



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

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

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 ☐ Proposal?

Is this a ☒ 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

What If Fundraising Felt Like Girl Scouting?

STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL OR DISCUSSION TOPIC, QUESTION, OR ISSUE

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

TOPIC, QUESTION, OR ISSUE

Councils across the Movement are exploring how to diversify revenue streams while deepening real-world leadership experiences for Girl Scouts. However, current national policy limits girls - especially younger members and those not pursuing Gold Awards - from participating in donor solicitation activities, even when those efforts are approved by councils and benefit Girl Scout programs directly.

This discussion explores how we might modernize that approach to allow girls of all levels, with age-appropriate support and safeguards, to participate in fundraising exclusively for Girl Scout-related purposes - never for outside nonprofits or unrelated causes, except Girl Scout Gold Award projects.

Key Questions for Movement Dialogue

- What's possible when we treat philanthropy as a leadership pathway, not just a staff function?
- How can we safely and equitably expand girls' fundraising roles to benefit the Movement?
- What innovative, girl-led fundraising practices have already worked at the council level – or with other non profit organizations- and how can we elevate, reinvent, and share them?

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?

Why This Matters

Girls want opportunities to lead in meaningful ways. Fundraising for their own programs, projects, and councils is a powerful way to teach communication, financial literacy, teamwork, and advocacy — skills essential for future nonprofit, civic, and professional leadership.

Youth-led fundraising is also more effective. National nonprofits like St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital have proven that when young people are visible and active in peer-to-peer campaigns, donor engagement increases. Their school-based and ambassador programs empower kids and teens to set goals, make the ask, and tell compelling stories — often outperforming adult-led campaigns in reach and emotional impact.

Imagine similar innovation within Girl Scouting:

- Council-approved giving campaigns where girls lead video appeals, write donor thank-you notes, or present to community partners and are able to ASK for financial investments.
- Digital fundraising teams for service projects, events, or community partnerships that benefit their own councils, camps, properties, programs or initiatives.
- Leadership badges or journeys that include practical, supervised fundraising experiences tied to Girl Scout outcomes that directly benefit investments in our own movement.
- Girl-led stewardship teams that support donor recognition and share stories of impact with local supporters.
- Philanthropy-enhanced cookie campaigns, such as:
 - "Give a Box, Fund a Program" initiatives, where girls invite customers to both purchase cookies and make an optional contribution toward a local Girl Scout program (e.g., campership fund, STEM program, or troop service project). Girls can explain where the funds go and why it matters.
 - Cookie booth donor outreach, where Seniors and Ambassadors are trained to share a compelling “philanthropic ask” alongside the cookie pitch — like supporting underserved troops or council innovation funds — turning a simple transaction into a deeper engagement opportunity.

These kinds of programs can be designed with the same care and safety as our product sales — ensuring alignment with council policies, developmental appropriateness, and adult oversight — while unlocking new leadership experiences that girls are asking for.

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

The current GSUSA “solicitation of contributions” 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 and often involve girls in fundraising events and meetings, 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 bylaws amendment instead if others feel this is a more appropriate way to handle this.

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.

Signature and Printed Name of chair, council board of directors

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, copying 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, copying 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.