

## I. Girl Scouts of the USA Policy

*Quoted from the 'Girl Scouts Blue Book 2019', rev. Feb 2019, p. 22*

[https://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/about-girl-scouts/facts/GSUSA\\_BlueBook\\_Feb%202019-E.pdf](https://www.girlscouts.org/content/dam/girlscouts-gsusa/forms-and-documents/about-girl-scouts/facts/GSUSA_BlueBook_Feb%202019-E.pdf)

"Girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money except for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors, who may solicit philanthropic donations to their councils of cash or in-kind goods for Girl Scout Gold Award projects, provided they have secured prior written permission from their council's Chief Executive Officer, Chief Development Officer, or their designee. **In addition, girls must abide by their own council's policies and procedures with regard to this matter.**"

## II. GSWPA Policy

### 1. Follow the Template

- When you are fundraising for your Gold Award project, you are representing Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania – we are a multimillion-dollar organization serving nearly 20,000 girls - that's a big deal!
- Even if you are soliciting by email, **you must use the 'Gold Award Request for Contributions Template' that puts yours letter on our official letterhead.** We have also provided a **Letter Outline** that shows the key points to make in any ask, and a **Sample Solicitation** letter.

### 2. Where?

- There are certain laws restricting fundraising across state lines, and Girl Scout councils as a courtesy do not solicit donors in other councils' footprints.
- Because of this, **fundraising must stay within our 27-county council borders.**
- That means the donor must live or operate within our council.
- Exception: family. You may solicit family across council lines.

### 3. Who?

- You can solicit anyone and any organization you want **within our council geographic borders**, provided you do so safely and with **any required council approval** (*see #4 Approval*).
- Some local business and foundations earmark funds for youth projects which may afford an opportunity for funding of Gold Award Projects.
- These requests are viewed by GSWPA as mission related, not for and will not benefit individual girls (no private enumeration).
- Corporations or foundations should not be encouraged to support a project to the detriment of the greater good of the entire Council. All contributions must support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience.

## II. GSWPA Policy (continued)

### 4. How Much? \$1,000 Per Donor Cap

- The maximum total cash that anyone or any organization can donate toward your project is \$1,000.
- This includes gift cards.
- This includes family (parents, guardian, grandparents, etc.).
- No, a single person or organization can't just give you multiple donations of \$1,000.

#### Family, Too?

- Any donation of \$250 or more legally (by IRS) requires a letter of substantiation from the main nonprofit – *not the Girl Scout* – for them to claim it on their taxes.
- That means that the donation must come through our office for processing, and we will not process a check for more than \$1,000.

### 5. Who Approves? Asking for \$250-\$1000 money

- If you want to solicit any single person or organization for \$250 to \$1,000, it must be approved by the GSWPA Fund Development team:
- **Complete the 'Girl Scout Gold Award Participant Request to Solicit Donations Form' and email to:**

Ms. Sandra Bernardi Hathazy  
Director, Fund Development  
Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania  
[sbernardi@gswpa.org](mailto:sbernardi@gswpa.org)

### 6. How? Processing Donations of \$250+

- For **legal reasons with the IRS if you receive \$250 or more from anyone** (grandma, PNC Bank, or NASA) it **must be** a check made payable to 'Girl Scouts Western PA' & **mailed to our Pittsburgh office first** with details in the memo line or accompanying note whose Gold Award project this is for.
- Then we will mail the full amount back to you, no fee – there's just an extra step!

Attn: Fund Development  
Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania  
503 Martindale Street, Suite 500  
Pittsburgh, PA 15212

### 7. No cap

- Approved use of troop funds.
- The Girl Scout's personal money.
- In-kind donations (goods and services)

### III. Additional Guidelines

1. **Safety.** Work with your mentor to make sure you are fundraising **safely** and engaging with people and organizations that are **consistent with your Girl Scout values**. **You may decline any gift** if something about the person or organization doesn't seem right, or they are asking you to use the money in a way that conflicts with your values or project goals.
2. **Strategy.** It is a good idea to start with **people & organizations where you have a connection** or who would be interested in the project. For example, if you always get your hair cut at the same salon with the same stylist, they might support you because of the personal connection. Or, solicit companies that are related to the area of your projects—like grocery stores, fitness centers, and sports equipment stores for a project on healthy living.
3. **Be specific.** For example, "I'm seeking sponsors for 10 trees for our community garden. Each tree costs \$40 for a total of \$400. Would you consider sponsoring one or more trees with a donation of any size?" An ask like that gives them something reasonable & specific (\$40) but also lets people know that you are grateful for \$20!
4. **Persistence.** Fundraising rejection happens often! You might need to send out 20 solicitations to get one gift, or you might get way less than you ask for – hang in there & make alternate plans if you don't raise the full amount.
5. **Integrity.** If you do not end up needing a large donation for various reasons, you should contact the donor for permission to use it in another way if you have a backup plan. A donation is a promise between you and the donor. If you promised to plant trees in the park but there was a barrier you couldn't resolve, be prepared to return donations if asked, especially for large gifts. Most donors will be reasonable and understand that this is a learning experience.

However, for smaller donations or if you can't reasonably contact the donor, any excess donations can be donated back to our council as a whole and will support things like financial assistance and the Gold Award program in general.