



Girl Scout Merchandise seeks to reduce our environmental impact and integrate social and environmental sustainability into our products and operations wherever possible. In 2020, we undertook several sustainability initiatives involving our organizational strategy and our Girl Scout Cookie Program, and we also initiated partnerships with leaders in the field, including Environmental Defense Fund and Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Our team oversees all the Girl Scout products you know and love, from vests, badges, and apparel to Girl Scout Cookies. Because these products are made with ingredients and materials from around the world, we recognize that our operations have a large environmental, social, and economic impact. We also know that by sourcing our products from ethical companies and/or woman-owned businesses, we can positively impact communities, workers, and the environment. Therefore, in conjunction with the Girl Scout Properties community, we developed the following sustainability strategy to align our operations with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDGs).

Our Girl Scout Merchandise and Properties teams set targets to advance Goals [7 – Affordable and Clean Energy](#), [8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth](#), [12 – Responsible Consumption and Production](#), and [13 – Climate Action](#) over the coming years:

Girl Scouts of the USA Supports the Sustainable Development Goals

By 2024, Girl Scouts of the USA will increase awareness about climate change among its employees, Girl Scout councils, and Girl Scout troops by integrating sustainability across our departments, considering climate impacts in business decision-making, and engaging in conversation with councils and troops. Phenom by Girl Scouts, the experience for girls at the 2023 National Girl Scout Convention, will feature environmental sustainability as a core focus.

By 2023, Girl Scouts of the USA will reduce plastic and paper waste in the life cycle of merchandise packaging by using 25% (plastic) and 75% (paper) post-consumer recycled materials. We will also encourage cookie consumers to recycle through improved messaging. We are working with our bakers to achieve maximum recyclability for cookie packaging and renewable electricity at their facilities. Moreover, our 2021 sustainable and socially responsible product assortment included upcycled or climate-neutral products, products made with recycled materials and organic cotton, and products with Forest Stewardship Council®, OEKO-TEX®, and bluesign® certifications. We increasingly work to offer durable products that supplant the need for single-use or short-term use products.



Girl Scouts of the USA is working to maximize energy efficiency, and we plan to achieve 100% renewable electricity by 2026 at our Distribution Center, Edith Macy Center, and Juliette Gordon Low Birthplace sites.

By 2021, Girl Scouts of the USA launched a collection of sustainable and socially responsible product. We intentionally sourced these products from businesses owned by women entrepreneurs or Girl Scout alumni, Certified B Corporations®, and companies with high ethical standards. This assortment also included fair-trade products, made by workers under the safest working conditions, who earned a premium for their labor. As always, Girl Scouts prohibits the use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), never sells products made using child labor or forced labor, and requires all partners to certify nondiscriminatory employment practices. We plan to continue sourcing as many products as possible using the highest standards of social and environmental responsibility.

Sustainable Development Goals 8, 12, and 13 are particularly relevant to Girl Scout Merchandise. For instance, Girl Scout Merchandise used SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth as a

framework for our socially responsible products, and SDG 12 – Responsible Consumption and Production as a framework for our packaging sustainability goals, thoughtfully sourced product materials, and sustainability collaborations with our bakers. SDG 13 – Climate Action helps Girl Scouts Merchandise integrate sustainability into conversations with other Girl Scout teams, councils, and troops.

Below you will find more information about the sustainability projects already underway across our products and packaging.

OVERVIEW

We spent 2020 identifying and understanding the current state of our cookie packaging, distribution center packaging, and opportunities for more sustainable and socially responsible merchandise. After careful analysis, we determined an ideal future state for these items and developed a strategy for achieving our goals. We also initiated partnerships with MIT and Environmental Defense Fund to understand the landscape of sustainability, because we understand that sustainability cuts across functions and sectors. We acknowledged that we did not have all the answers and we therefore sought to engage outside experts.

1. GIRL SCOUT MERCHANDISE

Girl Scout Merchandise launched our first collection of sustainable and socially responsible products in 2021. We intentionally sourced these products from businesses owned by women entrepreneurs or Girl Scout alumni, from certified B Corporations, and from companies with high ethical standards. This assortment included fair-trade products made by workers under the safest working conditions, who earned a premium for their labor. This assortment also included upcycled or climate-neutral products, products made with recycled materials and organic cotton, and products with Forest Stewardship Council® and OEKO-TEX® certifications. We increasingly work to offer durable products that supplant the need for single-use plastics or limited-use products.

At the helm of this sustainable product collection was the launch of new Girl Scouts uniforms in August 2021. The updated Girl Scout uniforms—the sash, vest, and tunic— are made of a fabric composed of recycled material (40%), virgin polyester (40%), and cotton (20%). The sustainable material includes [REPREVE®](#) fiber from [Unifi](#), which is made using recycled post-consumer plastic bottles. In conjunction with the new uniform items, Girl Scouts began an upcycling program (also known as creative reuse) to transform unused products into new materials of greater quality. Starting in August 2021, existing sash/vest inventory and unused products have been transformed into aprons, pillows, totes, and crossbody bags available for purchase through the Girl Scout Shop and select Girl Scout council stores.

Furthermore, by partnering with a licensing vendor in 2020, we launched a sweatshirt that contains 100% recycled material (50% recycled cotton, 50% recycled poly material). In addition, in November 2020 we launched a shoe at our Girl Scouts shop that features a recycled canvas upper, synthetic leather overlays, and recycled metal hardware. The shoe does not contain any animal materials.

As always, Girl Scouts requires all production partners to certify that they do not use child labor or forced labor and do not engage in discriminatory employment practices. We plan to continue sourcing as many products as possible using socially and environmentally responsible standards.

2. GIRL SCOUT COOKIES

Our cookie brand is the second-largest cookie brand in the country. We are pleased to share that there is no BPA in any of our packaging. In addition, no PFAS chemicals are present in our packaging, and our cookies and cookie packaging are not processed with equipment that uses PFAS. Lastly, our paper-based cookie boxes are made from 100% recycled paper, which means that the paper may have been recycled many times already. Some cookie varieties are produced in soft pack packaging only, without a box. The film overwrap is similar to the protective wrapping found inside the boxes of the other cookie varieties and is recyclable in certain markets. While the shift to film overwrap has eliminated thousands of pounds of paperboard from the waste stream and the reduction in packaging weight has saved thousands of gallons of diesel fuel, the material may not be accepted by some local recycling services.

There is, of course, an opportunity for Girl Scouts to continue improving its environmental impact. Packaging is the leading contributor to plastic waste in the U.S., accounting for 36% of this waste category. As a result, we're focused heavily on improving our packaging for the future. Our hope is that eventually, all Girl Scout Cookie packaging will be recycled so that less plastic reaches our oceans and marine life. As Girl Scout Cookies are produced and packaged by our two licensed bakers, ABC Bakers and Little Brownie Bakers, we regularly collaborate with them on this effort.

Our objective is to offer consumers products with packaging that is more environmentally friendly while maintaining freshness, shelf life, and product protection. This encompasses three key goals:

- Reduce the amount of material used.
- Optimize the use of renewable or recycled materials.
- Remove hard-to-recycle plastics, where possible, by shifting toward more recyclable materials.

We honor the golden rule of reduce, reuse, and recycle—in that order—and we keep this principle in mind when discussing sustainability with our bakers and vendors.

3. DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Girl Scouts ships all merchandise (e.g. welcome kits, uniforms, and badges) except for cookies from our 60,000-square-foot distribution center in Randolph, New Jersey. The facility primarily routes packages, but it also performs some assembly. While our Properties team manages the energy at our distribution center, Girl Scout Merchandise oversees all packaging at the facility. Mid-2020, we conducted an audit of our packaging materials and set sustainability goals. Currently, our paper is

100% recyclable and contains 100% recycled content, and our poly mailer bags are made from 100% recycled content and can be recycled with plastic bags. However, several improvement opportunities came to our attention regarding our poly bags, stretch wrap, and corrugated cartons. At the time, our poly bags and stretch wrap were not recyclable nor made of recycled content, and our corrugated cartons were recyclable but contained only 50% recycled content.

After analyzing our packaging and partnering with [MIT Sustainable Business Lab](#) to conduct a deep dive into our energy consumption, we developed a strategy for implementing our packaging and energy goals. We aim to divert material from landfills by switching to products that contain an increased amount of recycled content. Our goal, which applies to current and new packaging, is to use at least 25% recycled content in our plastic packaging and at least 75% recycled content in our paper and carton packaging by the end of 2023. In late 2020, we placed our first order of poly bags made with 30% post-consumer recycled content, and we continue to work with our partners to identify options for stretch wrap and corrugated cartons.

We look forward to continuing to partner with vendors who align with our sustainability strategy and values.