

How to Spend Your Troop Funds: Dos, Don'ts and Breakdown

Girl Scout troops are entrusted with funds earned through various activities, and it's important to ensure these funds are spent responsibly and in alignment with the goals and values of Girl Scouting. This page will guide you through the best practices for managing troop funds, with a clear breakdown of what is permissible and what is not.

Ways You CAN Spend Your Troop Funds:

1. Troop Meeting Supplies

Funds may be used to cover the cost of any necessary materials or supplies needed for troop meetings, such as:

- Arts and crafts supplies
- Books and educational resources
- Snacks and drinks for meetings
- Event decorations or team-building materials

2. Outings and Activities

Troop funds can be used to cover the expenses associated with planned outings and activities that the girls have voted on, such as:

- Field trips to museums, parks, or other local attractions
- Outdoor adventure activities like camping, hiking, or canoeing
- Tickets for educational or entertainment events
- Travel expenses related to Girl Scout activities (e.g., transportation or lodging)

3. Service Projects

Funds may be used to support service projects, such as:

- Materials for community service activities (e.g., volunteering at local shelters, creating care packages, etc.)
- Project supplies or tools needed to fulfill service project goals

4. Girl Experiences Voted on by the Troop

Funds can be allocated for experiences that are voted on by the troop, such as:

- Special recognition ceremonies or awards
- Girl-focused events, like leadership conferences, skill-building workshops, or team bonding activities

Ways You CANNOT Spend Your Troop Funds:

1. Personal Gifts

Funds may not be used for individual gifts or personal items for troop members, such as cash or gift cards.

2. Scholarships

Troop funds cannot be distributed as scholarships to individuals. All funds must be used for troop-related purposes as described above, benefiting the group as a whole.

3. Troop Member Reimbursement

Funds cannot be used to reimburse individual girls or adult volunteers for out-of-pocket expenses, unless previously agreed upon for specific troop-related activities. Always plan ahead and get approvals before purchasing items for troop activities.

4. Non-Girl Scout Related Expenses

Funds may not be used for activities that are unrelated to Girl Scouting, such as:

- Personal vacations
- Non-Girl-Scout-related club memberships
- Items or activities that don't align with Girl Scout values

How to Properly Manage Troop Funds:

Budgeting:

Before spending any funds, create a detailed budget for the year, including estimated costs for meetings, activities, and outings. This ensures you have a clear plan for how funds will be spent and helps keep the troop's finances organized.

Tracking Expenses:

Keep a record of all troop expenses, including receipts, invoices, and any other proof of purchase. This not only keeps the troop's finances transparent but also ensures you stay within your troop budget.

Get Approval:

Ensure that all spending is approved by both the troop leaders and the girls (if appropriate). This helps maintain transparency and ensures that funds are being spent according to the needs and desires of the troop.

Communicate with Families:

Keep families informed about how troop funds are being spent and encourage their participation in fundraising efforts.

Clear communication about expenses ensures that everyone is on the same page.

Follow Girl Scout Guidelines:

Always ensure that any spending aligns with the guidelines set forth by Girl Scouts Western Pennsylvania. If you're unsure whether a specific expense is allowed, consult council for guidance at 800-248-3355 or customercare@gswnpa.org.

By following these guidelines, you can ensure that your troop's funds are used in the most effective and responsible way, enriching the Girl Scout experience for all involved. Remember, the goal is to support the mission of Girl Scouting and provide girls with meaningful, enriching experiences that align with the core values of the Girl Scout mission.