HOW TO START A GIRL SCOUT TROOP 2020-2021
**GIRL SCOUT PROMISE**
On my honor, I will try:
To serve God and my country,
To help people at all times,
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

**GIRL SCOUT LAW**
I will do my best to be honest and fair,
friendly and helpful,
considerate and caring,
courageous and strong,
and responsible for what I say and do,
And to respect myself and others,
respect authority,
use resources wisely,
make the world a better place,
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.
We are so excited you are taking action and leading a Girl Scout troop! Our parents and adult volunteers are vital to the success of our eastern Missouri change-makers. We are grateful for the time, energy and passion you bring to this role.

Whether girls are earning their first petal, strategizing for the upcoming Cookie season or programming a robot, you are providing them the tools and skills needed to take that next step.

Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri will support you on this journey, starting with this guide. Within these pages are step-by-step instructions detailing the logistics of starting your new troop (some of these may now be virtual!).

We can’t wait to see what incredible accomplishments you and your Girl Scouts achieve together. Thank you for stepping up for our eastern Missouri Girl Scouts!

Bonnie Barczykowski
CEO, Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri
START YOUR TROOP IN SEVEN STEPS

STEP #1  REQUEST A TROOP

Visit girlscoutsem.org/howtostartatroop, and complete the New Troop Request Form. Once your request is submitted, you will be connected to our membership staff who will work closely with you to ensure a successful start to your new troop!

When a new girl or volunteer joins your troop, you’ll get an email notification with their contact information, allowing you to reach out and welcome them into your troop.

STEP #2  START LOOKING FOR OTHER ADULTS TO HELP!

A troop needs at least two unrelated, background checked adults (one of whom must be female) to get started. Troops can have more than two leaders and are encouraged to involve all adults. Additional volunteers can help with the Cookie and Fall Product Programs, as well as pitch in with snacks, field trips and other activities.

Parents of girls in your troop are prime candidates to help out, but adults from the community might love this opportunity, too. People tend to have the most fun with adults they know.
STEP #3  SET UP YOUR NEW TROOP

Your leadership experience begins when you register at girlscoutsem.org/join and successfully complete a background check. You will receive a link via email to complete your background check once your registration is processed.

After your membership is complete, it is now time to begin your training with the New Leader Course which is available online or in-person. Learn more at girlscoutsem.org/training. At least one leader or assistant leader in your troop must complete the New Leader Course within 90 days of beginning your role. We have additional trainings available to support many planned activities, like camping, canoeing and archery. We offer a wide range of online and face-face trainings that empower volunteers with the knowledge, skills and confidence to deliver fun, safe and meaningful Girl Scout experiences.

need help?

Contact our Answer Center at 314.400.4600 or answercenter@girlscoutsem.org.
STEP #4 PICK A DAY, TIME AND LOCATION FOR YOUR TROOP

It’s a great idea to start thinking about how your troop will get together right away. You can start contacting potential venues now as you complete your registration and on-boarding to find a good meeting space. Keep in mind:

Most troops meet twice per month, but you can choose a schedule that works best for you and your meeting space needs to be a safe, clean and secure environment that allows all girls to participate. Good options include: schools, libraries, places of worship, community centers, local businesses or virtual. To learn more about our virtual resources, visit gsemtogether.org.

○ CHOOSING A MEETING PLACE

Cost—the space should be free to use. Availability—Be sure the space is available for the entire length of the time you want to meet. Resources—Ask if tables and chairs come with the room and ensure lighting is adequate. Accessibility—Your space should accommodate girls with disabilities as well as parents with special abilities who may come to meetings.
STEP #5 IT’S TIME TO SPREAD THE WORD!

Now that you’ve registered, it’s time to start spreading the word about your new Girl Scout troop. While you complete your Girl Scout training in order to establish your troop, you can talk to your girl’s friends, your neighbors, and other families in the community to make sure that your girl will have a lively troop. As a bonus, more girls usually mean more adults who will be happy to help you lead this troop. Our staff will work closely with you to help support the formation of your new troop!

To get started, troops need to have a minimum of five girls. At Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri we encourage troops to have at least 10-15 girls. However, we understand that every troop is different and we will work with you to create the best possible experience for both you and the girls in your troop!

STEP #6 GET READY FOR YOUR FIRST TROOP MEETING

Now that your troop is registered you can hold a virtual or in-person parent meeting to discuss logistics and encourage other adults to get involved.

Next, review lesson plans by visiting the Volunteer Toolkit. Leaders gain access to the Volunteer Toolkit once they have completed their registration. The Volunteer Toolkit is a digital resource that supports troop leaders making the process of running a troop easier and more efficient. It includes a year plan and meeting agendas as well as badge curriculum, additional activities and community service ideas.

STEP #7 STAY IN TOUCH

Your Community Engagement Manager is the Council staff member who will be in touch once you are registered. They can answer any questions and direct you to local volunteers and resources.

You are encouraged to attend neighborhood meetings and check your email for Council news and information. Like us on Facebook, and follow us on Instagram and Twitter to stay connected to events and find other awesome volunteers to network and collaborate with.
Make Your Volunteer Hours Go Further! Many employers recognize the hours employees spend volunteering with cash contributions. Check with your company today to see if they offer a volunteer hour program or visit girlscoutsem.org/match.