



Girl Scouts of the USA  
420 Fifth Avenue  
New York, NY 10018-2798

Agenda Item Identification Code  
(For National Board Office only):

## Agenda Item Submission Form 58th National Council Session

Name of Girl Scout Council(s)

Girl Scouts of Oregon and SW Washington

City

Portland

State

OR

If a group of councils is submitting a single agenda item, all councils must be listed on this form.

Is this council(s) submitting a                      Discussion Topic or X Proposal?

Is this a X draft or a                      final submission?

Write the following information exactly as the council wishes it to appear in the *Workbook* if accepted for the agenda.

### TITLE OF PROPOSAL OR DISCUSSION TOPIC

Bylaw Amendment: Solicitation of Contributions

### STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL OR DISCUSSION TOPIC, QUESTION, OR ISSUE

(Proposals should be written in the form of a motion)

TO        amend current bylaws section: SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS to read as follows:  
SOLICITATION OF CONTRIBUTIONS **All Girl Scout members may solicit contributions for the benefit of the Girl Scout movement, with prior approval from their local council.** Adult members in their Girl Scout capacities may not solicit financial contributions for purposes other than Girl Scouting. ~~Adults may engage in combined fundraising efforts authorized by the Girl Scout council and in which the local council is a beneficiary. Girl members may not engage in any direct solicitation for money except for Girl Scout Seniors and Ambassadors, who~~ may also 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 and adults must abide by their own council's policies and procedures with regard to this matter.

## **REASONS:**

- 1. What is the issue the discussion topic or proposal is trying to address?**
- 2. Are there other ways to address this issue?**
- 3. How does this proposal improve Movement governance or policy? OR How does this discussion topic inform Movement strategy?**
- 4. Does this agenda item have Movement-wide significance? Does it apply to all councils?**
- 5. Is this agenda item time-sensitive? What happens if it is not addressed at NCS 58?**

### **1. What is the issue the proposal is trying to address?**

The current policy overly restricts youth Girl Scout members, particularly younger girls and those not pursuing Gold Awards, from participating in philanthropic fundraising beyond cookie and product sales. As a result, we are missing opportunities to build essential leadership and communication skills in our members, while also failing to engage girls in one of the most critical aspects of nonprofit success — philanthropy.

Additionally, councils are too reliant on cookie and product programs as primary revenue sources. The fundraising landscape has changed, and many girls, particularly older members, are eager for new challenges and leadership opportunities. Being part of the philanthropic process - including making the "ask" - is a real-world skill that prepares girls to lead in professional and civic environments.

Research shows that engaging youth in fundraising and philanthropy not only enhances nonprofit impact but also builds long-term leadership, communication, and civic skills. Youth-led fundraising campaigns are proven to be more authentic and effective, often inspiring greater donor engagement. Organizations that successfully integrate young people into development activities are better positioned to innovate and diversify revenue streams. Girl Scouts is uniquely positioned to lead in this space but is currently constrained by outdated fundraising restrictions. By updating the policy, we can align with best practices in nonprofit development while providing meaningful, real-world leadership experiences for our members.

### **2. Are there other ways to address this issue?**

While councils could provide internal programs on fundraising theory or simulations, they lack the impact of real engagement. The most effective way to teach fundraising and donor relations is through direct experience, which is not possible under the current policy. Expanding the policy allows councils flexibility to safely and effectively engage girls in age-appropriate fundraising roles.

### **3. How does this proposal improve Movement governance or policy?**

This proposal enhances the Girl Scout Movement's governance and strategy by promoting equity in leadership opportunities and aligning policy with the Movement's emphasis on girl-led experiences. It opens pathways for innovative, council-approved fundraising approaches, builds girls' confidence in advocacy and communication, and supports more diversified and sustainable revenue streams across councils.

Additionally, youth are effective and authentic fundraisers. For instance:

- Young people influence giving: A 2022 *Fidelity Charitable* study found that 75% of Gen Z and Millennial donors are more likely to give to a cause when they see youth actively involved. Young fundraisers bring authenticity and emotional connection to donor appeals, which can drive increased engagement.
- Peer-to-peer fundraising success: Nonprofits like *St. Jude Children's Research Hospital* and *Thirst Project* have demonstrated the effectiveness of peer-to-peer fundraising led by youth. Campaigns involving youth ambassadors consistently outperform adult-led campaigns in terms of donor engagement and social media reach.

- Gold Award Girl Scouts are proof: Our council doesn't have great examples to share here, but we know they are out there! We would love to hear from your councils if you have seen girls do great things in this space so we can highlight them.

#### 4. Does this agenda item have Movement-wide significance?

Yes. This issue applies to all councils, as all face similar fundraising constraints and heavy dependence on product sales. A movement-wide policy update would allow councils to innovate and adapt their fundraising strategies while engaging girls more meaningfully. Councils with successful models can lead the way and share best practices across the Movement.

Additionally, youth philanthropy builds leadership skills. For instance:

- According to the *Learning to Give* initiative and the *National Center for Family Philanthropy*, youth who are involved in philanthropy develop stronger skills in communication, leadership, financial literacy, and civic responsibility.
- A 2019 study by Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy concluded that youth who participate in fundraising and philanthropic decision-making are more likely to be civically engaged as adults.

Current Girl Scout programs lay the foundation, but don't go far enough. The Girl Scout cookie program teaches entrepreneurial and financial skills, but girls — especially Seniors and Ambassadors — report wanting more advanced experiences in nonprofit leadership, advocacy, and fundraising (GSRI studies). Councils across the country have piloted philanthropic training programs for older girls, but their impact is limited by the current bylaws, which prohibit participation in actual donor solicitation.

#### 5. Is this agenda item time-sensitive? What happens if it is not addressed at NCS 58?

Yes. Philanthropic giving across nonprofit sectors is becoming more competitive. If we do not act now, we risk falling further behind in innovation and donor engagement. Moreover, we risk disengaging older girls who seek leadership roles that extend beyond traditional fundraising methods. Addressing this at NCS 58 positions the Movement to modernize its fundraising approach and respond to girls' evolving interests.

Additionally, philanthropic giving is shifting, and nonprofits must innovate. For instance:

- Donor expectations are changing: According to the 2023 *Giving USA* report, individual giving has declined as a percentage of total giving, with increasing competition among nonprofits for philanthropic dollars. Donors are seeking more transparent, innovative, and impact-driven initiatives.
- Diversification is critical: Heavy reliance on traditional fundraising methods (e.g., annual product sales) puts organizations at risk. The *Chronicle of Philanthropy* emphasizes the importance of expanding revenue streams through community engagement, peer-to-peer campaigns, and digital fundraising.

**Please Note:** Our council is also interested in proposing this as a discussion item instead if others feel this would allow more creativity and opportunity to debate innovation. We are proposing both at this time to solicit input.

#### References

- **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.** (n.d.). *Youth Fundraising Programs*. <https://www.stjude.org/get-involved/school-fundraising-ideas.html>
- **Giving USA Foundation.** (2023). *Giving USA 2023: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2022*. Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University. <https://givingusa.org>
- **Fidelity Charitable.** (2022). *2022 Future of Philanthropy: Next-Gen Donor Insights*. <https://www.fidelitycharitable.org/insights/future-of-philanthropy.html>

- **Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.** (2019). *Women Give 2019: Gender and Giving Across Communities of Color*. Indiana University. <https://philanthropy.iupui.edu>
- **Learning to Give.** (n.d.). *Why Teach Philanthropy?* <https://www.learningtogive.org>
- **National Center for Family Philanthropy.** (2020). *Engaging Youth in Philanthropy*. <https://www.ncfp.org>
- **The Chronicle of Philanthropy.** (2023). *Nonprofits Seek New Fundraising Strategies Amid Donor Fatigue*. <https://www.philanthropy.com>
- **Girl Scout Research Institute (GSRI).** (2020). *What Makes a Girl? The State of Girls Reports*. Girl Scouts of the USA. <https://www.girlscouts.org/en/about-girl-scouts/research/state-of-girls.htm> 1

## FINANCIAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR PROPOSALS

Indicate the projected expenditure and impact on resources for councils and the national organization, for a five (5) year period.

### Short-Term Impact: Minimal or Gradual

In the immediate term, expanding philanthropic participation for girls—particularly in donor-facing roles—may not result in dramatic revenue shifts. Councils would likely take a phased approach, piloting programs with older girls or integrating giving options into existing campaigns like the cookie sale. Administrative costs may include updating training materials, staff oversight, and adapting fundraising guidelines, but these are relatively modest and scalable.

### Mid- to Long-Term Impact: Diversification and Donor Growth

#### 1. Revenue Diversification

Many councils are heavily reliant on the annual cookie and product programs. Enabling more flexible, girl-led fundraising allows councils to create new streams of revenue: local giving campaigns, digital appeals, alumni engagement through girl storytelling, and council event fundraising with girl participation. These initiatives can complement—not replace—product sales, making councils less vulnerable to year-over-year fluctuations in those programs.

#### 2. Increased Donor Engagement and Retention

Donors are more likely to give—and to give again—when they feel emotionally connected to the cause. Youth participation, especially when visible and authentic, is shown to boost donor loyalty. Councils that include girls in solicitation efforts, storytelling, and peer-to-peer campaigns may see higher donor retention and a broader base of individual supporters.

#### 3. Enhanced Grant Competitiveness

Funders increasingly seek evidence of community engagement, youth leadership, and innovation. Councils that can demonstrate authentic girl involvement in fundraising may become more competitive for grants from family foundations, corporate social responsibility programs, and youth-focused philanthropies.

#### 4. Strategic Support for GSUSA

As councils innovate and share success stories, GSUSA may gain national visibility as a leader in youth philanthropy, which can support national fundraising efforts. Over time, this could help GSUSA attract more corporate partners, national sponsors, and mission-aligned donors who value youth empowerment and nonprofit innovation.

## 5. GSUSA Investment in Program Development and Volunteer Training

To ensure success and consistency across the Movement, GSUSA would need to invest in the development of new curriculum and resources that embed fundraising and philanthropy within the Girl Scout Leadership Experience. This includes:

- Age-appropriate badges or journeys focused on fundraising, nonprofit leadership, and ethical donor engagement that include the “ask” as part of the curriculum.
- Training modules and tools for adult volunteers and council staff to supervise, support, and coach girls effectively in these activities.
- Clear policy guidance and best practices to help councils implement programs equitably and with strong safeguards.

While this requires upfront investment, it aligns closely with GSUSA’s mission to provide transformative leadership opportunities and would likely be well received by both councils and external funders.

### Considerations and Cautions

- Clear parameters and guardrails are needed to ensure fundraising remains mission-aligned and does not create inequities with different staff/volunteer capacities or donor bases.
- Councils may need to invest in staff training to supervise youth fundraising appropriately.
- Communications and branding guidance from GSUSA would be important to maintain consistency and protect the Movement’s reputation.

### Summary

Empowering girls to engage in philanthropic efforts for Girl Scout purposes has low financial risk but strong potential upside, particularly in donor engagement, revenue diversification, and long-term sustainability. It positions councils and GSUSA to be more resilient, more innovative, and better aligned with evolving donor and girl expectations—provided it’s supported by thoughtful investment in curriculum and adult training.

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Signature and Printed Name of chair, council board of directors

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Date of council board meeting

### **Open Comment and Collaboration Period: April 7-May 14, 2025**

To submit for Open Comment and Collaboration, completed forms must be emailed to [BoardOffice@girlscouts.org](mailto:BoardOffice@girlscouts.org), copying [abeck@girlscouts.org](mailto:abeck@girlscouts.org), with subject line: Draft Agenda Item from [INSERT COUNCIL(S)].

### **Final Submission Deadline: May 30, 2025**

Final submissions, signed off by your council(s) board chair must be emailed to [BoardOffice@girlscouts.org](mailto:BoardOffice@girlscouts.org), copying [abeck@girlscouts.org](mailto:abeck@girlscouts.org), with the subject line: Final Agenda Item from [INSERT COUNCIL(S)].

Please note that if a group of councils is submitting a single agenda item, the submission form should be signed by each council’s board chair.

If additional space is needed, please attach a separate page.