



COVID-19 and Girl Scouts: Frequently Asked Questions

Thank you to all who attended GSOSW's COVID-19 and Girl Scouts: Virtual Q&A session on August 25, 2020! Below is a compilation of questions from the live session. Questions have been grouped by topic below. Some questions have been altered for clarity, and duplicate questions have been combined and answered together.

If you were not able to join us on August 25, please look out for future Q&A and feedback opportunities later in the fall, or contact us directly at answers@girlscoutsosw.org with your questions; GSOSW strives to reply to all member inquiries within three business days. We appreciate your resilience and flexibility during this challenging time, and look forward to collaborating with you to resume in-person Girl Scout activities when the time is right!

COMMUNICATION

Q: How did you decide whom to send the email about *GSOSW's Draft In-Person Troop Meeting Guidelines* to?

A: The initial email request for review of *GSOSW's Draft In-Person Troop Meeting Guidelines* was sent to GSOSW service teams. As representatives of their local Girl Scout communities, we asked teams to review the guidelines and provide feedback, as well as provide a sense of their service unit's sentiment around current COVID-19 conditions. At this time, GSOSW is carefully reviewing and applying feedback from service teams to the *Draft In-Person Troop Meeting Guidelines*, and will release a future draft to all members for feedback.

A note about email from GSOSW: If you have not been receiving email from GSOSW related to COVID-19 or other council-wide communications, please first [check your member record in My GS](#) to ensure that you are opted in to email. If you need help opting back in to email from us, or have a question about your account, please contact us at answers@girlscoutsosw.org for assistance. Please also ensure that girlscoutsosw@email.girlscouts.org is added to your "safe senders list" and is not being filtered to spam.

Q: For future input requests, it would be nice to be given more time to respond. The last survey had very little time.

A: Thank you for this insight! We will keep this in mind and do our best to create a reasonable timeline for member feedback in the future.

Q: How can we submit additional questions to GSOSW, and what is the turnaround for an answer?

A: If you have a question for GSOSW, about COVID-19 or any Girl Scout-related topic, please reach out to us at answers@girlscoutsosw.org or [fill out a contact form](#) on our website. You can also call us at 800-338-5248. GSOSW strives to reply to all member inquiries within three business days.

IN-PERSON ACTIVITIES/MEMBER-TO-MEMBER CONTACT

Q: Can we do a "drive-by" bridging celebration? i.e. Leaders drive by girls' homes to drop off bridging awards -or- have bridging girls drive by a leaders house to pick up bridging awards?

A: GSOSW is developing guidelines for this type of interaction and will provide more information soon. Stay tuned!

Q: Are there any guidelines or restrictions for providing activity supplies, like craft supplies, from troop leaders to girls that will be used doing a virtual meeting? (i.e. contactless pick-up, delivery.) What are the rules around contact between leaders and troop members?

A: GSOSW is developing guidelines for this type of interaction and will provide more information soon. Stay tuned!

Q: Why is it that other Girl Scout councils or youth organization in our regions have been able to begin meeting in-person but GSOSW cannot—even socially distanced outdoor meetings?

A: Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington has made the decision not to permit in-person Girl Scout activities at this time—even outdoors—based on current health and safety data for counties throughout our region and guidance from national and local health authorities, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Girl Scouts of the USA. GSOSW cannot speak to the decision-making processes of other councils or youth-serving organizations.

Q: Is it possible to consider different grade level guidelines? For example, high school seniors are very capable of masking, social distancing outside for long periods.

A: GSOSW has crafted *Draft In-Person Troop Meeting Guidelines* with this perspective in mind, while also prioritizing guidance from national and local health authorities, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Girl Scouts of the USA. We will continue to

monitor this guidance, current health and safety data for counties throughout our region, and feedback from members in crafting final guidance for reopening.

Q: GSUSA is advising councils not to reopen until states and counties have passed the final phase of reopening. Does GSOSW plan to follow this guideline?

A: GSOSW is using a variety of guidance to advise our reopening process, including recommendations from GSUSA. This particular recommendation from GSUSA—to resume normal in-person activities only after states and counties have passed the final phase of their reopening process—is abundantly cautious, and at this time GSOSW is not planning to implement this particular guideline. That said, the safety of girls, volunteers, staff, families and our community is our highest priority. We will continue to weigh this and other guidance from GSUSA in our decision-making, along with guidance from national and local health authorities and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Q: Why is the shutdown being blanketed across all of GSOSW? Why can't rural counties resuming school in September monitor their situation and allow the girls to have in-person meetings?

A: GSOSW is considering this perspective in the development our *Draft In-Person Troop Meeting Guidelines*. At this time—based on current health and safety data and guidance from national and local health authorities, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and Girl Scouts of the USA—GSOSW has decided to prohibit in-person Girl Scout activities for the safety of members and staff. We will continue to consider a regional approach as the situation evolves and in the implementation of reopening guidance from GSOSW.

Q: Is it possible to allow small troops to remain small or adjust troop caps so it is easier for troops to socially distance?

A: Current *Draft In-Person Troop Meeting Guidelines* do prioritize small group cohorts in alignment with local health authority guidance. At this time, GSOSW is reviewing these draft guidelines against current health authority guidance and service team feedback, and will be releasing an updated draft to all members for feedback soon.

Q: Do we have a clear guidance or metrics of when we will be able to meet?

A: This is a complex and ever-changing situation, which make clear guidance difficult. That said, GSOSW is monitoring closely the guidance and safety metrics given to schools, summer camps, and childcare facilities, and using these benchmarks to inform our decisions and *Draft In-Person Troop Meeting Guidelines*.

Q: If a troop decides to meet in person with masks and social distancing in a park setting, would that be fine?

A: At this time, all in-person Girl Scout activities—troop meetings, trips, activities or other gatherings—are prohibited.

HIGHEST AWARDS

Q: I understand that girls who would be moving to a new level have until December 2020 to finish Bronze, Silver, and Gold Awards. If they're taking the extra months to finish those awards, does that mean that they cannot work on any of the next level awards until after December, or can they work on both? (e.g. Can a 6th grader who is now a Cadette—but is still taking the extra time to finish her Bronze—start working on other Cadette badges in the meantime.)

A: Yes, Girl Scouts who are making use of the extra time to complete highest awards may begin working on badges and awards available to them at the next level of Girl Scouting.

PRODUCT PROGRAM AND RECOGNITIONS

Q: Will Cookie/Nut Credit cards/Adventure Passes with an extended expiration date of 12/31/20 be extended beyond that? If not, what can we redeem it on?

A: At this time, we have not made the decision of whether or not to extend the expiration date for cookie credits beyond the 12/31/20 extension; this will depend on current conditions closer to that deadline and we will continue to keep in touch with members about this. In the meantime, there are lots of ways girls can use those credits now, including: [2021 overnight camp registration](#) (opening on December 8, 2020), [GSOSW Girl Scout shop merchandise](#), [virtual event registration](#), and more.

Q: Please speak about the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Will there be in person sales or just online? When will decisions be made?

A: Online sales methods—Digital Cookie orders, shipped and girl delivery—are expected to proceed as usual. There are many unknowns currently with regard to other elements of the program, and GSOSW (together with Little Brownie Bakers and GSUSA) is crafting a variety of condition-responsive scenarios to help girls get the most from the Girl Scout Cookie Program, regardless of what guidelines may be in place at the time. Clear guidelines will be provided to all Girl Scout Cookie Program participants and volunteers. At this time, a decision date has not been set.

ADULT TRAINING

Q: How will First Aid Certification take place (specifically, the CPR portion) while we are unable to have in-person training?

A: GSUSA has now approved the acceptance of online First Aid/CPR/AED certificates temporarily while in-person classes are unable to meet. GSOSW's only approved source for online CPR training is the one used for the online portion of our blended Red Cross CPR course. This online training is free for GSOSW volunteers and is only good for becoming a qualified troop first aider; it is not a full certification for use outside of Girl Scout activities.

This training will be valid until 90 days after GSOSW can resume offering in-person CPR classes. The link can be found in the GSOSW Certification Submission course in [gsLearn](#).

Q: Is there a way to take overnight and outdoor trainings online?

A: At this time, we are offering Day Trips and Indoor Overnights raining virtually—you can find upcoming dates at girlscoutsw.org/activities. While we recognize that troops cannot get together to advance their travel progression and practice key skills in person, they *can* begin planning processes in a virtual environment. In the meantime, we encourage all volunteers to take [Virtual Troop Leadership Training](#) to help girls make the most of the virtual troop environment.

Q: Where do I find training registration on the GSOSW website?

A: You can find and register for upcoming training via the [GSOSW Activities page](#), or through your [My GS account](#).

Q: Will there be some easing on the requirements for overnight and outdoor training for traveling overnight?

A: GSOSW is considering this issue and will provide more information soon. Stay tuned!

MEMBER RECRUITMENT

Q: How are we expected to recruit new girls, adults and create troops to meet our goals when we cannot even meet in person? Is there any consideration of lowering goals or awarding a percentage of pennies based number of girls recruited?

A: We recognize the challenge and limitations to traditional recruitment methods posed by COVID-19. We have developed and are supporting a variety of new, innovative virtual recruitment methods for use by GSOSW staff and volunteers, and collaborating with service units to achieve and reassess goals. You can learn more at girlscoutsw.org/connect and by reaching out to your service unit's volunteer membership support liaison.

VIRTUAL MEETINGS/AT-HOME PROGRAM

Q: How do we encourage girls and parents to want to spend one more hour or more on 'screen time' when school will also be virtual for the time being?

A: Girl Scouts, even in a virtual environment, is a key support for girls and a critical source of structure and community during uncertain times. [Check out this excellent Raising Awesome Girls article](#) for some tips and perspectives. And if you're a volunteer, we encourage you to make use of these [virtual tips and tools for troop leaders](#), and to take [Virtual Troop Leadership Training](#) with GSOSW to learn how to host engaging virtual meetings.

Q: Can we offer a badge or Journey opportunity that a Girl Scout and her family can do on their own?

A: Girl Scouts at Home is a fabulous resource for activities Girl Scouts and interested girls can participate in for free, including badge activities, live virtual events, service projects and much more. Check it out and share it today at girlscouts.org/athome. GSOSW also has lots of locally-produced virtual badge activities and workshops available on our website at girlscoutsosw.org/at-home.

gsZOOM ACCOUNTS FOR TROOPS

Q: Can you confirm that troops who renew by September 30, 2020, will get FREE gsZoom accounts. Last I heard it was \$36 for the year. If so, what are the exact requirements for the free account and will that flow to SUs as well?

A: Yes! All GSOSW troops who renew at least five girls and two troop leaders by September 30, 2020, will receive a FREE gsZoom account for the 2021 membership year. [Check out our gsZoom FAQ for details](#). While service units are not eligible for the free account offer, they CAN take advantage of the discounted \$36 accounts through GSUSA. Service team members received a survey at the beginning of August inquiring about interest in gsZoom accounts. Teams that expressed interest in an account will be contacted directly by a GSOSW staff member in September. Additionally, any troop or service unit can take advantage of a discounted \$36/year account at any time (through September 30, 2021) by contacting answers@girlscoutsosw.org.

Q: If our troop qualifies for a free gsZoom account, how will the Zoom information be provided?

A: Once you have renewed at least five girls and two troop leaders into your troop, GSOSW staff will contact you by email with details on how to claim your free account. [Check out our gsZoom FAQ for additional details](#).

Q: What if a troop already has a Zoom account set up; will Zoom work with transfer our account to a gsZoom account?

A: If you already have an existing Zoom account, you CAN transfer it to a gsZoom account! To do so:

- If you qualify for a FREE gsZoom account through GSOSW: You will receive an email from GSOSW with a gsZoom Troop Opt-In form. Please complete the form, and a GSOSW staff person will contact you to set up your account.
- If you are paying for a \$36/year account through GSOSW: Please send an email to answers@girlscoutsosw.org and a GSOSW staff person will contact you to set up your account after October 1, 2020.

Zoom is currently working with customers to reimburse whatever months on your existing account have not been used.

Q: Will the discounted gsZoom licenses be available throughout the year (for new troops who form throughout the year) or is it a limited-time offer?

A: The offer of a free gsZoom license to renewing troops ends on September 30, 2020. Beginning October 1, 2020, through September 30, 2021, any GSOSW Girl Scout troop may purchase a gsZoom license for \$36/year per account, for use during the 2021 Girl Scout membership year (October 1, 2020-September 30, 2021; actual dates may vary depending on account set-up process).

TRAVEL

Q: What will the criteria be for beginning travel, will it be different than when we can meet as a troop? Will we be given a heads up to get the paperwork in and start traveling on the first day travel is open. Also, if travel is not allowed this year, Girl Scouts needs to have a good discussion about other ways girls can spend their travel money (as they are seniors and graduating out) on themselves. They should not have to donate \$15,000, but should have other options for their hard work.

A: These are all excellent points! A complex, but certainly solvable situation. We are working on solutions to these issues and will provide more details soon. Stay tuned!

SERVICE/TAKE ACTION PROJECTS

Q: Any ideas for how to do service and take action projects when we can't be together?

A: Girl Scouts at Home is an excellent resource for service and Take Action projects! [Check out a variety of national service projects girls and troops can participate in](#) on Girl Scouts at Home.