



Sustainability Briefing

AUG 2020





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Overview

GSUSA'S COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY:

Climate change is one of the biggest challenges of our lifetime, and today's youth, including our girls, will bear the brunt of it. We recognize that tackling climate change must be a priority for us; it is, after all, ingrained in our values as an organization. At Girl Scouts, our philosophy includes using resources wisely and leaving a place better than we found it—both key tenets of sustainability.

We recognize that the U.S. ranks near the top in per capita carbon emissions. We therefore seek to reduce our impact wherever possible. This past year, we undertook several sustainability initiatives involving our organizational strategy and our Girl Scout Cookie Program (among others). As part of our commitment to sustainability, we have also initiated partnerships with leaders in the field, including Environmental Defense Fund and the Environmental Protection Agency. From measuring the true environmental impact of our packaging and energy operations to identifying how we can improve them, we are thrilled by our progress—however, it is vital to remember that this is just the beginning.

Sustainability is a journey that will take time; we know that we will not be green overnight, but we also must adjust our practices to better protect the environment for our girls, volunteers, councils, employees, and communities—both current and future. We understand that sustainability is a continual process rather than a destination, and we are fully committed to this effort.

We look forward to sharing our progress with you in this Sustainability Briefing and encourage you to continue educating yourself on this important topic. This is the decade of action and the time to act is now.

“When I was younger, sustainability mattered to me because I love animals and I love nature, but now, I don't think sustainability is an option. It's something we're going to be dealing with in the next decade. We've destroyed our planet so much and we need to take measures to bring it back to what it used to be. I don't see sustainability as a choice.”

—CURRENT GIRL SCOUT



Organizational Sustainability Strategy & Future Vision

OUR FRAMEWORK:

In order for us to set meaningful sustainability goals, we need a framework. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are commonly used by organizations and government entities to frame their own sustainability goals. The SDGs address global challenges to sustainable international development and were set in 2015 by the United Nations General Assembly. The 17 goals and 169 targets range across social, economic, and environmental issues. The UN aims to achieve these goals by 2030.



OUR FOCUS:

Based on an assessment of relevant SDGs and thorough research, we have chosen to focus our efforts on four SDGs: Climate Action, Quality Education, Responsible Consumption & Production, and Affordable and Clean Energy:

Girl Scouts of the USA supports the Sustainable Development Goals

By 2023, Girl Scouts USA will increase awareness about climate change among its employees, Girl Scout councils, and Girl Scout troops by integrating sustainability into performance reviews and decision-making frameworks and engaging councils and troops in conversation.

By 2023, Girl Scouts USA will reduce the plastic and paper waste in the life cycle of merchandise packaging by using 25% (plastic) and 75% (paper) post-consumer recycled materials and encouraging recycling with the use of a QR code on cookie boxes and through Girl Scouts programming. We are working with our bakers to achieve maximum recyclability for cookie packaging, 100% renewable energy, sustainably sourced palm oil, and Rainforest Alliance certifications for some cookies by 2030.



By 2023, Girl Scouts USA is increasing its programmatic focus on environmental education for girls to include age-appropriate discussions about environmental justice, proper recycling practices, and sustainability-related service projects.

By 2026, Girl Scouts USA is working to maximize energy efficiency at our 4 owned & leased locations and achieve 100% renewable electricity at owned properties.





GOAL 13: CLIMATE ACTION IN GOVERNANCE

Our vision for prioritizing climate action includes:

- GSUSA governance evaluates environmental impact in all decision-making and performance evaluations
- GS councils prioritize environmental sustainability and engage in ongoing conversation with GSUSA about environmental sustainability, with a focus on education and resilience efforts
- GSUSA systematically consults Girl Scouts themselves on environmental sustainability issues
- GSUSA achieves science-based targets (SBT) to align with the Paris Agreement



GOAL 4: QUALITY EDUCATION

Our vision for providing a quality education to our girls encompasses four main points:

- Programming provides age-appropriate holistic environmental justice education and knowledge of nearby Native American tribes
- Programming provides girls with information on what the different recycling numbers mean and how to find out what's recyclable in their local area
- GSUSA implements at least 1–2 National Service Projects related to environmental sustainability/climate change annually
- GSUSA provides 3 Sustainability Gold Award Scholarships annually by 2023



GOAL 12: RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION & PRODUCTION

Our vision for shifting towards more responsible consumption and production encompasses both packaging and procurement. Targets include:

- Packaging for cookies and merchandise uses more post-consumer recycled content and achieves 100% recyclability
- Girl Scout Cookie boxes have a QR code that takes the user to a website with local recycling information
- All GSUSA vendors have set sustainability goals (by 2024) that align with GSUSA science-based targets and are working to achieve them by 2030
- All Girl Scout Cookies use sustainable palm oil and reach 100% renewable energy, and 1–2 cookies are Rainforest Alliance certified by 2030



GOAL 7: AFFORDABLE & CLEAN ENERGY

Our vision for providing affordable and clean energy is threefold and includes:

- 100% renewable electricity at the distribution center, Edith Macy, and Savannah sites by 2026
- Maximal energy efficiency at the distribution center & Edith Macy
- All employee travel (air + train) is net carbon-neutral

CURRENT STATUS

Given the size of our Movement, which includes 2.5 million girl and adult members, we believe there is great potential for positive impact. We are energized by the opportunity to provide our Girl Scouts and adult members with holistic environmental education so they can become more confident environmental stewards who can then engage their own troops and communities on these topics. We are engaging teams internally to design National Service Projects and have also completed one sustainability focus group with current Girl Scouts. We will discuss our progress with Girl Scout merchandise in more detail in the next section. Our hope is that ultimately all of our stakeholders (including our girls and employees) will consider sustainability in their daily decision making.



Girl Scout Merchandise Initiatives

OVERVIEW:

We spent the past year identifying and understanding the current state of our cookie packaging, distribution center packaging, and distribution center energy consumption. After careful analysis, we determined an ideal future state of these items and developed a strategy for achieving our goals. Perhaps most importantly, we initiated partnerships with MIT, Environmental Defense Fund, and the Environmental Protection Agency; we understand that sustainability cuts across functions and sectors. We acknowledge that we do not have all the answers when it comes to sustainability and therefore seek to engage outside experts whenever possible.

1. 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 parts of our packaging. Additionally, no PFAS chemicals are present in our packaging, and our cookies and cookie packaging are not processed with equipment that uses PFAS. Finally, our cookie boxes are made from 100% recycled paper (from the LBB side these include Thin Mints, Trefoils, Do-si-dos, Toffee-tastics, Tagalongs, and Samoas; from the ABC side these include Caramel deLites, Peanut Butter Patties, Shortbread, Thin Mints, and Peanut Butter Sandwich) —this means that the paper may have been recycled many times already!

However, there is great potential here to have an even larger impact. We've focused heavily on improving our packaging, as packaging is the largest sector within plastic waste, accounting for 36%. Our hope is that eventually, all 200 million cookie boxes will be recycled annually so that less plastic reaches our oceans and marine life. As Girl Scout Cookies are produced and packaged by our two bakers, ABC and LBB, we are regularly collaborating 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 towards more recyclable material

We understand that we must follow the golden rule of reduce, reuse and recycle, and we therefore keep this principle in mind when discussing sustainability with our bakers and vendors. We are working to improve our packaging by exploring various options, keeping in mind our objective and goals. Updates will be shared as they are confirmed.



2. DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Girl Scouts ships all merchandise (e.g., welcome kits, uniforms, badges) except for cookies out of our one 60,000-square-foot distribution center in Randolph, New Jersey. The facility primarily routes packages but also performs some assembly.

Packaging: We conducted an audit of our packaging materials; through examination, we now better understand our starting point. We determined that we use paper, clear poly bags, poly mailer bags, corrugated cartons, stretch wrap, and tape. Our paper is 100% recyclable and contains 100% recycled content, which was great to see. Our poly mailer bags are made from 100% recycled content and can be recycled with plastic bags. However, we realized that there were also some improvement opportunities when it came to our poly bags, stretch wrap, and corrugated cartons. Our poly bags and stretch wrap are not currently recyclable; our corrugated cartons are recyclable and contain 50% recycled content, but we believe we can go one step further by increasing the percentage of recycled content.

Energy: Our distribution center contributes significantly to our operations by moving all (non-cookie) merchandise. However, we did not understand our energy usage or how our operations align with energy efficiency best practices. We enlisted a team of students from MIT's Sustainability Lab to help us understand options for improving our energy usage. We chose to focus on energy because it is a major driver of climate change. According to the U.S Green Building Council, buildings use 41% of the energy in the U.S, making the warehouse site critical for tackling energy efficiency

Achievements: After analyzing our packaging and partnering with MIT to conduct a deep dive into our energy consumption, we developed a three-year 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/carton packaging. Partnering with our suppliers to identify new concepts and innovations available in the market is critical. On the energy front, we aim to achieve best-in-class energy usage by reducing our energy consumption by 36% and working towards the EPA's ENERGY STAR certification. As part of this goal, we have already:

- Installed a tankless water heater, which will allow us to easily access warm water when needed vs. keeping tanks warm
- Developed an operational checklist to ensure sustainable operations at start and close of business day
- Installed smart thermostats for office HVAC which will help us save energy by managing our usage more efficiently
- Conducted research on solar panels to understand our options

We know that sustainability is a process—as we continue implementing our strategy, we plan to regularly monitor our energy usage, conduct regular onsite monitoring, and collaborate with vendors/nonprofit partners to implement improvements as necessary.

3. LICENSING

We are excited to announce that by partnering with a vendor, we launched a sweatshirt that contains 100% recycled material (50% recycled cotton, 50% recycled poly material). Additionally, we will be launching a shoe (November 2020) at our Girl Scout shop that contains a recycled canvas upper, synthetic leather overlays, and recycled metal hardware. The shoe does not contain any animal materials. We look forward to continuing to partner with vendors who align with our sustainability mission and values.



