

# Girl Scout Event Planning Timeline Suggestions

## 4 to 6 months before your event

1. Involve girls in the planning process. Depending on their grade level, decide how to appropriately include them in providing input, planning or leading activities.
2. Determine the purpose and focus of your event and who will be invited.
  - Does your event support the Girl Scout Leadership Experience (GSLE) with its three keys of leadership – Discover, Connect, and Take Action – and its 15 leadership outcomes?
  - Does your event support the values in the Girl Scout Promise and Law?
  - Will the event provide for cooperative learning and personal growth?
  - Will the program be suitable to the age, group and experience level of those invited?
  - Will the event provide opportunities for hands-on activities?
3. Research your event. Historical data may be available.
  - What has been done before?
  - What are the possibilities?
  - If this is a repeat event, review evaluations from previous years. What needs to be improved?
  - Consult Safety Activity Checkpoints, and Volunteer Essentials to review council policies and procedures.
4. Begin preliminary event planning, delegating as needed. Maintain communication with your SUM or council program manager as questions or problems arise.
  - Do you need an event committee? Recruit volunteers.
  - Develop a timeline for this event.
  - When should this event be offered (what time of year)? Reference service unit, school, cultural and religious calendars. Consider expected weather conditions.
  - Are the activity choices culturally sensitive? Will girls be involved with people from diverse backgrounds?
  - Will a patch be offered? Does it need to be custom ordered?
  - Find an appropriate location or venue.
    - How many girls can participate at this location?
    - Are there provisions for girls with special needs?
    - Is a deposit needed? By what date? Is it refundable?
    - Is there a minimum payment? Is it refundable?
    - Is a contract required? Check council procedures for authorized signer.
    - Are there participant waivers that need to be completed?
    - Make sure that the location is an approved facility and has an up-to-date Certificate of Insurance on file with council.
  - Determine expenses and calculate cost per person.
    - What is the total cost?
    - What is the break-even number? The event should be planned to break even.

- Calculate the cost per person based on minimum participation
    - Is it reasonable for what is being offered?
    - Is there a difference in the girl cost vs. the adult cost?
  - Consider arrival and departure plans, parking, collection of coats/outerwear, information/patch/T-shirt distribution, if applicable.
  - How will girl participation and responsibility be incorporated into the event?
  - Is an event first aider needed? See Health and Safety Guidelines.
- 5. **Develop contingency plans. What should be done if:**
  - the event needs to be cancelled? Who will contact participants and how will refunds be handled?
  - the weather is inhospitable?
  - key personnel are delayed or unable to attend?
  - funds collected will not cover planned expenses?
- 6. Confirm in writing that the facility is reserved for your event on your selected date, with any required deposits paid.
- 7. Develop your promotional flier including all dates, deadlines, costs, event description, and contact information. Distribute according to SU and council practices.
- 8. After flier distribution, be prepared for phone calls or e-mails requesting information about the event.

## 2 to 3 months before your event

1. Plan to speak, or have girls speak, at your service unit meeting to promote your event. Look for other opportunities for event promotion.
2. Contact your council program manager to request your event be included on the council web site.
3. As registration forms and checks come in, create a participant roster by troop and maintain an accurate count. Have a process in place to prioritize registrations if you are expecting more participants than can be accommodated.
4. Deposit funds in a timely fashion and always before funds are needed. Check with your SU treasurer concerning service unit-specific practices.
5. Establish emergency procedures for the day of the event.
6. Plan for an easily communicated clean-up process after the event. How will the girls help?
7. Keep your SU manager (and program manager, if event is advertised on council web site) apprised of any event changes or concerns.

## 1 month before your event / registration RSVP deadline

1. Review registrations received.
  - Are you close to the maximum or minimum number of participants?
  - Are there so few that you aren't going to cover your costs?

- Work with your SUM to find a solution.
2. Secure special event insurance, if necessary.
  3. Determine patch order.

## 2 to 3 weeks before your event

1. Inform SUM and SU treasurer of any anticipated overages or shortfalls of money.
2. Send registration confirmation to participating girls and troops, if appropriate.
3. Confirm number of participants with your facility and event committee.
4. Determine who is going to do what on the day of the event. Everyone should have a role.
5. Purchase any needed items. Keep receipts for reimbursement.
  - If snacks are provided, are they culturally sensitive? Are food allergies being considered?
6. Prepare participant or troop evaluation forms for distribution on the day of the event.
7. Arrange for photographer or publicity coverage for the day of the event, ensuring all girls have photo permission clearance either through registration form or separate photo release.

## Day of the event

1. Arrive early and check in with your facility contact.
2. Have your event committee all wear the same color or shirt, or identify them with a special nametag.
3. Post any needed directional signs or schedules.
4. Set up a first aid and/or refreshment station, if needed.
5. Set up an arrival/registration table.
  - Registration should be open 30 minutes prior to event start with multiple stations as necessary to accommodate number registered.
  - Have all the necessary supplies handy, i.e. pencils, name tags.
  - Is there written information that needs to be distributed to the participants i.e., schedule, map, evaluation forms, cleanup process?
6. Have a plan in place for late arrivals or early departures.
7. Collect Participant/Troop Evaluations as they leave.
8. Extend a “thank you” to the event planner and event committee, if appropriate and if possible.
9. Acknowledge any guests or dignitaries present at the beginning or end of the event.
10. Enlist girls to help tidy up. Girl Scouts leave a place cleaner than they found it.

## **Within two weeks after your event**

1. Turn in all receipts for reimbursement. Make sure all bills have been paid.
2. Document any information that would be helpful to someone planning a similar event in the future.
3. Involve girl volunteers in the event evaluation process.
4. Write thank you notes as appropriate.
5. Return any reusable or borrowed materials.

**Congratulations! And Thanks for All You Do for Girl Scouts!**