunteers

Girl Scouts is not only committed to providing amazing experiences to girls, but to ensure that our volunteers feel engaged and empowered with the knowledge and skills to be part of the mission. All Girl Scout Traveler volunteers are expected to be registered, criminal background screened, and knowledgeable members of Girl Scouts. Volunteers must stay current with all council level required trainings for their roles.

Due to the specialized nature of these volunteer roles, volunteers will be required to apply for Traveler leadership positions. Through this process, council will gather more information about the prospective volunteer and an interview will be required to ensure the best fit. Travel Advisor positions will be appointed for a term of one (1) or two (2) Girl Scout Membership Year(s) (October 1st to September 30th of the following year), depending upon the Travel Advisor role for which they are applying. Volunteers may apply for an unlimited number of appointments. Upon appointment, Travel Advisors are required to review and acknowledge the requirements associated with their role as identified on the associated Volunteer Role Description. GSCM will also require that each Travel Advisor complete specialized training to adequately prepare for the expertise needed to fulfil their role, which may include but is not limited to: Introduction to Travel – Field Trips, Day Trips and Indoor Overnights, Camp Training, Travel the Next Level – Regional and National Travel, Tent Camping, Travel the Final Frontier – International Travel, Backpacking, First Aid & CPR, Wilderness First Aid or Wilderness First Responder.





Traditional Troop Travel, Council Appointed Travel Troop, Council Sponsored Travel Group & Destinations

Which is Right for Me?

Girl members will be encouraged to travel in any of four (4) different ways – (1) council appointed travel troops; (2) council sponsored travel groups, (3) traditional troop travel and/or (4) Destinations. So which one is right for your daughter?

Council Appointed Travel Troop – A council appointed travel troop is created when a volunteer seeks approval from council to establish a travel troop. These troops are primarily comprised of girls that are acquainted and are generally comprised of girls in one geographical area. These groups work together to determine the scope of their trip, participate in council sponsored product sales activities and, council approved additional group money-earning activities. The approval of all travel related money-earning activities will be overseen by the TAC and council staff. Only council staff may approve additional money-earning activities, providing there is a demonstrated need for additional money-earning activities. All troop funds will be retained by the troop appointed treasurer and account information must be reported monthly to the troop's members. The TAC Unit Treasurer (TACUT) must be updated on account status at the conclusion of each approved money-earning activity.

Council Sponsored Travel Group – A council-sponsored travel group is comprised of girls from across the council. Girls may or may not be acquainted before the group is formed. These travel opportunities provide girls a great opportunity to meet girls from all over council. These trips are great for those girls who are looking for a robust travel opportunity, with less pre-travel time commitment than may be associated with council-sponsored travel troop opportunities. Each girl will be responsible for funding her travel expenses. The cost of these trips will be known at the time girls register to participate in the trip. With approval, girls may participate in individual and/or group additional money-earning activities. The approval of all travel related money-earning activities will be overseen by the TAC and council staff. Only council staff may approve additional money-earning activities, providing there is a demonstrated need for additional money-earning activities. All funds related to council sponsored travel groups will be retained by the TAC Unit Treasurer (TACUT). The TACUT will report balance information at least monthly to the TAC Unit Manager (TACUM) and the assigned Travel Advisor.

Traditional Troop Travel – Traditional troops are encouraged to embark on journeys both near and far. Troop travel is a fundamental component of the travel program, as it is often where girls complete the first three (3) levels of the travel progression chart. Travel encourages bonding among troop members, establishes self-confidence and independence. Travel may enhance badge work or further knowledge of the World Centers. However, there is no requirement that travel be linked to badge work or the World Centers. The troop trip should follow the progression in travel as the girls mature and decide on their destinations and activities. If your daughter is interested in additional travel opportunities, but your traditional troop is not, you should consider participating in a Council Appointed Travel Troop, Council Sponsored Travel Group or Destinations. With approval, troops may also participate in additional money-earning activities if necessary.



For purposes of additional money-earning activities related to travel opportunities, traditional troops must submit their money-earning requests to the Trefoil Adventure Committee, rather than their SUM. Only council-staff may approve additional money-earning activities, providing there is a demonstrated need for additional money-earning activities. All troop funds will be retained by the troop appointed treasurer. Travel account information must be reported monthly to the troop's members. The TAC Unit Treasurer (TACUT) must be updated on account status at the conclusion of each approved money-earning activity.

Destinations – This Girl Scout travel experience is for individual Girl Scouts. Destinations are planned by GSUSA and Councils across the nation. Trips vary in length and include national and international destinations. Trips are different each year and are applied for individually through GSUSA. Check out their website at www.girlscouts.org for this year's exciting trips and then apply! A limited amount of scholarship money is generally available to GSCM for Destinations opportunities; contact GSCM at membercare@gscm.org to discuss financial aid. With approval, girls may also participate in additional money-earning activities if necessary. The approval of all travel related money-earning activities will be overseen by the Trefoil Adventure Committee, and council staff. Only council staff may approve additional money-earning activities, providing there is a demonstrated need for additional money-earning activities. All funds related to Destinations will be retained by the TAC Unit Treasurer (TACUT). The TACUT will report balance information at least monthly to the TAC Unit Manager (TACUM) and assigned-council staff.





Her Traveler Experience - Ready, Set, Go!

Progression

Girl Scouts is a great place for girls to learn how to plan and take exciting trips, because travel is built on a progression of activities—one activity leads to the next. Daisies may begin with a discovery walk and then progress to a simple overnight at the Science Center. As girls grow in their travel skills and can better manage the planning process, they progress to longer trips—even international ones! If you are overwhelmed by the process, don't be! Council staff and council appointed experienced volunteers are here to help and guide you through all things travel!

Girl Scout Travel Progression

Progression allows girls to learn the skills they need to become competent travelers, including how to plan and organize trips. Because when girls take the lead, the possibilities are endless.

LOCAL FIELD TRIPS

Get your travel feet wet! Walk to a nearby garden, or take a short ride to a firehouse or other local spot.

Keep it girl-led: girls choose the location.

DAY TRIPS

Take an all-day trip!

Keep it girl-led: girls choose the location and activity (perhaps working toward a badge) and make plans for lunch.

OVERNIGHTS

Start with one night, maybe at a camp or museum. Progress to a weekend trip in a nearby city or state park.

Keep it girl-led: girls plan the activity and meals, create travel games, and pack their own overnight bags.

REGIONAL TRIPS

Spend three to four nights away somewhere a few hours from home.

Keep it girl-led: girls plan key details of the trip, such as the activities, the budget, the route, and lodging.

(Extended trip insurance required.)

NATIONAL TRIPS

Travel the country! Trips often last a week or more. Girls should think beyond a typical vacation location and consider historical sites, museums, or national parks!

Keep it girl-led: girls lead the entire planning process and might add a community service or Take Action project.

(Extended trip insurance required.)

INTERNATIONAL TRIPS

Travel the world! These life-changing trips usually take one to three years to prepare. Consider visiting a WAGGGS World Centre!

Keep it girl-led: girls download the Global Travel Toolkit and plan their entire trip (including learning about the language, culture, passports and visas, exchange rates, etc.).

(Extended trip insurance required.)

INDEPENDENT TRAVEL

Older girls with national or international travel experience can travel nationally or internationally independently through council-offered travel opportunities or GSUSA's Destinations program. Check with your council, or visit the Girl Scout Destinations website!

Check with your council about age requirements. Girls should have experience at every level of the progression before moving on to the next level. For regional travel, girls must be Juniors or older. For national and international trips, girls must be Cadettes or older.

When moving up to each level of the progression, consider girls' independence, flexibility, decision-making skills, group skills, and cross-cultural skills.



Support and Encourage Girl Travel

Progression Details

The GSCM Travel Experience provides the opportunity for all levels to participate in travel opportunities. While Daisies and Brownies cannot hop on a plane to the UK, planning a single night sleepover, or a simple 2-night get-away will carry the same level of excitement for our youngest girls! If your girls are Juniors and older, GSCM offers multiple ways for them to participate in travel—via rail, plane or cruise ship—to various destinations. Trips are designed to meet the needs of the experienced or novice traveler and we would not dare forget our special interest travelers!

Short trips to local points of interest (Daisies and older): A walk to a nearby garden or a short ride by car or public transportation to a firehouse or courthouse is a great first step for Daisies.

Day trip (Daisies and older): An all-day visit to a point of historical or natural interest (bringing their own lunch) or a daylong trip to a nearby city (stopping at a restaurant for a meal) allows younger girls to select locations and do much of the trip-planning, while never being too far from home. Full-day trips may be very challenging for Daisies, especially for kindergarteners who have not experienced short trips. Make sure girls take some short trips before they progress to a full day trip.

Overnight trips (Daisies and older): A trip of one—or possibly two—nights away is just long enough to get girls excited about travel, but not long enough to generate homesickness. If your girls are ready, think about staying in a hotel, motel, or campground—or even an overnight at a large museum. A one-night camping experience at a Girl Scout property, state or national park is a great first camping experience. If you aren't sure about your level of comfort with such overnight experiences, checkout GSCM program offerings. GSCM programs are a great way to achieve new experiences for your girls while ensuring that you have all the support you need to make the outing a success.

Extended overnight and regional trips (Juniors and older): Three or four night camping trip or staying in a hotel, motel, or hostel within the girls' home region is a great next step. Enjoy taking girls up to a few hours away from home as the girls solidify their ability to be away for a few days. Think about taking your girls camping at Assateague, or maybe venture to Western Maryland and stay at New Germany State Park, or Herrington Manner. Or perhaps a visit to GSUSA national HQ in New York, NY or Juliette Gordon Low's birthplace in Savannah, GA is more your speed? A great way to begin planning a multi-day trip is to ask your girls what sort of experience they would like to have. Do they want to camp? See historic sights? Do they like the beach or the mountains? Start general and then work your way into the specifics.

National trips (Cadette and older): These are trips outside our region. Maybe your girls want to see the Hollywood Sign? Or maybe they are eager to head to the Pacific Northwest to visit Pike Place Market and the Olympic Peninsula? Regardless of where they want to go in the United States, if girls are ready, you can go. These trips will last for a week or more, so before you go, be sure that these girls have traveled without family, or been without family members, for an extended period. Once ready, find a plane, train or automobile (or cruise ship) and make your plans to travel anywhere in the country. Try to steer clear of ordinary recreational trips girls might take with their families and consider those that offer some educational component—such as incredible cities, historic sites, and museums around the country.



International trips (Cadettes and older): Once girls are ready and can demonstrate (1) the ability to be away from family for an extended period, and (2) the requisite level of maturity, the world is full of travel opportunities. Girls may enjoy visiting one of the World Centers, taking a cooking class in Italy or seeing the Eiffel Tower at night, whichever experience is selected, girls and adults will need time to prepare. Travel around the world can require one to two years of preparation for both girls and adults. International travel with girls should only be undertaken by adults with significant travel experience, who understand the culture, customs and geography of the country to be visited. Adults must ensure passports, documentation, visas, and customs requirements are in order well in advance of the trip.

Girl Scout Traveler Program

The Foundational Girl Scout Experience, Traveler Style

The Girl Scout Mission is to build girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. Girl Scouts is all about practicing everyday leadership, preparing girls to empower themselves, and promoting the G.I.R.L (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader) experiences. In Girl Scouts, everything centers around the girl; activities are girl-led, which gives them opportunities to take on leadership roles and learn by doing in a cooperative environment. Through the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, girls Discover themselves and what they are passionate about, Connect with others, and Take Action to make the world a better place. Through travel and preparation for travel, girls are provided with opportunities to lead and experiential learning opportunities that reinforce the Girl Scout Leadership Experience in an unparalleled manner. Girls may:

- Earn badges in STEM, Outdoor, Life Skills and Entrepreneurship through the lens of a Traveler. For example, the Senior Traveler badge is an easy fit, but so are many badges—from Junior Eco Camper to Ambassador Photographer— be creative and adapt activities to incorporate your travel experiences!
- Patch programs can also be an exciting addition to the travel experience. A great example is the GSCM Be a Partner with the World patch programs. Girls may complete requirements and earn their patch in preparation for, or during, a trips to one of the World Centers. Many other patches may be earned while traveling. Incorporate GSCM's Hispanic Heritage Patch in your Mexican dining experience, or research other council's patch programs – the opportunities are endless.

OR

- Take part in a National Leadership Journey. All the Journeys are eligible. These fun and challenging experiences are grounded in a specific theme. The Journey adult guides provide insight into trips that will enhance the Journey and bring it to life, from Daisies to Ambassadors. Incorporating travel into girls' Journey is an amazing way to reinforce the lessons and add memorable experiences. Journeys and the leadership experience may also be incorporated in approved additional money-earning activities. Workshops run by older girls, develop leadership and confidence in the girls and teach them invaluable lessons about developing and executing a plan. Younger girls, who attend these workshops, also benefit from seeing girls take the lead.

OR

- Earn one of the highest awards. The Girl Scout Silver and Gold Awards are a fundamental part of the Girl Scout experience. Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors grow through a progressive leadership experience where they partner with their communities to create sustainable solutions that address society's biggest challenges. Empower girls to take action on a Travel related issue and encourage their growth as courageous leaders, community organizers, and change makers. While Travel Advisors will encourage girls to seek their highest awards, girls are encouraged to work through these awards with their traditional troops. However, if a girl does not belong to a traditional troop, her Travel Advisor may support her through the highest award program.



The Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE): This experience is what Travelers activate through the challenges girls face while planning and traveling. Girls learn about themselves and their values as they seek new challenges. Travelers work together with their fellow adventure seekers and build positive relationships. Through travel girls gain unique perspectives that encourage them to think critically about the world around them and consider how they can make the world a better place.

The Three Girl Scout Processes: These ensure the promotion of the fun and friendship that have always been integral to Girl Scouting.

- **Girl-led** -- girls take an active and grade-appropriate role in figuring out the what, where, when, why, and how in order to form and implement a plan.
- **Learning by doing** -- hands-on learning that engages girls in action and reflection, allowing them to gain a deeper understanding of concepts and mastery of skills.
- **Cooperative learning**-- to promotes sharing of knowledge, skills, and learning in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation as girls work together on goals that can only be accomplished with the help of others.

Take Action: Take Action and service projects can focus on a wide variety of service-related activities.

Service projects can include introducing travel skills and travel-related issues to troops of younger Girl Scouts, whether in the community or at camp. Examples may include:

- Host, plan or participate in, events that bring awareness to the benefits of travel. Activities could include education on issues facing female's around the world, or a display focusing of travel safety.
- Examine how to remove barriers for people with differing abilities and needs.
- Global stewardship and action can include activities such as how to be a better traveler and respect local customs.

Awards: For Girl Scouts interested in pursuing honors that develop their leadership skills, awards are an excellent option. Below are some considerations:

- Cadettes can go for the Silver after completing one Cadette Leadership Journey.
- Seniors/Ambassadors must complete the Silver and one Senior/Ambassador Leadership Journey or, in lieu of the Silver Award, two Senior/Ambassador Leadership Journeys before attaining the Gold Award.
- Girls may set their sights on earning the Cadette, Senior, or Ambassador Leadership Torch, Service to Girl Scouting Bar, or Community Service Bar for their service and leadership efforts within their travel troop or wider community. These awards recognize girls who go above and beyond in service to their troop or school as they identify issues to tackle through their highest award project.



Girls eager to mentor younger Girl Scouts and build their group leadership skills (and the pipeline for future Travelers), may consider earning these:

- Leader in Action (LiA) and Program Aide (PA) pins for Cadettes
- Volunteer in Training (VIT) and Counselor in Training (CIT) pins for Seniors and Ambassadors
- Service to Girl Scouting Bars for Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors
- Silver Award for Cadettes
- Gold Award for Seniors and Ambassadors

Product program: All Traveler Program participants engage in product program just as other troops do. This is a great way for girls to help finance their travels. All Travelers, except traveling traditional troops, will participate in the product sale under the supervision of the Trefoil Adventure Committee's Cookie Manager also known as, Trefoil Adventure Unit Cookie Manager (TAUCM). Like a traditional troop, each Traveler troop will have an appointed Traveler Troop Cookie Manager who will aid girls in orchestrating and completing a robust product sale. If a girl belongs to a traditional troop and participates in a Traveler troop/group, she can participate equally in both troops' product sales activities. Traveler troop/group booth opportunities will be coordinated via the Trefoil Adventure Committee.

Traveler uniform: The GSCM Travelers wear the same Girl Scout age-level uniform as that for traditional troops. They also wear a GSCM Trefoil Adventure bandana and bucket hat. The official GSCM Girl Scout Traveler uniform does not require that the girl wear the Girl Scout age-level sash, or sash equivalent, worn by traditional troops. GSCM Travelers will also be required to wear a GSCM Traveler shirt when participating in community activities.

Working the Steps – Skill Development!

Girl-led Planning

Girl Scouts embraces girl-led planning. As girls plan a trip they will discover, connect, and take action at every stage, from budgeting to traveling, whether the trip is to a local park, a camp, or a foreign country. Girls make decisions and choices about what they do and how they do it. Girls feel they “own” their group and experiences, resulting in more fun.

Girl-led planning can be a journey unto itself and you need to be patient through the process. There will likely be many false starts as girls contemplate their travel plans and how to fund their plans. Girl Scouts embraces inclusion; thus each girl must have a chance to speak and each girl must learn to be a respectful listener. As girls navigate the planning process, permit ample time for girls to explore potential destinations, activities, accommodations, and costs. Whether your group chooses to travel with a tour company, or seeks the assistance of a travel agent, or decides to book everything directly, the girls should do the initial legwork. It is important for girls to “respect others” and recognize that while they may change their minds, they should not seek the services of a travel professional until they have at least a basic idea of where they intend to travel and have a solid understanding of their budgets and the potential cost of their desired excursion.



As a troop leader or travel advisor, you should guide girls through a rewarding experience. Start by understanding each family's commitment to their daughter traveling and how much money and time a family is willing to commit. Then determine what each girl really desires. Do the girls really want to travel to a particular destination or are they more interested in having a certain experience. While some girls may be determined to travel to Paris, France and may be willing to spend hours and years selling cookies and leading additional money-earning programs, other girls may be just as happy to travel to Quebec, Canada, experience a taste of France and have a very rewarding experience, but with a smaller price tag and thus a potentially shorter amount of time.

Keep in mind that different families have different priorities and different financial capabilities. One family may be able to contribute little financial support for their daughter's trip, while others may be able to fully fund their daughter's trip. One family may feel that it is important for their daughter to "work" to fund her trip, while another family may feel that their daughter's time is better spent on another activity. While it can be challenging to manage such differences, it is important for you to facilitate compromise and it is important for girls to learn to compromise.

Funding a Trip

When your group decides to travel, one of your initial conversations should have to do with budgeting. Before you can begin to determine where you will go, you, and your girls, need to understand your budget. First, determine the amount, if any, the group already has earmarked for travel. Then, in an anonymous and confidential manner, determine how much money each girl and her family feels comfortable contributing to the trip. Finally, add those numbers together to arrive at your initial budget.

With your initial budget in mind, discuss trip options with your girls. If the options available, given their budget, do not align with the girl's desired destinations, your next step is to examine the estimated cost of the trip the girls want to take and what the girls will need to earn to make that trip a reality. During this phase of planning, do not spend months nailing down the cost of each activity, rather have the girls create a rough outline of the trip that they would like to take and the associated costs, or look at the cost of a similar trip offered through a tour company. The girls can then subtract their initial budget from the dream trip estimated budget to arrive at what they will need to earn through council sponsored product sales and, if necessary, additional money-earning activities.

When discussing money-earning activities with your group, begin by examining the amount your group may be able to generate from robust participation in council sponsored product sales. Then explore additional money-earning activities if necessary. Encourage your girls to be realistic in the number of additional money-earning activities that they can offer a year and the number of years that it may take to raise the funds needed to embark on their dream journey. While offering programs to younger Girl Scouts can be an extremely rewarding experience, planning and running these programs can also be exhausting. The goal is to retain girls in Girl Scouting through travel, not to have girls leave Girl Scouts because they are overwhelmed by money-earning activities or feel as though they may never actually get to take a trip through Girl Scouts. The recommendation is that it take no more than two (2) years to fully plan and execute your trip.

If additional money-earning activities are necessary, you must submit a complete (1) Money-Earning Request Form (including budget) and (2) Money-Earning Reconciliation Form following each event. If you are requesting to participate in more than two (2) additional money-earning activities during one membership year (October 1 - September 30th), you must submit information detailing why the additional money-earning activities are necessary.

Now, that your girls know the cost of traveling and their options to fund travel experiences, it's time to get down to planning. Be sure to consult Volunteer Essentials and Safety Activity Checkpoints while planning and submit all necessary forms to council for approval.



Building an Itinerary

An itinerary is simply a plan for what your girls want to do on their trip. Your group may decide on an itinerary that schedules every second of the day in an attempt to see all that can be seen, or maybe your group opts for a more open itinerary that leaves plenty of room for downtime and open exploration. Whatever itinerary is selected, the girls should participate in its creation.

You are required to submit a copy of your itinerary to council no later than 45 days before extended travel (3+ nights) within the continental United States and 90 days before travel outside of the continental United States. To assist you in your planning, you may choose to use the Daily Trip Planner, that may be found in the Extended Overnight Trip Application, or you may use your own form so long as all necessary information is contained within the itinerary. Don't forget to include what will happen if your trip is cancelled or postponed.

Debrief

Once you return from your trip, take time to complete the Outcome Evaluation Form for Girl Scout Travel. You may want to have a special celebratory meeting, or use the time wisely during your return trip spent waiting for transportation. In any event, the evaluations will need to be filed with council within thirty (30) days of your group's return home.

You will also need to submit your reconciled spending log and any remaining funds within thirty (30) days of your group's return. If your budgeting was successful, you should have very few, if any remaining funds. Residual funds may revert to your troop's general account (traditional troops ONLY) or be remitted to council's general travel account to aid girls who need financial support to participate in travel opportunities. Funds may not be disbursed directly to individual girls or families.

Approval for Travel

With the retirement of the Travel Pathway program, GSCM will no longer accept bulk submission of trip applications or additional money-earning requests. The Travel Advisor associated with a traditional troop or a council-appointed travel troop will be required to: (1) meet established member minimums; (2) submit council standardized travel forms; (3) submit council standardized additional money-earning request forms in the event that additional money-earning is needed; (4) participate in all required travel trainings; and (5) follow all trip related requirements established by GSCM. As discussed in prior sections of this manual, volunteers who opt to lead a troop that is organized for the primary purpose of traveling will be required to submit a request to council to establish a Council-Approved Travel Troop and request to be appointed as Travel Advisor. Volunteers will not be permitted to maintain a troop number or submit requests for additional money-earning programs for troops that do not meet all requirements.

Things will run smoothly in approving the travel desired by your girls if all necessary paperwork is fully completed and submitted to GSCM via membercare@gscm.org in a timely manner. Before you begin the paperwork process, verify that all adults attending the trip are registered and have completed the required criminal background check, that you meet ratio requirements and that you have a GSCM appointed First Aider in your group of adult volunteers. Requirements are as follows:

**For Local Field Trips, Day Trips and Simple Overnight not more than 250+ miles from Designated Meeting Location** – *(Originals Retained by Leader with Copies to each Adult in Charge)*

- Parent/Guardian Permission for Girl Scout Activities, Trips and Events, for each girl, signed and completed by parent or guardian; and
- Roster of travelers, both girl and adult; and
- Girl and Adult Health History Records

For trips 250+ miles from designated Troop/Group meeting location, 3+ nights within continental United States – *(Due 45+ days prior to the planned start date of the trip.)*

- Parent/Guardian Permission for Girl Scout Activities, Trips and Events, for each girl, signed and completed by parent or guardian;
- Girl and Adult Health History Records for each girl and traveling adult;
- Extended Trip Overnight Application, fully completed with roster and itinerary;
- Mutual of Omaha Plan 3PI Additional Insurance Form and check for payment of premium; and
- Contracts for accommodations, transportation, or activities (if applicable).

NOTE: An Intent to Travel Form does not need to be filed with council for travel within the continental United States, unless the group intends to participate in additional money-earning activities or a contract for accommodations, transportation or activities requires execution. In such cases, the form may be submitted to GSCM via membercare@gscm.org simultaneously with the request for permission or execution.

For Trips Outside the Continental United States – *(Due 90+ days prior to the planned start date of the trip.)*

- Parent/Guardian Permission for Girl Scout Activities, Trips and Events, for each girl, executed by parent or guardian;
- Girl and Adult Health History Records for each girl and traveling adult;
- Extended Trip Overnight Application, fully completed with roster and itinerary;
- Mutual of Omaha Plan 3PI Additional Insurance Form and check for payment of premium;
- Notarized Authorization for Medical Treatment for each participating girl and adult; and
- Notarized Permission to Travel Form for Minors;
- Copies of Passport for each participating girl and adult;
- Evidence of STEP Registration with the U.S. State Department (see Non-Continental US Travel Forms Packet);
- Contracts for accommodations, transportation, or activities, if applicable.

NOTE: Intent to Travel Form must be filed with council at least 1 year before non-continental US travel. The approved form must be on file, or submitted simultaneously with, the submission of request for (1) permission to engage in additional money-earning activities or (2) execution of contracts for accommodations, transportation, activities etc. The Intent to Travel Form must be submitted to GSCM via membercare@gscm.org.



Risk Management

Safety is our number one priority, whether the travel is local, national, or international.

Safety Activity Checkpoints: Instructions for staying safe while participating in activities are detailed in the Safety Activity Checkpoints for GSCM. Read the GSCM specific checkpoints, follow them, and share them with other volunteers, parents, and girls (as grade-level appropriate) before engaging in activities. Review them again just before travel and consult them any time plans change.

Volunteer Essentials: Volunteer Essentials for GSCM provides details of the Girl Scout Leadership Experience, information for age appropriate programming and detailed information regarding the policies, standards, and procedures of Girl Scouts of Central Maryland. All adult members attending any trip should read and understand what is expected of them while traveling. Adult Girl Scout members are required to comply with Girl Scout of Central Maryland policies, standards and procedures while engaging in Girl Scouting activities, including travel. The use of alcohol or drugs is strictly prohibited during Girl Scout activities, regardless of age and state or country laws.

Travel Security and Safety Tips: When traveling, always use caution and pay attention to what is happening around you. Adults must know the location of girls at all time and ensure that girls are easily contacted. Individuals traveling under the GSCM Traveler Program must not be left to explore foreign countries on their own, regardless of age.

Buddy System: Use the buddy system at all times. Inform girls and adults about what to do if separated from the group.

Proper Attire: Do not wear your name monogrammed where strangers can see it. It is better to all dress alike with the same color t-shirts, bandanas, or backpacks when visiting crowded areas. This makes group identification easy. However, you should avoid wearing full uniforms in airports, train stations and other high-traffic public areas.

Emergency Plan: Always have an emergency plan. Be aware of your surroundings and the location of the balance of your group. Also, ensure that everyone knows how to phone home, the police, or fire department. Every country has its own system for making calls. You **MUST** arrange to have at least one cell phone with the travel group for emergency communication at all times. For international travel, this will require the arrangement of international service with the carrier well before the trip.

Know what to do in case of fire. Make a plan with escape routes for each new place you visit. A copy of your group's roster, itinerary, emergency plan, and contact information must be provided to your group's emergency contact that is staying behind. Additionally, each adult in the traveling party must have a copy of the group's roster, itinerary, emergency plan, and health forms. Health forms should remain in sealed envelopes and only opened in the event of an emergency. If traveling outside the continental United States, each adult must also have copies of all passport information, copies of the Permission for Medical Treatment and copies of the Permission to Travel Form for Minors.

Avoid Theft: Carry identification in an inside pocket. If carrying a backpack, pin the zipper down with a large safety pin. It may be a little inconvenient to use, but it will help prevent theft from behind. Always be alert and aware of your surroundings. Never leave bags, packages, phones, or personal items unattended in public areas. Carry only what you need and secure other items safely within your room.

Chaperones: Girls and buddy groups must check-out with their assigned chaperone before leaving any designated location. When returning to the location, girls and buddy groups, must check-in with their assigned chaperone.



Room Safety: Girls are prohibited from opening room doors for anyone other than another trip participant. Doors are to be kept locked at all time.

Incident Reporting: All necessary steps must be taken to ensure that a planned excursion is safe. However, on occasion, accidents happen and knowing what to do should that occur is as important as planning to avoid an incident. Should an accident or incident occur, first provide needed medical care to the injured person. If the injury is serious, be sure to contact 911 for emergency medical assistance. In the event of a serious emergency, you must adhere to the GSCM Crisis Communications Plan. At no time should a volunteer issue statements about an accident or speak to reporters. After the injured person is medically treated, complete and file an Incident Report with GSCM via membercare@gscm.org. Every registered girl and adult Girl Scout member is covered under basic Girl Scout Activity Insurance (up to 3 nights) upon registration. The entire premium cost for this protection is borne by Girl Scouts of the USA. The basic plan is effective during the regular membership year (October 1st through September 30th of the following year). This insurance is secondary to an individual's primary insurance, providing additional coverage up to a specified maximum for medical expenses incurred as a result of an accident while a member is participating in an approved, supervised Girl Scout activity. Generally, only registered Girl Scouts and necessary council approved adult volunteers are permitted to participate in GSCM's travel opportunities.

Additional Insurance: Additional insurance is required for all groups traveling for a term of 3 nights or more or traveling outside the continental United States. Additional insurance may also be necessary for some riskier activities. Be sure to consult GSCM's Safety Activity Checkpoints.

Traveling Safely: An integral component of travel safety is knowing that it is safe for you and your group to travel to your desired destination. While GSCM monitors the safety of travel, it is the responsibility of each Travel Advisor to ensure that there are no advisories issued in connection with travel, either by GSCM or other agencies. If traveling internationally, you must register your trip with the U.S. Department of State via the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) and provide confirmation of registration to council. Visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.htm>. Prior to departing for your trip, confirm the travel advisory level for your destination(s) via the U.S. Department of State's travel page. Visit <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel.htm>. Prior to departing for your trip, consult the Centers for Disease and Control Prevention website and address potential health concerns with participants and family members. Girls and adults should discuss their travel health requirements and any vaccinations or medications necessary with their physicians prior to travel. Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/>.

Transportation of Members Policy: To ensure that your trip gets off on the right path, start by selecting a reliable form of transportation. Volunteer Essentials outlines acceptable modes of transportation; public transportation options include public buses, trains, watercraft or airplanes. Private transportation includes private passenger vehicles, rental cars, privately owned or rented recreational vehicles and campers, chartered buses, chartered boats, and chartered flights. For Girl Scout activities in which a group will be transported in private vehicles:

- Every driver must be an approved adult volunteer, at least 21 years old and have a valid license. State laws must be followed at all times and take priority over Girl Scout requirements. Girls never drive other girls.
- Each adult may not drive more than six (6) hours a day. Rest breaks are required every two hours.
- A group is traveling in one vehicle, requires at least two (2) unrelated, approved adult volunteers (at least one of whom is female) in the vehicle.
- A group traveling in multiple vehicles, may travel with a single female adult driver; however, care should be taken to ensure that a single car is not separated from the group for an extended length of time.



- Each person transported in a non-commercial vehicle must have a specifically designed passenger seat and wear a seat belt.
- Never transport girls in flatbed or panel trucks, in the bed of a pick-up, or in a camper-trailer.
- Keep directions, a road map, a flashlight, first-aid kit and emergency information packet (roster, health records and emergency contact information) in the car.

Contracts for use of vans, buses, and other leased transportation services: All contracts and agreements must be signed by Girl Scouts of Central Maryland's CEO. Any trip involving the leasing of transportation services requires an Intent to Travel be on-file with, or submitted simultaneously with the contract.

The Intent to Travel and contract must be submitted to GSCM via membercare@gscm.org. If the transportation company is not one that is pre-approved by council, a Certificate of Insurance with a minimum of \$1M in coverage must accompany the contract. Fifteen (15) passenger vans are not permitted for the transportation of girls. Uber, Lyft, Curb, and similar ride-sharing companies are not permitted to transport girls.





Appendixes:

All forms can be found on www.gscm.org/travel

Girl and Adult Health History Record

Parent/Guardian Permission for Girl Scout Activities, Events and Trips

Extended Overnight Trip Application

Additional Insurance Information

Intent to Travel Form

Non-Continental US Travel Forms Packet

Money-Earning Request Form (Updated form to be released on or about 10/01/2020)

Money-Earning Reconciliation Form

Incident Report Form

Crisis Communication Plan (Updated document to be released on or about 10/01/2020)

