

Girl Scouts is 2.6 million strong—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>™</sup> to change the world. No youth-serving organization other than Girl Scouts combines time-tested, research-backed program delivery methods with fun, innovative programming that speaks to the interests of today's girls and their particular learning styles and leadership development. Girl Scouts welcomes girls of all backgrounds and interests who want to develop their courage, confidence and character to make the world a better place.

Girls need public policies that champion support for all-girl—and girl-led—safe spaces and honor the unique developmental needs of girls in relation to extracurricular activities like scouting. They need programs and initiatives that allow them to grow up healthy and strong, develop the skills they need to excel in an ever-changing workforce, and make a positive mark in their communities and the world. To build tomorrow's leaders, Girl Scouts is prioritizing the following public policy goals in 2019.

## Promote Economic Opportunities for Girls

---

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

If our country is to maintain its competitive advantage in the global economy, we need to make sure our young people—especially girls—can take on careers in STEM. That's why Girl Scouts is committed to ensuring every girl has chances to explore and build interest and a possible career path in STEM-related fields. In July 2018, Girl Scouts debuted 30 new badges for girls ages 5–18. These badges not only enhance the one-of-a-kind Girl Scout experience—they address some of society's most pressing needs, including those relevant to cybersecurity, mechanical engineering, robotics, computer science, and space exploration. These national efforts are a vital step toward eliminating traditional barriers to industry access, such as gender and geography, and will help prime girls for success in their eventual careers and in life overall.

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
- Engage girls in engineering and computer science to prepare them for the 21st century STEM workforce
- Expand out-of-school STEM programming to girls and underrepresented minority groups

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

Whether she chooses to become the CEO of a Fortune 500 company, the CFO of her family, or an entrepreneur who starts her own business, a girl must develop the financial know-how and business skills to power her future. Entrepreneurship and financial literacy have been cornerstones of the Girl Scout experience for more than a century. Through the Girl Scout Cookie Program, girls develop important business and entrepreneurial acumen, acquiring five skills that serve them for life—goal setting, decision making, money management, people skills, and business ethics. In addition to selling cookies the traditional in-person way, girls can participate via the Digital Cookie<sup>®</sup> platform, which puts Girl Scouts in the driver's seat of their own digital cookie businesses and teaches them vital 21st century lessons about online marketing, app usage, and ecommerce.

Girl Scouts supports policy efforts to:

- Ensure all girls gain financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills
- Bolster the role of youth-serving organizations in promoting real-world financial literacy and entrepreneurial experiences in all-girl environments
- Leverage educational technology to strengthen the financial literacy capabilities of youth

## Encourage Girls to Embrace A Healthy Lifestyle

---

### ***Expand Girls' Access to Outdoor Adventure***

The outdoors is a fundamental component of Girl Scouting—specifically, engaging girls in outdoor experiences that build capable, adventurous outdoor advocates. By participating in outdoor activities, girls feel connected to the environment, one another, and their communities at large, and many report that their outdoor experiences in Girl Scouts strengthened their self-reliance, perseverance, and leadership skills. In April 2018, Girl Scouts announced a multiyear collaboration with the North Face to develop 12 new Outdoor Adventure badges. Featuring activities ranging from mountaineering and climbing to backpacking, hiking, and trail running, this expansion of Girl Scouts' outdoor programming will see girls challenging themselves, learning about the natural world, and honoring the Girl Scout tradition of having life-changing outdoor experiences.

Girl Scouts supports policy efforts to:

- Ensure all girls can participate in transformative outdoor experiences regularly and in varied ways
- Engage in outdoor experiences girls from under-resourced and marginalized communities who may have limited opportunities for (but are interested in) this engagement
- Engage girls in environmental stewardship and advocacy so they can learn the value and, in the process, learn to advocate for themselves

### ***Prevent Bullying/Relational Aggression and Foster Healthy Relationships Among Girls***

According to the Girl Scout Research Institute\*, about 30 percent of girls have experienced some form of bullying or relational aggression from their peers. Bullied girls have higher rates of absenteeism; have lower grades; and are at increased risk of depression, eating disorders, alcohol and drug abuse, and suicide. To address this problem, Girl Scouts gives girls a blueprint for developing healthy relationships and preventing 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
- Support girl-only bullying prevention initiatives that focus on relational aggression, and girls' unique needs, relationship behaviors and experiences

## Foster Global Citizenship and a Global Voice for Girls

---

Girl Scouts is dedicated to ensuring that girls develop an increased awareness of the larger world around them and understand their relationship to it so they can grow into responsible global citizens. Girl Scouts of the USA's new global citizenship program will aim to provide girls with experiences that help them become responsible and effective global citizens and leaders who recognize new and differing perspectives and connect with others as they take action to improve their local, national, and global communities today and tomorrow.

\*For more information on the original research used to support our public policy priorities, visit [www.girlscouts.org/research/](http://www.girlscouts.org/research/).

Girl Scouts supports policy efforts to:

- Promote education about global issues, particularly those affecting girls and women, and ultimately, help girls develop a sense of global citizenship
- Promote access to education for girls around the globe
- Provide opportunities for girls to explore and engage in creating solutions to global issue

## **Uphold a Strong Nonprofit Community that Supports the Girl Scout Leadership Experience**

---

Girl Scouts supports policies that incentivize charitable giving. Charitable giving policies fuel the health of our nation and communities around the world. Total charitable giving in the United States in 2017 surged to an estimated \$410.02 billion. While total giving remains robust, the number of American households who give to charity has declined every year for the last decade. Girl Scouts supports changes in tax policy that encourage more people—specifically, those who do not currently have access to the charitable deduction—to give more.

Girl Scouts supports policy efforts to:

- Support tax policies that encourage individuals' charitable donations, which serve as the backbone of all nonprofits
- Ensure a healthy, effective, and vibrant nonprofit community that sustains the nation's philanthropic tradition
- Maintain the financial stability of the Girl Scout Movement so we can offer the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to an ever-increasing number of girls