

Graduating Seniors Funds Extension Guidelines

The GSSGC board approved: Temporarily changing the policy to allow GSSGC Girl Scouts who graduated in 2020 and those who will graduate in 2021 to use their Girl Scout funds/credits until September 30, 2022.

Please see below for guidance on these funds. Questions? email customercare@gssgc.org so you can be directed to the most appropriate staff or volunteer to answer your questions.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced the cancellation of many programs and activities that 12th grade Girl Scouts had planned for spring/summer of 2020 and all of 2021: extended travel, bridging-to-adult ceremonies, camping, Gold Award projects, and other Girl Scout activities. In response to this current situation, our council has allowed an **extension for 12th graders to use money-earned funds to reschedule many of these cancelled activities until September 30, 2022.**

These guidelines apply to **troop funds, Cookie Dough/Cash, and/or any other type of Program Credits.** Regardless of how girls use the funds the same policies and procedures still apply to the use of Girl Scout funds; except the extension of the date. This means if they are troop funds voting will still be part of the procedure.

Financial Considerations

- Troop should follow all procedures for disbanding troops by 8/31/21, including financial reconciliation and closing bank accounts.
- After 9/30/22, these young alums **may not** participate in the Fall Product or the Cookie Program, and they may not do any additional money-earning to finance activities planned for the 2021-2022 membership year. The **single exception** to this guideline is money-earning for Gold Award projects: funds intended to be used toward Gold Award projects must be raised and used by December 31, 2020 for girls who graduated in 2020 and by September 30, 2021 for girls graduated in 2021, following all standard council guidelines. See “Gold Award Guidance” below.

Membership

- **All participants must maintain a current membership.** Graduating girl members cannot take advantage of the “young alum” discount by purchasing a [Lifetime Membership](#) or purchase an adult annual membership for the 2020-2021 & 2021-2022 membership years. Adults working with the young alums must also have active membership.

Use of Funds

- **All activities and use of funds must be directly tied to the mission of Girl Scouts** and be permitted Girl Scout activities only. All funds “must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting.” (*Ownership of Assets Policy*, Blue Book p. 22). Girls may use School Package banked funds in the way it was intended, but to avoid the risk of private benefit other funds cannot be used in that way. (For example: Girl Scout travel and events/activities would be mission-related, but use of proceeds to provide individual college scholarships would not.)
- **Troops should continue their usual diligence to avoid individual accounting.** Mixed-grade and multi-level troops/groups who have money-earned together should continue to make group decisions on use of funds. Again, this is to avoid risk of private benefit which has individual IRS implications as well as council concerns.
- **All standard safety and risk management procedures should be followed** for group activities, including Volunteer Essentials, Safety Activity Checkpoints, and the GSSGC Activity Approval

Process. In addition to this for these girls the following special guidelines must be followed:

- The young alums using funds from this temporary change to policy will be treated as Ambassador Girl Scouts. Using the same guidelines and ratios for the supervision of young alum members as for supervision of Ambassador Girl Scouts. One exception: for group overnight travel that includes both girl members and young alums, steps must be taken to provide separate sleeping arrangements for the girl members, the young alum members, and the adult members.
- If the group plans to take an extended trip, the standard policy of purchasing the additional Mutual of Omaha insurance stands.

Gold Award Guidance

- Girl Scouts offered a **3-month deadline extension from September 30 to December 31, 2020** for Girl Scouts who are graduating from 12th grade. There is no additional extensions. Girl Scouts who will bridge to adults officially on October 1, 2021 will no longer eligible to earn the GoldAward.

Recommendations for Troops including 12th Graders Who Intend to Disband

- There are many ways that girls can still spend funds and give back to their community and/or to Girl Scouts in the current membership year. Example ways girls might use funds before 9/30/21:
 - Design and execute a Take Action project – perhaps one that addresses the current pandemic
 - Purchase “young alum” [Lifetime Memberships](#) at the special discount price of \$200. These funds **cannot** be used to purchase Lifetime Memberships for current adults (e.g. troop leaders, parents).
 - Donate to an existing council scholarship fund
 - Campership Funds
 - Financial Aid Fund for Membership and Troop Supplies
 - Partnership or Troop-Start-up Fund
 - Work with your council to create a new scholarship fund that the council can administer for an activity the girls are passionate about (e.g. a camp scholarshipfund)
 - Donate to another Girl Scout fund (e.g. the Juliette Low World Friendship Fund or World Foundation for Girl Guides and Girl Scouts)

Conclusion

These are unprecedented times. This is a one-time extension to use funds specifically to meet the needs of girls whose plans were cancelled or rescheduled due to COVID-19. The intent is to support the continuation of Girl Scout activities that had been planned prior to the onset of the pandemic, not to support the planning and financing of new or additional Girl Scout activities.

It is important for troops to recognize that rescheduling activities for next year may not be practical in many cases; troops may have girls dispersing to different states, with uncertainty about their plans for summer 2021. For some troops, disbanding, and finding a rewarding way to deploy the funds they earned on behalf of Girl Scouts, may be their best path forward. Troops should have a frank discussion about their choices and do their best to make fair and equitable decisions.