

Girl Scouts is the world's preeminent leadership organization for girls, with 2.6 million members—1.8 million girls and 800,000 adults who believe in the power of every G.I.R.L. (Go-getter, Innovator, Risk-taker, Leader)<sup>TM</sup> to change the world. We know through over a century of time-tested research that girls thrive in an inclusive, safe space in which they're free to explore their potential and take the lead without the distractions or pressures that can be found in a coed environment.

The United States needs public policies that support programs and initiatives that allow girls to grow up healthy and strong, develop the skills they need to excel in the ever-changing workforce, and make a positive impact in their communities and on their world. In partnership with our 112 councils, Girl Scouts works with policymakers at all levels to advance the cause of girls and their limitless potential. In our effort to build tomorrow's leaders, Girl Scouts is prioritizing the following public policy goals in 2018.

## Promote Economic Opportunities for Girls

### ***Increase Girls' Involvement in STEM***

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Girl Scouts is committed to ensuring that every girl has the opportunity to explore and build an interest and possible career path in STEM-related fields. In 2017, Girl Scouts released new STEM programming that gives girls the opportunity to earn awards in engineering, computer science, and outdoor STEM, as well as 15 new badges in robotics and mechanical engineering. In 2018, Girl Scouts plans to introduce cybersecurity education to millions of girls across the United States through compelling programming designed to instill in them a valuable 21st century skillset. Through hands-on and age-appropriate experiences for girls as young as five, Girl Scouts is addressing the lack of exposure many girls have to STEM.

#### **Girl Scouts supports policy efforts to:**

- **Promote proven techniques for engaging girls in STEM, including single-gender learning environments and hands-on, inquiry-based learning.**
- **Introduce girls to diverse role models and mentors.**
- **Expand out-of-school STEM programming to girls and underrepresented minorities.**

### ***Strengthen Financial Literacy and Entrepreneurial Skills***

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A nationwide survey conducted by the Girl Scout Research Institute\* reveals girls are confident and optimistic about their financial futures, but their current knowledge is limited. Girl Scouts can help fill this need. Through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, girls develop five lifelong financial literacy and entrepreneurship skills: goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics—key 21st century business and finance skills. In 2018, as we embark on a second century of the cookie program, Girl Scouts are embracing technology to innovate the most powerful girl-led business to reflect today's business realities without losing essential offline skills.

#### **Girl Scouts supports policy efforts to:**

- **Ensure that all girls have financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills.**
- **Bolster the role of youth-serving organizations in providing real-world financial literacy and entrepreneurial experiences in an all-girl environment.**
- **Leverage educational technology to strengthen financial literacy capabilities for youth.**

# Encourage Healthy Living Opportunities for Girls

## ***Increase Access to Outdoor Activities***

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In 2017, Girl Scouts released eight new badges related to outdoor skills, outdoor adventure, and environmental skills. The new programming builds on what girls already know and encourages their interest from an early age in areas they may not be as familiar with, such as environmental conservation.

### **Girl Scouts supports policy efforts to:**

- **Ensure that all girls get outdoors regularly and in varied ways, particularly girls in underserved communities who may have limited opportunities to experience nature.**
- **Provide opportunities for girls to explore solutions to conservation issues and develop an increased understanding of natural sciences, natural resource management, and STEM careers.**
- **Engage girls in environmental stewardship and action to conserve our natural resources.**

## ***Prevent Bullying/Relational Aggression and Build Healthy Relationships***

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According to the Girl Scout Research Institute, about 30 percent of girls have experienced some form of bullying or relational aggression from their peers. Girls who are targeted have higher rates of absenteeism, lower grades, and are at increased risk of depression, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, and suicide. To address this, Girl Scouts gives girls the skills to develop healthy relationships and prevent bullying behavior outright. Our evidence-based BFF (Be a Friend First) bullying-prevention program, designed for middle-school girls, focuses directly on reducing bullying, particularly relational aggression and cyberbullying.

### **Girl Scouts supports policy efforts to:**

- **Engage local education agencies in providing education and training programs for middle-school (and elementary school-age) youth to reduce relational aggression, bullying, and adolescent violence, as well as in creating safe schools and communities.**

# Foster Global Citizenship and a Global Voice for Girls

Girl Scouts is dedicated to ensuring that girls have opportunities to develop increased awareness of the larger world and to understand their relationship to it—even if they don't travel beyond their own community—so they can grow into responsible global citizens. We strive to promote cross-cultural learning opportunities and educate girls on relevant global issues that inspire them to take action.

### **Girl Scouts supports policy efforts to:**

- **Promote education about global issues, particularly those affecting girls and women, and ultimately, promote a sense of global citizenship.**
- **Promote global access to education for girls.**
- **Provide cross-cultural opportunities for learning and international travel.**

## Support a Strong Nonprofit Community That Encourages the Girl Scout Leadership Experience

Girl Scouts is proud to partner with nonprofits to ensure that they not only survive but also flourish as employers that provide essential services. We support policies that help nonprofits screen, recruit, and retain staff and volunteers, as well as incentivize charitable giving. Charitable giving policies help fuel the health of our nation and communities around the world.

**Girl Scouts supports policy efforts to:**

- **Ensure a healthy, effective, and vibrant nonprofit community that sustains the nation's philanthropic tradition.**
- **Maintain the financial stability of the Girl Scout Movement to ensure that the Girl Scout Leadership Experience can be offered to an increasing number of girls.**

