



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

A New Vision for Girl Scout Philanthropy

### 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 policies and practices limit GSUSA, councils, and girls to innovate in this space. For instance, girls - especially younger members and those not pursuing Gold Awards - are not able to participate in donor solicitation activities, even when those efforts are approved by councils and benefit Girl Scout programs directly.

To diversify revenue beyond fundraising, councils and GSUSA should also consider mission-aligned strategies such as brand licensing, girl-designed product partnerships, and cause marketing or influencer campaigns that generate income while elevating the visibility of the Movement. These approaches could include revenue-sharing agreements with socially responsible companies, licensing Girl Scout curricula or badges for public use, or national cause marketing initiatives that invite customers to support Girl Scouts with every purchase. These models not only diversify funding but could also offer girls leadership experiences in entrepreneurship, product design, and brand storytelling.

This discussion explores how we might diversify revenue streams including modernizing our fundraising 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 as stated in the *Blue Book*), while also looking and other funding streams like licensing, partnerships, cause marketing or influencer campaigns.

## 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 beyond money earning activities 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?
- How might we leverage the Girl Scout brand through ethical licensing, product partnerships, or cause marketing to generate new revenue and visibility?
- What business models or funding strategies outside traditional philanthropy could better position our Movement for long-term sustainability?

## 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 can also be 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 (*the following are examples for conversation context*):

- 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.
- Licensing with social impact product partnerships: Select commercial partners—aligned with our values—could develop Girl Scout-branded products shared revenue models benefiting national or local councils.
- Girl-led social enterprise pilots: With adult supervision, older Girl Scouts could design and launch service-based mini-ventures—like youth consulting panels, wellness events, or community-based pop-ups—combining real-world impact with entrepreneurial learning and council fundraising.

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?**

Councils are too reliant on cookie sale and product programs as primary revenue sources. The fundraising, licensing and cause marketing landscapes have 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.

Current GSUSA policies overly restrict funding opportunities including engaging youth Girl Scout members, particularly younger girls and those not pursuing Gold Awards, from participating in philanthropic fundraising beyond money earning activities like 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.

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 have 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 are currently constrained by outdated fundraising restrictions. By updating the policy, we can align with the 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 GSUSA has governance and operational committees in place, we have not seen significant, transparent, or transformational shifts emerge. Unlocking innovation requires decentralized idea-sharing and visible leadership from within the Movement—not just policy from above. Councils across the

country are already experimenting informally; formalizing and empowering these efforts would allow for shared learning and faster scaling of what works.

A more effective and scalable approach is to educate and activate the most engaged and well-connected members of the Girl Scout Movement—our girls, especially Seniors and Ambassadors—through open, idea-generating opportunities that treat philanthropy as a leadership pathway, not just a staff or adult function.

By equipping these highly motivated members with broad, open-ended information, tools and platforms to explore real fundraising innovation, paired with appropriate safeguards and adult guidance, we can foster faster momentum toward culture change. This grassroots, girl-led experimentation is likely to surface creative, high-impact practices that might otherwise be missed in top-down committee processes.

Simply put, innovation happens at the edge, not at the center. Empowering our most capable girls to lead the ways supported by adult allies and council infrastructure—will generate the practical, scalable insights we need to evolve, diversify funding streams, and retain our most ambitious members through meaningful, modern leadership opportunities.

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

This discussion 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 and the movement.

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 that this works. Since policy changes were made to allow Gold Award Girl Scouts to fundraise for their projects, we have seen them raise significant funds to create lasting change in their communities. Imagine if we gave them tools and training to support these efforts.

### **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 discussion could lead GSUSA/councils to innovate and adapt their fundraising and diversification 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 policies, 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 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.

#### **References**

- **St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.** (n.d.). *Youth Fundraising Programs*. <https://www.stjude.org/get-involved/school-fundraising-ideas.html>
- **Learning to Give.** (n.d.). *Why Teach Philanthropy?* <https://www.learningtogive.org>
- **The Chronicle of Philanthropy.** (2023). *Nonprofits Seek New Fundraising Strategies Amid Donor Fatigue*. <https://www.philanthropy.com>

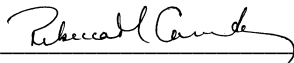
---

#### **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.

Unknown

Rebecca Camden



5/28/25

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](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.