



# 2024 April Showers Troop Participation Guide

April Showers Training and Reporting Information

**Door-to-Door Distribution: April 5-7**

**Showering the Community: April 6**

**Donation Collection: April 13**

**Online Registries: April 5-14**











## Welcome to April Showers 2024!

Another spring season is upon us and for the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri community that means supporting those in need through our personal care item drive.

For 26 years, Girl Scouts have collected more than 28 million personal care items through our Council-wide community service project, April Showers, and we appreciate the thousands of girls and adults who participate in this program each year.

This troop guide will help you understand the April Showers program, and how to have a successful experience. As a troop leader, you will coordinate and manage April Showers efforts for the members of your troop along with any family, friends or supporters.

We are gearing up for 2024 and cannot wait to see our troops connecting with their communities while making the world a better place. The current need for personal care items in our area is greater than ever, but by working together, we can support our community members safely. We encourage troops to continue to engage their families this year with options to walk a route as a family, count and sort donated items at home or organize an online drive through their neighborhood. We will continue to utilize Amazon's and Target's online registries for our online donation options.

We are looking forward to seeing our girls and adults in the community promoting this essential program to meet the needs of our communities. Please be assured that your Neighborhood April Showers Coordinator, District April Showers Coordinator and the Council staff are ready to support you in any way possible.

Thank you for choosing Girl Scouts for your family! Together, we will make April Showers 2024 our biggest collection yet!

Yours in Girl Scouting,

Director, Programs and Partnerships



# History of April Showers



In 1998, the April Showers personal care item drive was established as part of Seasons of Giving. Troops place April Showers notifications one weekend in April and return the following Saturday to pick up personal care items. These items are taken to collection sites and either remain at these sites or are delivered to food pantries for distribution.

In collaboration with Operation Food Search, Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri collects and distributes more than one million personal care items annually to local families and individuals in need.

## Why April Showers?

Try to imagine what life would be like without soap, toothpaste, deodorant and feminine hygiene items. These items are important not only for cleanliness and good health, but for positive self-esteem and a sense of well being. Personal care items are often overlooked when donations are made to food banks, but for which a great need exists.

Girl Scouts and their families who participate in April Showers have positively impacted the lives of many people in our community.

## Benefits of April Showers

- Increases the visibility of Girl Scouts' community service efforts
- Helps local families and individuals in need who cannot purchase personal care items with the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- More than 900,000 people a year in Missouri live below the federal poverty line – the items collected through April Showers account for more than 60 percent of personal care items donated in eastern Missouri and go to these individuals who often have to choose between buying food or paying for basic needs



## Our Partner, Operation Food Search

Founded in 1981, Operation Food Search (OFS) is a hunger relief organization that provides free food, nutrition education and innovative programs proven to reduce food insecurity.

With a strategic focus aimed at ending childhood hunger, OFS empowers families and increases access to healthy and affordable food. The agency provides food and services to nearly 200,000 individuals on a monthly basis – one-third of whom are children – through a network of 330 community partners in 27 Missouri and Illinois counties and the city of St. Louis.

Health and beauty care items are often considered “extras” for families in need and wouldn’t be accessible without your community outreach during April Showers.

To learn more about this organization, visit [operationfoodsearch.org](http://operationfoodsearch.org).



# Operation Food Search

Healing Hunger. Strengthening Our Future.



**"I think it is important to participate in April Showers because it's a way to give to people who are having a hard time getting what they need. Everyone deserves the basic things in life to care for themselves, and we as Girl Scouts have the power to bring that to people."**

**Dana C.  
Ambassador**



# Troop Responsibilities

All registered Girl Scouts are expected to participate in April Showers through door-to-door distribution, donation collection or Showering the Community. District and Neighborhood events scheduled for either weekend of April Showers should plan to incorporate April Showers as part of the event plans. Troops camping are expected to participate in April Showers on the alternate weekend. Encourage girls, their parents and families to help. Non-member insurance is secured by Council so all can help make a difference.

## Ways to Participate

### Door-to-Door Distribution and Donation Collection

The first weekend of April Showers, girls, their leaders, and families distribute sticky notes door-to-door throughout the Council's jurisdiction. The sticky notes give the community the option to put out donations for pick up the following weekend or purchase donations through one of the online registries. The second Saturday, girls return to collect donations of personal care items.

### Showering the Community

Girl Scouts across eastern Missouri will host the annual "Showering the Community" event. Girl Scouts will set up mini collection sites, like a table or booth at participating stores in our jurisdiction to encourage donations and collect personal care items for individuals and families in need.

### Other optional ways to participate in April Showers:

#### Online Registry Promotion

Again this year, our community has the option to support April Showers through online registries. The registries will be promoted through a QR code on the sticky notes, and we encourage girls to come up with creative ways to promote the online registries. A branding toolkit will be available on the April Showers page of our website with suggested social media posts and graphics.

#### Counting/Sorting Registry Donations

Registry donations will be shipped to Camp Tuckaho and Camp Cedarledge. Sign ups will be available for troops/girls to come to camp to help mark UPC codes, count, and sort items.

## Troop Leader Responsibilities Include:

### Training

- Attend April Showers Training for your Neighborhood, usually held in months leading up to April Showers

### Troop/Group Assignment

- Troops/groups assigned to door-to-door distribution will receive area maps and sticky notes
- Troops/groups assigned to support Showering the Community will select a shift at a local store. Shopping lists will be provided to pass out to store patrons asking for personal care donations
- Troops/groups assigned to help with donation collections will be provided area maps and further instructions
- If you are assigned an area for door-to-door distribution or donation collection, please do not place sticky notes or pick up donations in an area that is not assigned to you. Another troop may not have had the opportunity to cover their area yet
- More supplies are available from your Neighborhood April Showers Coordinator, if needed

## Door-to-Door Distribution and Donation Collection Days

- Girls and adults should wear uniforms, Girl Scout T-shirts, or pins to identify themselves as a member of the organization.
- Adults must monitor, supervise, and guide the activities of all grade levels. Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies and Juniors must be accompanied by an adult. Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors must be supervised by an adult. Girls should always use the buddy system. Follow girl/adult safety information
- Do not enter any buildings (homes, apartments, or businesses). Apartments with exterior entries may be covered with an adult accompanying the girls. Do not enter apartments with hallway entries. Girl Scouts may decide to speak with apartment complex management about displaying a poster or collection box in their office or clubhouse instead
- Post sticky notes on doors—so they do not blow away and become litter. Do not post sticky notes to mailboxes; it is against U.S. Postal Regulations
- The public is asked to have donations out by 9 am on collection day; troops should not start picking up donations before 10 am. Bags or boxes not labeled for April Showers or not containing personal care items should not be picked up
- Allow time to complete pick-up, counting, marking out UPC codes and delivery to your collection site on collection day—verify the time your collection site closes with your Neighborhood Coordinator
- Opened packages of the following products are accepted and counted: diapers, individual feminine hygiene products, toilet paper rolls, etc.

## After Donation Collection:

### Tasks to Complete

- Count total number of items your troop collected, including sample-sized items
- Vertically mark out UPC codes on items with a permanent marker
- Arrive at your designated collection site and unload the items and place where instructed.
- Turn in the April Showers Participation Form to the designated Data Collection Coordinator at your designated collection site when the troop is finished collecting, counting, and sorting
- Make a second drive through your territory later during the day for donations put out late
- Deliver these extra items to your troop's designated collection site. Report for a second time, only the items collected on the second run. Do not include the number of items already reported from the first collection. Extra reporting forms are available at the designated collection site

### Recycling

- While collecting donations, troops may be collecting plastic bags and/or cardboard boxes. Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri encourages Girl Scouts to recycle plastic bags, boxes, or other items.
- Please recycle at a participating pantry or store in your area

### More Helpful Hints and Information

- Read the “Frequently Asked Questions” included in this booklet for further information and review with the girls, families, and friends

## Troop/Girl Accessibility

If any troop or Girl Scout is unable to participate in April Showers due to time conflicts with their religious observations, we are more than happy to support that troop/girl in any way we can and make necessary accommodations.

Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri welcomes the participation of all girls and adults and will make reasonable modifications for persons who need them. To make this request, please complete the Accessibility Request at [vr.girlscoutsem.org/AR](http://vr.girlscoutsem.org/AR). Once the form is completed, you will receive a phone call to discuss the details of the program and how we can best support your Girl Scout.





# Girl/Adult Safety

To ensure the safety of girls and adults during all Girl Scout events and activities, it is important that everyone is aware of good supervision, safety precautions and instructions. Accidents and incidents are more likely to happen when safety precautions are overlooked. All participation in Girl Scout community service projects is valued and appreciated. Please choose the April Showers participation option that is best for your troop. Below you will find information to help prevent or handle unsafe situations.

## Important Information to Share

### Door-to-Door Safety:

- Girls should never enter the house of a potential donor. Girls should always check first with their leader or another trusted adult before going anywhere, accepting anything or getting into a vehicle with anyone
- Girls should not go out alone and should always follow the buddy system
- Adults must monitor, supervise and guide the activities of all grade levels. Girl Scout Daisies, Brownies and Juniors must be accompanied by an adult. Girl Scout Cadettes, Seniors and Ambassadors must be supervised by an adult
- Practice basic safety skills and safe pedestrian practices with the girls. Make an outing a teachable experience in which girls practice safety tips: the buddy system, locating adults who may help if they need assistance, etc. Find opportunities to practice “what if” scenarios

### Dog Safety:

- Dogs and kids are a terrific combination and usually best friends. Although, sometimes people can get too excited or scared when a dog is around, and that can make for a potentially dangerous situation
- Remember, all dogs can bite. Dogs will bite when they are afraid, angry, threatened, protective or hurt
- If a dog does not know you, it sees you as a stranger and may become frightened
- Do not approach the property if a “Beware of Dog” sign is posted on or near property, even if the dog is not visible
- Do not go into a yard to pet a dog you do not know or pet a dog that is chained
- Never reach through a car window or fence to pet a dog
- Dogs do not like to be teased, yelled at or have objects thrown at them
- Always respect a dog’s feelings about the things it wants to protect. Never grab an object from a dog

### Online Safety:

- April Showers registry information can be shared on social media pages and in online groups if solicitation is allowed.
- Adhere to the Girl Scout Internet Safety Pledge
- In addition, review and apply the below Supplemental Safety Tips for Online Marketing:
  - o To protect your personal identity, NEVER direct message with people you do not know online or on social media platforms
  - o Parents/caregivers must supervise all communications with anyone girls don’t personally know
  - o Never share your personal information (e.g., last name, phone number, email, or street address)
  - o Never share your personal location information



**If a Girl or Adult is Injured, Follow These Procedures:**

- Seek medical assistance for the injured person
- Notify the girl's caregivers; if not available, contact designated emergency contact
- Document the accident/incident; who, what, where, when, etc.
- Call the Girl Scout Service Center at 314.592.2300 or 1.800.727.4475 and state that you are reporting an emergency. Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri has an answering service that will contact a designated Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri official to assist. Give the telephone number from which the call is made. Have someone remain at the phone for a return call







# Showering the Community Guidelines

*Please note: specific details on Showering the Community will be shared closer to the event. Guidelines may vary depending on the store.*

Girl Scouts will be "Showering the Community" at local stores throughout our jurisdiction. District/ Neighborhood Coordinators will be responsible for managing the collection at their local participating store, scheduling all troops in their area, ensuring the items are counted and reports are turned in. Girls are welcome to wear rain boots, raincoats and carry umbrellas if available, to help promote.

## **Troops are Needed in the Following Areas:**

- Front doors of store handing out Showering the Community shopping lists that list personal care items needed
- Exit doors of store collecting donated items
- Moving donated items to counting area
- Counting donated items and crossing out UPC codes

Troops must turn in total collection numbers to District Coordinators.







# Communications

As with all Girl Scout community activities, to ensure consistent messages and promotion, the marketing and communication of this event will be managed by the Communications Department of Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri. This includes ALL media, advertising and promotion of April Showers 2024.

## Communications Department Contact

Kelly Daleen, 314.592.2397, [kdaleen@girlscoutsem.org](mailto:kdaleen@girlscoutsem.org)

- If you are contacted by the media, please direct the call to Kelly Daleen
- The Communications Department will be glad to assist you with any media inquiries
- If you have questions or suggestions for reaching out to your local media, please contact Kelly Daleen
- If you contact your local media outlet to secure coverage for an April Showers event, please notify the Communications Department so we can work together on the opportunity

### Other Notes:

While the Communications Department has systems in place to track print, TV, radio and online coverage, should you hear or read any announcements about April Showers programs, please let us know the date, time and outlet where the program was featured.

## Stories About April Showers

- If your district, neighborhood, troop or a girl is taking a unique approach to April Showers, please let us know. We'd love if you share your stories with us through the story form found at [girlscoutsem.org/communityservice](http://girlscoutsem.org/communityservice)
- Anything with an unusual angle or attention-getting twist may contribute to a great story for the media and exposure for this wonderful community program
- Feel free to share any photos you take with the Communications Department; we may be able to use them in Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri publications, and on the website and social media. Media Releases are required for each person shown in the photo, please contact Kelly Daleen for the release form

## Promotions for April Showers 2024

- Promotion of the April Showers collection across the Council's jurisdiction
- Promotion of Showering the Community across the Council's jurisdiction
- Ongoing media relations to broadly promote April Showers



# Frequently Asked Questions

## General

**Q: Why are we collecting personal care items?**

**A:** Personal care items cannot be purchased with SNAP credits, and personal care items comprise less than 40% of donations to pantries and shelters. The items that are collected during April Showers are donated to local pantries and shelters to provide personal care items year-round.

**Q: Is participation in April Showers required?**

**A:** It is the expectation of Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri that all troops participate in this Council-wide community service project through door-to-door distribution, donation collection or Showering the Community.

**Q: Is there a patch?**

**A:** Yes, there is an April Showers patch that includes the corresponding year. This year, girls who participate in the campaign will receive a patch as a thank you. Troop leaders will fill out their April Showers Participation Form and will tell us the number of patches they need for their troop. If girls participate in Showering the Community, a Showering the Community patch can be purchased from the Girl Scout Shop in St. Louis.

**Q: I have a suggestion for the promotion of April Showers. What should I do?**

**A:** Contact Nicole Dalton, Director of Programs and Partnerships, at 314.592.2370 or [ndalton@girlscoutsem.org](mailto:ndalton@girlscoutsem.org).

**Q: Why do Girl Scouts have to mark out the UPC symbol?**

**A:** All the UPC symbols must be marked out prior to distribution to eliminate the possibility of the product being returned to the store. This is an additional service to the pantries and makes the donation immediately available.

**Q: What role does Operation Food Search play in April Showers?**

**A:** Operation Food Search is the distribution partner for April Showers. They assist with logistics and distributing donated items from in-store collections, trailer sites and the online registries to our April Showers agencies as well as additional agencies they support.

## Door-to-Door Collections

**Q: Does our troop have to use the collection site assigned to our Neighborhood?**

**A:** Yes. Each Neighborhood was given the opportunity to choose the collection site they will use for April Showers.

**Q: What if our troop runs out of sticky notes on Door-to-Door Distribution Days?**

**A:** Call your Neighborhood April Showers Coordinator for more sticky notes.

**Q: I have April Showers sticky notes leftover. Should I save them for next year?**

**A:** No, the message is different from year to year. Recycle any unused sticky notes.

**Q: Do I, as Troop Leader, have to cover my entire territory or can parents help with this?**

**A:** Caregivers may take girls out to participate in the campaign. This is a great family project and will make the task lighter for everyone. Health History Permission forms are required. Be sure that each girl's signed permission form is in the vehicle with her.



**Q: Are sample or hotel-sized items counted?**

**A:** Yes.

**Q: What if a cash donation is made instead of items?**

**A:** Troops are encouraged to use that money to purchase items to be donated if cash is received. It can also be mailed or brought to the Girl Scouts of Eastern Missouri office at 2300 Ball Drive, St. Louis, MO, 63146, Attn: April Showers

**Q: What do I do if I collect more items after I have already turned in my April Showers Participation Form?**

**A:** Once the additional items are collected, counted, sorted and the UPC codes are marked out, deliver these extra items to your troop's designated Collection Site. Report a second time - ONLY THE ITEMS COLLECTED ON THE SECOND RUN. Do not include the number of items already reported from the first collection.

## **Online Registries**

**Q: How are donations purchased?**

**A:** Community members will have the option to purchase items for donation through online registries set up specifically for April Showers.

**Q: Why were the retailers selected for the online registries?**

**A:** The selected retailers have registries that are designed for nonprofits to create lists and allow us to have donations delivered to our locations.

**Q: How will the items donated through the registries be divided among the participating agencies?**

**A:** Items will be divided up among the participating agencies that opted in to picking up a portion of the registry donations.

**Q: How will the donated items get to the participating agencies?**

**A:** All items purchased through the registries will be delivered to Camp Tuckaho or Camp Cedarledge. After being counted and sorted, items will be distributed to agencies through Operation Food Search.

**Q: Will girls be physically handling the items donated through the registry?**

**A:** Girls will have the opportunity to sign up for a shift at camp to help mark out UPC codes, count, and sort items. Sign up will be through SignUp Genius.



# Counting Guide

## Multi-pack Toilet Paper

- Each roll counted as one item

## Multi-pack of Soap

- Each bar counted as one item

## Paper Towels

- Each roll counted as one item

## Disposable Razors

- Each razor counted as one item

## Feminine Hygiene Items

- Each individual pre-packed item counted

## Diapers

- Each diaper counted as one item

## Band-Aids

- Each individual pre-packaged band-aid counted

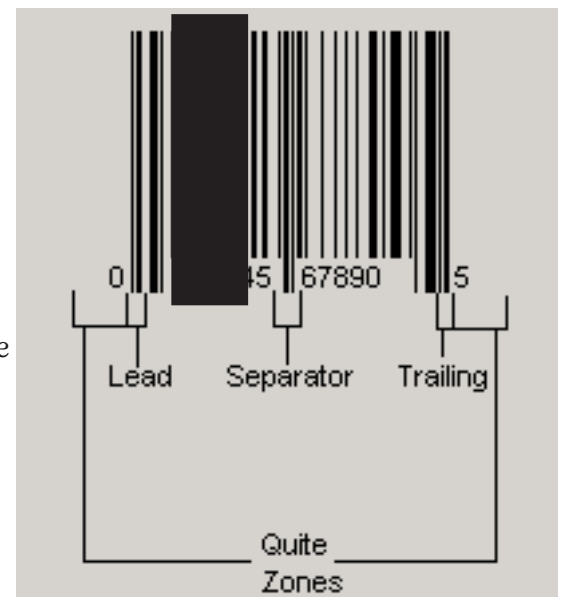
## First Aid Kits

- Each individual pre-packaged item counted

To eliminate the possibility of the product being returned to the store the UPC symbol should be marked out vertically (see example).

We only need the grand total of items collected. You do not have to count each type of item individually.

Note: multi-packs should be counted individually as per the counting guide shown to the left.





## April Showers Participation

**Troops must submit this form to the designated Neighborhood Coordinator.**

We recognize that members participate in April Showers in many different ways. Please use this form to report participation numbers of your group. This includes door-to-door distribution, Showering the Community, donation collection, and work done at collection sites.

1. Troop number or Juliette: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ▶ Program Level: \_\_\_\_\_
2. How did you participate?    Sticky Note Distribution    Showering the Community    Collection Day
3. District: \_\_\_\_\_ Neighborhood: \_\_\_\_\_
4. If you participated in collecting items on collection day, list the collection site name here:  
 \_\_\_\_\_
5. Total number of girls who participated with April Showers: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ▶ Total number of adults who participated with April Showers: \_\_\_\_\_  
 ▶ Total number of tagalongs who participated with April Showers: \_\_\_\_\_
6. Of total adults, how many are registered Girl Scout members? \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many service hours did the troop/group give to April Showers? Please complete the chart below.

- Service hours include time spent planning, preparing, traveling, and providing the service
- Add the number of hours girls gave and multiply by the number of girls who participated
- Example: 2 hours of service x 10 girls participating = 20 total hours of service
- Do the same for all adults who helped, both registered and non-registered, such as parents who help
- Tagalongs are kids younger than 18 who are not registered Girl Scouts

	# of Girls participated	Avg. hours per Girl	Total Girl Hours	# of Adults participated	Avg. hours per Adult	Total Adult Hours	# of Tagalongs participated	Avg. hours per Tagalong	Total Tagalong Hours
Door-to-door distribution	x	=		x	=		x	=	
Showering the Community	x	=		x	=		x	=	
Donation collection	x	=		x	=		x	=	
Work at collection site	x	=		x	=		x	=	

8. Total number of items collected by troop on collection day (April 13): \_\_\_\_\_  
 ▶ If you participated in Showering the Community, how many items were collected? \_\_\_\_\_  
 ▶ If you participated in Showering the Community, which location did you volunteer at?  
 \_\_\_\_\_
9. It is important that we measure the impact of this program on the girls who participate. Please have the girls who participated respond to the following questions, which you can read aloud. Record the number of yes and no answers.  
 ▶ It is important for me to make a difference in my community. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
 ▶ I believe girls my age can help other people. Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

10. How many April Shower patches does your troop need? \_\_\_\_\_  
*Patches only go to girls and adults who participated in the campaign.*

**girl scouts**   
of eastern missouri