



girl scouts   
of oregon  
& sw washington

# Back to Troop 2023 Leader Guide



Summer is here, and the beginning of a new Girl Scout year is just on the horizon!

Prepare for a new year of fun, adventure, and supporting your girls as they become the leaders of tomorrow with these helpful tips, tricks, and planning tools.

[www.girlscoutsosw.org](http://www.girlscoutsosw.org)  
[answers@girlscoutsosw.org](mailto:answers@girlscoutsosw.org)  
(503) 977-6800

**girl scouts**   
of oregon  
& sw washington

# Membership Renewal

## Find out where you are.

You can see who in your troop has renewed, and who still needs to renew, in your MyAccount. Here's how:

- Log into your [MyAccount](#).
  - Having trouble logging in? [Let us know!](#)
    - Special note: Please don't create a new account if you're having trouble logging in, as this could create duplicate accounts.
- Find **MyTroops(s)** in the white bar running down the left side of the page, and click the drop arrow (v) symbol to open the drop down of all of the troops your family is a part of.
- Click on the troop you wish to review
- From here, you can see all members who are:
  - Are ready and renewed for another year (**Active Membership**).
  - Have 2022 membership, but still need to renew (**Time to Renew Membership**).
  - Have lapsed membership, and need to renew (**Lapsed Membership**).

## Connect with troop families.

Once you know who still needs to renew, you can connect with troop families to determine if they plan to continue or not.

For girls and adults who aren't coming back next year, you can mark the **Not Returning** box next to their name. Don't forget to press save!

## Renew troop members.

Did you know that troop funds can be used for girl and adult membership renewals? Just as with other important group decisions, this is an opportunity for a meaningful troop conversation. What a great chance for girls to exercise financial independence, practice girl-led financial decision making, and enjoy the benefits of their collaborative efforts. Need help renewing your troop? Check out our [Troop Renewal Guide!](#)

If your troop isn't opting to use troop funds for membership renewal, here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Respecting individual family needs.** Only individual families should be making the choice to request financial assistance or use program credits for membership renewal.
- **Creating access and normalizing support.** Some families may not feel comfortable requesting financial assistance for membership. As a troop leader, you can help all families understand that financial assistance is available to girls in need by sharing the [GSOSW financial assistance policy](#) with your troop.
- **Share resources.** The [Family Renewal Guide](#) can walk families through membership renewal, and includes information about renewing with program credits and financial assistance. And, if they need any additional support, they can call (503) 977-6800 or email [answers@girlscoutsosw.org](mailto:answers@girlscoutsosw.org)!

## Troop Leader Reflection

### Self-reflect.

Volunteering is a fulfilling and amazing experience. It's also a responsibility and requires time and energy. Take time to reflect on where you are and how you feel about continuing as a Girl Scout volunteer. Here are some things to ask yourself:

- Do I want to continue volunteering in the same roles this coming year?

- If yes: Great!
- If no: Connect with your coleader(s) to create a transition gameplan to find a replacement volunteer. This could include hosting a special Parent Meeting to discuss troop volunteers.
- Do I need more support from my coleaders and troop families?
  - If so, what kind of support do I need?
- Are there volunteer duties I can delegate to other troop volunteers?
- Now that the girls are another year older, what responsibilities can they begin to take on this coming year as part of their progression?

## Connect with your co-leaders.

Now that you've had time to reflect on your own needs as a volunteer, connect with your co-leader(s). An open and honest discussion can help you get on the same page, reflect on the past year together, and plan a little for the year ahead. Here are some things to ask yourselves:

- Did we feel like we shared leader responsibilities equitably?
- Are there any particular responsibilities you'd like to delegate to someone else?
- What went really well this year?
- What didn't go well this year?
- What are we excited for the coming year?

As your group works through the discussion, reflect back on what has been said as a way to offer empathy, check for understanding, reframe divisive language, and highlight key phrases.

### What to Summarize and Examples

1. Key Themes
  - "There were three issues that came up multiple times, which were (\_\_\_\_)."
  - "Some of us had strong emotions around certain points. One moment that stands out to me was when (\_\_\_\_)."
2. Divergence
  - "One key area of disagreement is (\_\_\_\_)."
  - "It sounds like you would like to see (\_\_\_\_). I see things differently and feel (\_\_\_\_) would be a better fit."
3. Common Ground
  - "There is a huge passion in this room for (\_\_\_\_)."
  - "When you started talking about (\_\_\_\_), everyone leaned forward."
4. What Was Not Said
  - "I noticed that no one mentioned (\_\_\_\_)."
  - "When the topic of (\_\_\_\_) came up, the room got silent."

5. Process Check
  - “How is everyone doing?”
  - “Do we need a break?”
6. Transition or Closure
  - “As we wrap up our meeting I want to acknowledge that we’ve accomplished (\_\_\_\_).”
  - “We are about to move on to (\_\_\_\_). Before we do, I would like to take a moment to summarize what I just heard from all of you (\_\_\_\_).”
7. Take a Moment to Gather Your Thoughts, Too
  - “If I knew what was most important here I would say (\_\_\_\_).”
  - “I am going to identify where things stand now, and then we will identify how to move forward.”

## Back to Troop Form

### What’s that?

Every year, GSOSW provides a form troop leaders can use to update troop information in the months leading up to the beginning of the new Girl Scout year.

### Why is it important?

The Back to Troop form is important for a few reasons:

- **For troop families:** Accurate meeting information ensures that troop members have what they need to be active participants in the troop.
- **For your troop and yourself:** Ensuring volunteers are in the right roles, and have completed registration, background checks, and training will make things a whole lot easier for you and your troop when it comes to:
  - Fall Product Program and Girl Scout Cookie Program pre-qualification
  - Troop travel planning (Form 116b, we're looking at you!)
  - Troop Financial Report submissions in June
- **For everyone:** Accurate troop details help Girl Scout staff (and service unit volunteers!) support you with a better volunteer onboarding experience, better customer service, and better program opportunities.

## Troop size and welcoming new girls.

Welcoming new members gives your girls the opportunity to live the Girl Scout Law: friendly and helpful, considerate and caring, and being a sister to every Girl Scout. With that in mind, troops are never just “open” or “closed” to new members. Instead, welcoming girls throughout the Girl Scout year is predicated on your troop’s chosen troop size.

The Back to Troop Form gives you the opportunity to update and confirm what your troop would like its troop size to be for the coming year. After you submit the form with your preferred number, Girl Scout staff will follow up as needed to make sure that your chosen troop size is *at least* the lowest possible number for your level:

- Daisy troops: 8 girls
- Brownie, Junior and Cadette troops: 10 girls
- Senior and Ambassador troops: 5 girls
- Multi-level troops: Depends on the levels of the girls

With your chosen troop size finalized for the coming year, open spots are available if your troop's total number of girls is less than your chosen troop size. If your troop has four members and a chosen troop size of 10 girls: your troop has six open spots! And:

- At any time of year, if a girl leaves the troop officially and that drops your total membership below your chosen troop size, that spot in the troop will open and be available for any interested girl in your community.
- **Beginning October 1**, any girls that haven’t renewed will no longer be active members of your troop. If their not returning drops your total below your chosen troop size, spot(s) in the troop will open and be available for any interested girl in your community.

When your troop size and your total girl members are equal (or you have more girls than your chosen troop size), your troop won’t have any open spots and girls won’t be able to join through our website. Here is how you can see if your troop has open spots:

- Log into your [MyAccount](#)
- Click on **MyTroop(s)**
- The far right column of your troop box is **Open spot(s)**
- This area shows open girl spots and open volunteer spots!

And, if you’d like to invite specific girls in your community to your troop, you can do that even if the troop doesn’t have open spots. Here’s how:

- Log into your [MyAccount](#)
- Next to **MyTroop(s)**, click on the drop arrow (v) symbol to open the drop down of all of the troops your family is a part of.
- Click on the troop number you'd like to review
- Scroll down to the very bottom of the page
- Click **Invite friends to join your troop**
- Type in the caregiver email address(es) and press the green **SUBMIT REQUEST** button.

**Special note for multi-level troops regarding open spots:** Due to system limitations, open spots can't be allocated to certain grades. By that we mean, it's not possible to allocate three spots for new Daisies, four spots for new Juniors, and one spot for new Cadettes; there are just eight spots available for that troop in any grades that the troop supports.

## Ready to fill out the form?

The 2023 [Back to Troop Form](#) is live and ready for you to complete! Please complete a separate form submission for each troop you lead.

## Back to Troop Drawing!

Every troop that submits the form by August 31 will be entered into a drawing to win one of three \$50 prizes for their troop bank account! Winners will be announced in the September Troop Connect Newsletter.

# Back to Troop Meeting & Rededication

Once you've taken the time to renew troop members, reflect on the past year, connect with your co-leaders, and complete our annual Back to Troop form, it's time to plan a Back to Troop Meeting with your whole troop and their caregivers. This meeting will give your troop the opportunity to:

- Start planning what they'd like to do together in the coming year;
- Think about any special activities or events they'd like to have;
- Develop goals and a budget with activities, events, travel and outdoor programs in mind;
- Decide if they'd like to participate in the Fall Product Program to support their year;
- Re-engage your amazing group of adult volunteers;
- Get EXCITED about another year of Girl Scouts; and
- Have an Investiture and Rededication [Ceremony!](#)

Looking for a fun way to commemorate the start of a new Girl Scout year? Give your troop the [Back to Troop fun patch!](#)



Thank you for the care, knowledge and time you give as a Girl Scout volunteer. Your dedication is inspiring, and your efforts make a meaningful difference in girls' lives!

**We're here to support you every step of the way.**