

Thinking of going on a trip with Girl Scouts? There are a variety of ways to fund your trip through the Product Program.

General troop proceeds can be used for troop activities including travel, but if you'd like to stretch your dollar a little farther, there are some additional options.

Troops:

- **Option 1:** Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador troops who are planning an approved Girl Scout trip have the option of opting out of cookie rewards in exchange for an additional \$0.15/package bonus in troop proceeds. In order to receive the bonus, **all girl members** of the troop must agree to opt out of the rewards & must complete the Opt-Out Request Form, complete with signatures of girls and their parents/guardians, by **February 1**. (Cookie Program Only).
- **Option 2:** If the whole troop doesn't want to opt out of rewards, girls can choose to trade-in their GEMS for travel funds. Travel funds can be used for girl expenses including airfare/transportation, hotels, event fees, meals, etc. for trip to a **GSUSA or GSAK sponsored event, a WAGGGS World Centre, the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace, or a location at least 300 miles from home when a Service Learning/Take Action Project is completed during the trip**. Travel funds will be issued as reimbursements for fees already paid for the trip or will be paid directly to the vendor. (Fall Product & Cookie Programs)

Remember that all funds collected, raised, earned, or otherwise received in the name of and for the benefit of Girl Scouting belong to the **troop** and must be used for the purposes of Girl Scouting. Funds are administered through the troop and **do not belong to individuals**.

Individuals (Independent Girl Scouts OR a girl traveling without her troop):

- **Option 3:** Girls can choose to trade-in their GEMS for travel funds. Travel funds can be used for girl expenses including airfare/transportation, hotels, event fees, meals, etc. for trip to a **GSUSA or GSAK sponsored event, the Girl Scout National Convention, a WAGGGS World Centre, the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace, or a GSUSA Destination**. Travel funds will be issued as reimbursements for fees already paid for the trip OR will be paid directly to the vendor. (Fall Product & Cookie Programs)
- Additionally, individual girls can apply for additional travel funds from GSAK. Funding varies based on participation in the cookie program. (Cookie Program Only)

General Questions

What happened to travel credits?

We simplified our product program credits into one, streamlined, system - GEMS (**G**irl **E**xperience **M**embership **S**hop). If you still have travel credits to use, those funds will be available until their expiration date.

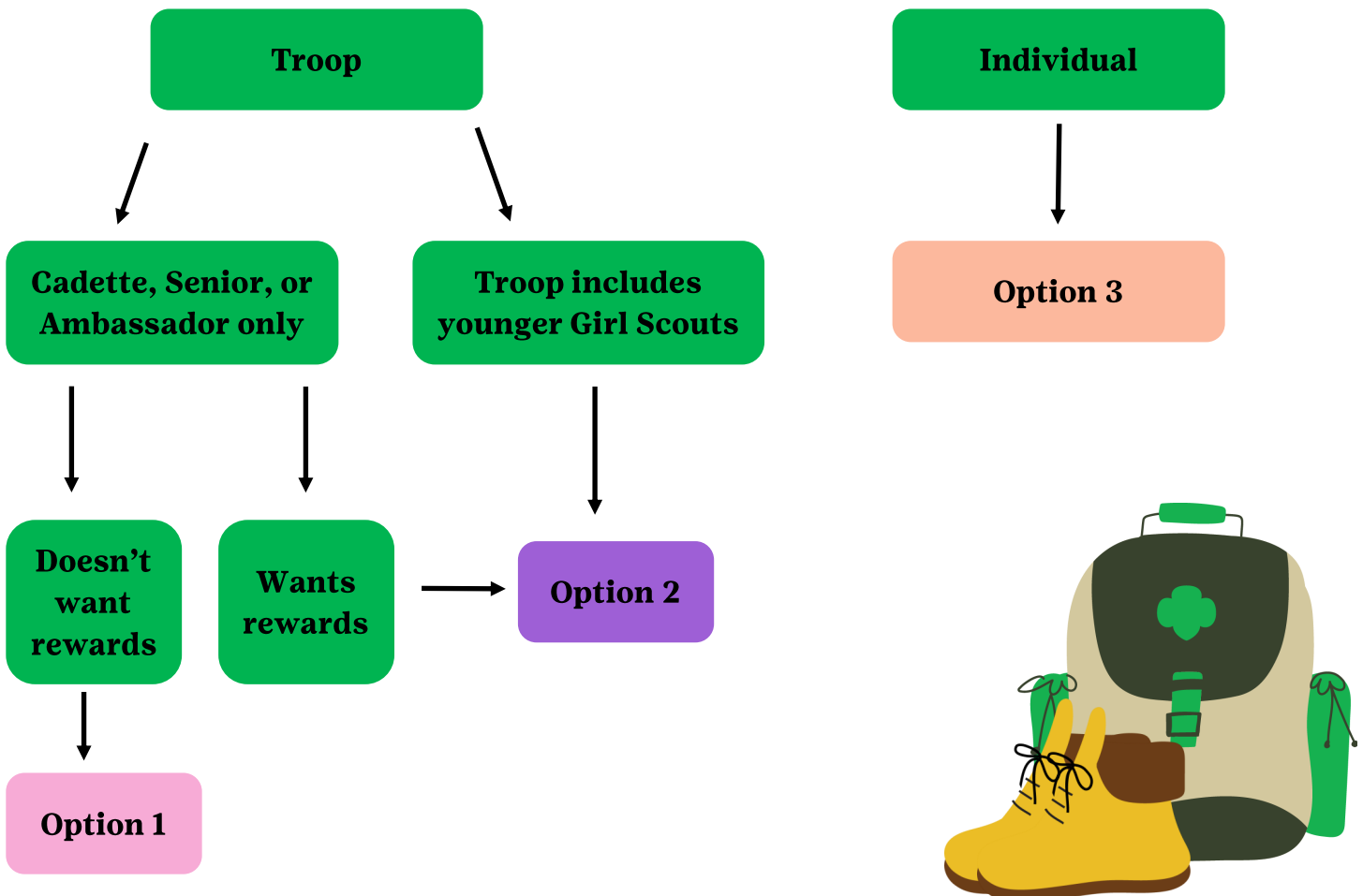
Our troop doesn't meet the requirements for any of the options, can we still use our regular troop proceeds for travel?

Yes! Troop proceeds can be used for any Girl Scout related expense, including travel & overnights as long as you follow troop finance policies and guidelines.

What if my trip includes girls from more than one troop?

You will not be eligible to opt out of rewards, but the Girl Scouts can choose to trade in the GEMS for travel funds.

Which option is right for me?



Option 1: Rewards Opt-Out

Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador troops who are planning an approved Girl Scout trip have the option of opting out of cookie rewards in exchange for an additional \$0.15/package bonus in troop proceeds. In order to receive the bonus, **all girl members** of the troop must agree to opt out of the rewards & must complete the Opt-Out Request Form, complete with signatures of girls and their parents/guardians, by **February 1**. (Cookie Program Only).

Who can opt out of rewards?

Cadette, Senior, and Ambassador troops who are planning an approved Girl Scout trip.

How do we opt out of rewards?

Submit a completed [Opt-Out Permission Form](#) and an [Intent to Travel Form](#) between October 1 and February 1. Forms will be reviewed to ensure that all supporting documentation is included, and the trip meets the appropriate qualifications.

Can we opt out of rewards during the Fall Product Program?

No. Opting out of rewards is only available during the cookie program. However, Girl Scouts who participate in the fall product program will earn GEMS that can be converted to travel funds.

I have younger girls in my troop, can we still opt out of rewards?

You may opt out of rewards if you currently have Junior Girl Scouts (or older) in your troop, and all Juniors will be Cadettes at the time of travel. Troops with Daisy - Brownie Girl Scouts are not eligible to opt out of rewards.

If we opt out of rewards, will troop members still receive GEMS?

No. If you opt out of rewards, troop members will not receive GEMS or physical rewards. They will still receive patches (if applicable).

Not everyone in my troop is selling cookies, do they have to sign the opt out form?

No. Only troop members who will be participating in the cookie program need to sign the opt out form. However, if a troop member decides to participate in the cookie program later, they will need to sign the form and you will need to resubmit.

Option 1: Rewards Opt-Out

What if a girl in the troop sells cookies but is not going on the trip?

If she chooses to opt out of rewards, your troop can still receive the additional troop proceeds. If she would like to receive rewards, your troop cannot opt out of rewards, but traveling troop members can still choose to trade in GEMS for travel funds.

If a girl participates in the cookie program with the intent of traveling and leaves the troop before the trip (i.e. moves away or drops out), will her packages sold count towards the troop total?

If a girl moves out of council or leaves Girl Scouts the packages sold stay with troop. If a girl leaves her troop to become an Individually Registered Member/Juliette or join another troop, the troop does not retain the packages sold. The girl will be considered an individual seller for the ENTIRE cookie program. For this to happen, Council must be notified no later than the day before the first ACH. If a girl leaves the troop or decides not to go on the trip after the first ACH, her packages are retained by the troop.

What if we earn more money than we need?

Your troop proceeds can be used for any Girl Scout-related expense including, but not limited to: troop activities; Girl Scout memberships; Highest Awards, Take Action, or community service projects; summer camp registration fees; badges and patches; and Girl Scout uniforms or apparel.



Option 2: GEMS for Troop Travel

Option 3: GEMS for Individual Travel

If the whole troop doesn't want to opt out of rewards or a Girl Scout is traveling without her troop, girls can choose to trade-in their GEMS for travel funds. Travel funds can be used for girl expenses including airfare/transportation, hotels, event fees, meals, etc. for trip to a **GSUSA or GSAK sponsored event, a WAGGGS World Centre, the Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace, or a location at least 300 miles from home when a Service Learning/Take Action Project is completed during the trip.** Travel funds will be issued as reimbursements for fees already paid for the trip or will be paid directly to the vendor. (Fall Product & Cookie Programs)

What are travel funds?

GEMS earned during the fall product and cookie programs can be traded in for travel funds to help cover the cost of Girl Scout travel for both troops and individuals. Girl Scout travel includes trips to a GSUSA or GSAK sponsored event, a [WAGGGS World Centre](#), the [Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace](#), or for troop travel when the trip at least 300 miles from home AND a [Service Learning/Take Action Project](#) is completed during the trip. Travel funds will be issued as reimbursements for fees already paid for the trip OR will be paid directly to the vendor. Travel funds can be used for girl expenses including event fees, airfare, meals, and accommodations. Travel funds cannot be used for spending money, non-Girl Scout attendees, or adults' expenses. Travel funds have no cash value and are redeemable for 2 membership years. (Travel funds expire on September 30th of the second year).

Who can use travel funds?

Girl Scouts are eligible to trade in GEMS for travel funds if:

- they earned at least 125 GEMS **AND**
- they are planning a trip to a GSUSA or GSAK sponsored event, a [WAGGGS World Centre](#), the [Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace](#), or a troop trip when the trip at least 300 miles from home AND a [Service Learning/Take Action Project](#) is completed during the trip **AND**
- they/their troop has submitted an Intent to Travel form and received approval for the trip.

How do I trade in GEMS for travel funds?

Travel funds are available in \$50 increments starting at 125 GEMS. (125 GEMS = \$50, 250 GEMS = \$100, 375 GEMS = \$150, and so on). Complete the [GEMS Trade-In Request Form](#) (and have an [Intent to Travel Form](#) on file) to request travel funds. Travel funds are held by the council and will be issued as reimbursements for fees already paid for the trip OR will be paid directly to the vendor. You must submit documentation of expenses (receipts for airfare, event fee or accommodations, statement or bill from event sponsor) to customercare@girlscoutsalaska.org in order to receive the funds. GSAK will deposit funds into the troop/trip bank account, send a check, and/or pay vendors directly. (When choosing how to receive the funds, remember once funds are deposited into the troop account, they are property of the whole troop and cannot be earmarked for any one girl.)

Option 2: GEMS for Troop Travel

Option 3: GEMS for Individual Travel

How will I receive the money?

Travel funds are held by the council and will be issued as reimbursements for fees already paid for the trip OR will be paid directly to the vendor. You must submit documentation of expenses (receipts for airfare, event fee or accommodations, statement or bill from event sponsor) to customercare@girlscoutsalaska.org in order to receive the funds. GSAK will deposit funds into the troop/trip bank account, send a check, and/or pay vendors directly. (When choosing how to receive the funds, remember once funds are deposited into the troop account, they are property of the whole troop and cannot be earmarked for any one girl.)

Can a troop leader request travel funds for their troop members?

No. While travel funds can be used for troop travel, the request must be submitted by the Girl Scout's parent or guardian.

Can I use travel funds for more than one trip?

Yes, you can use travel funds for any approved trip prior to expiration. In order to use your travel funds, you must submit the [Intent to Travel Form](#) for each trip.

Do travel funds expire?

Yes, travel funds will expire. They are good during the year they are earned and the following membership year. They will expire on September 30th of the second membership year. For example, if you earn GEMS during the 2024 cookie program and convert them to travel funds, you can use them any time between May 2024 and Sept 30, 2025.

Can I trade in my GEMS before I need the travel funds?

Yes, you can trade in your GEMS at any time, prior to expiration, as long as you have an [Intent to Travel Form](#) on file, but keep in mind that once GEMS are converted to travel funds, they cannot be used for any other purpose. GSAK will hold on to & track your travel funds until you need them (or the expire, whichever comes first). Once you are ready to use them, email your receipts or other documentation of expenses to customercare@girlscoutsalaska.org. GSAK will deposit funds into the troop/trip bank account, send a check, and/or pay vendors directly.