



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 Central Indiana

City

Indianapolis

State

Indiana

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?

Discussion Topic

Is this a

draft or a

final submission?

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

How can GSUSA help troops to diversify revenue streams for Troops beyond Cookie Sales, provide clarity on money-earning activities permitted at each program level, and shift public perception that equates Girl Scouting with cookie sales?

STATEMENT OF PROPOSAL OR DISCUSSION TOPIC, QUESTION, OR ISSUE

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

TOPIC, QUESTION, OR ISSUE

or

THAT

or

TO

Troops face a three-fold problem regarding cookies:

1. Cookie sales can be an unreliable source of troop funds due to market fluctuations, price increases making our product more challenging to sell, and shifting priorities for family time investment. We need a more diverse array of troop income streams.
2. The Blue Book of Basic Documents is difficult for troop leaders to decipher to understand what money-earning activities ARE allowed for girls in each program level.
3. Girl Scouting has become so closely tied to cookie sales that it is the ONLY thing that the Movement is known for. This shortchanges all that Girl Scouting can offer to girls and to our communities.

We would like to discuss suggestions for how the Movement can prioritize the creation of tools to help troops

1. Meet their financial goals
2. Build important philanthropic skills and goals
3. Change the conversation from what the newest flavor of cookies is to what those cookie sales have allowed girls to do for their communities and for their own character building.

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?

REASONS:

1. What is the issue the discussion topic or proposal is trying to address?

Cookie sales are THE thing Girl Scouts are known for. Many troops rely heavily on cookie sales as their primary income source to fund a diverse array of programming. In our council, participation in the cookie sale is mandatory to be eligible for financial aid and for a troop to be eligible to participate in other money-earning activities. Our troops benefit not only from the profits, but one of the cookie prizes has been free membership renewal.

However, challenges in the supply chain, a downturn in the economy, lack of retail partners who allow us to host booths outside their stores, inability of parents to dedicate time to booths, can each cause poor cookie sales. In addition, the price of cookies in some of our councils is now getting so high that we are pricing ourselves out of the market (our council is \$6/pkg). Hanging so many benefits on this ONE fund raiser is not a sustainable business model.

While each council must decide package price for themselves, how to divide up cookie proceeds and what benefits are attached to cookie sale participation, we think it would be helpful to discuss Movement-wide ideas for diversifying revenue streams, clarifying fund-raising policies, and ways to shift public perception of the cookie sale.

2. Are there other ways to address this issue?

The root problem of over-reliance on cookie sales is one that is Movement-wide. Based on feedback from many councils across the country, troops are feeling the pinch of increased membership dues, as well as inflation in general. In addition, we often compete among councils for cookie sales, as any troop leader knows when she lives next to a council where the price is way cheaper just over the county line. Similarly, it is clear that there are many misunderstandings about what fund-raising opportunities girls can and cannot pursue. The best way to address this issue is a Movement-wide attempt at clarification, as well as brainstorming and dissemination of ideas for fund-raising diversification. Lastly, changing the public perception of Girl Scouting to be about more than cookies will definitely take a concerted national effort and that is a charge best led at a Movement level.

3. How does this proposal improve Movement governance or policy? OR How does this discussion topic inform Movement strategy?

For the Movement to strategically position itself for the years ahead, we will need to address the concerns that very much center on the internal AND public perception of cookie sales. Based on the Shine Scout research, safety is paramount to families - and what outsiders see of our cookie sale is not perceived as safe or worth the effort. Families want to see specific outcomes from their outside activities and are driven by a desire to raise kind, compassionate, empathetic humans.

As a Movement, we need to find ways to reframe the product program to ensure these character development qualities of participating in cookies are more visible within and outside the Girl Scout community. Diversifying revenue streams for troops promotes girl-led experiences as the girls explore their skills and decide what fund raising method makes the most sense for THEM specifically.

Diversifying troop revenue may impact the income streams for councils, so it will be important to provide national guidance and tools for councils to improve transparency and diversify THEIR income streams as well. This will involve nationwide support to councils as they improve their communication with troops about the funding streams for their council, impacts of de-emphasizing the cookie sale, and ways each council can diversify THEIR income streams as well.

4. Does this agenda item have Movement-wide significance? Does it apply to all councils?

Yes, all councils are impacted by the challenges intrinsic to the cookie program.

5. Is this agenda item time-sensitive? What happens if it is not addressed at NCS 58? Yes, this is time-sensitive. Inflation, tariffs and supply chain issues, and challenges with participation will likely continue to plague the cookie sale each year. Many councils are already charging >\$5/box and reducing troop profits or prize points to maximize profits for cookie sale. Each year we wait to diversify, this topic becomes more urgent as troop costs increase, cookie sales become more challenging, and troops & councils miss out on planned revenue to fund ongoing expenses and programming.

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.

Because this is a discussion suggestion, does that mean we don't have to complete this section of the proposal?

It might be helpful to show some specifics about impacts of bad cookie sale years?

Maybe what our sales shortfall was and any council plans that had to be modified as a result?



Stephanie Smithy

05/06/2025

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)].

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.

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)].

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