

MONEY MATTERS

Handling money safely and responsibly is a key component to the Girl Scout Cookie Program. Use the guidelines below to help ensure smooth transactions. Encourage the girls in your troop to get involved in the money handling. Provide plenty of support and check for accuracy.

- Payment for cookies should always be collected at the time of delivery, excluding Digital Cookie girl-delivered options.
- Accepted forms of payment are cash, money order, credit card, or check.
- Ask parents and girls to turn in collected money regularly—at least once a week! Always count money as it is turned in and in front of the parent. Utilize Cheddar Up or the receipt book to record payments. Give the parent a copy and retain a copy for troop records.
- Make a point to visit the bank after troop meetings and cookie booths where you know you'll be collecting cookie funds.
- Use your best judgment on how many cookies to release to parents at a time. For example, if a family has \$500 of cookies in their possession, it's a good idea to collect payment for those cookies before they are allowed to pick up additional cookies.
- Stay in touch with girls and parents. This is the best way to be aware of and address any payment issues early. If you suspect a problem with a parent, talk to your SU cookie coordinator for advice immediately!
- Store money safely and securely. Do not leave cookie money in a car, home, or other unsafe locations. Remember, the TCM is responsible for storing money safely until funds can be deposited. Deposit often to avoid lost funds.

Accepting Check Payments for Cookies

For your troop's safety, use extra caution when accepting checks from customers you don't know. Troops will be responsible for checks that are returned for insufficient funds. When accepting checks, remember:

- It is required that all checks must have name, address, driver's license number, and 2 DIFFERENT PHONE NUMBERS (home, work, cell) on the front of the check.
- Write the troop number and Girl Scout's name on memo line.
- Checks must be made payable to the Girl Scout troop.
- Checks are deposited into the troop's checking account.

Accepting Credit Card Payments for Cookies

This year it is strongly encouraged for troops to offer a contactless payment method for customers to purchase cookies.



CLIMB  **WITH**  **COURAGE**

Cheddar Up

GSGCF has partnered with Cheddar Up to provide troops a point of sale system at no cost to them. Troops using the Cheddar Up platform are eligible for one free credit card reader and all credit card fees will be covered by GSGCF. Troops may purchase additional credit card readers. For additional information, see the Cheddar Up module on gsLearn.

Troops may also choose to accept credit cards using companies like Square, Intuit, or other similar apps for their smart phones. If troops choose to utilize a platform other than Cheddar Up, the following guidelines apply:

- Troops are responsible for making arrangements for accepting credit card processing, including selecting a processing vendor and purchasing equipment and software as needed (such as PIN pads, card swipers, software, smartphone apps, etc.).
- Troops are responsible for all credit card processing fees. Troops should decide as a group whether it is worth the processing fee expense.
- The TCM must provide training to all parents and volunteers who will be accepting credit card payments.
- Credit card payments should be deposited directly into the troop bank account, not to a parent's or volunteer's personal bank account.
- Troops are required to follow all local, state, and federal laws regarding credit card payments.
- Troops cannot sell cookies for more than \$5 per package (\$6 per package for specialty cookies) to cover the credit card processing. The cost of doing business should be absorbed by the troop.
- The TCM is responsible for maintaining all cookie program financial records, including documentation of funds received via credit card payment.
- Credit card payments may only be accepted in person or through Digital Cookie.

Paying For Cookies

- eBudde will be pre-loaded with troop bank accounts for troops who participated in the 2020-2021 cookie program. Troops who have had bank account changes and new troops will need to verify the correct information is entered into eBudde by the initial order deadline. Personal checking account information should not be used.
- Troops that do not enter in their troop's Wells Fargo checking account information will have their initial order withheld until payment information is provided.
- Troops will deposit ALL Girl Scout Cookie payments received into their Wells Fargo troop checking account so that there is a financial record. Cash should not be held outside of the account.
- Payments owed to the council for cookies will be collected via electronic transfers or "sweeps" from the troop bank account according to the schedule below.
- It is the TCM's responsibility to ensure that cookie funds are deposited in a timely fashion to ensure the sweeps clear the account.
- Use the "Sales Report" tab in eBudde to see your balance owed to council at any time during the sale.
- Troops who do not have sufficient funds for a sweep will not be permitted to pick up additional cookies or cookie rewards until their balance is paid. The council will pursue collections actions for any balances not paid promptly.

Date	Sweep Amount
February 15	\$1.50 per box ordered on initial order
March 15	Total remaining balance



Delinquent Accounts

There are occasions where cookie funds go missing or are not submitted to the troop in a timely manner. Use the guidelines below to reduce the odds of a delinquent account and how to handle the situation if it does arise.

- Don't give out large quantities of cookies all at once. Set a troop limit and let parents know they must pay for the cookies before they can pick up more.
- Contact your SU cookie coordinator as soon as you suspect you have a problem with a parent.
- Any parent account that is not 100% paid by March 15 is delinquent. Follow the steps below to report unpaid funds to the council for further collections action.
- Delinquent parents must be reported to council no later than April 2.
- The TCM is responsible for reporting outstanding debt. Any troop balance that is not reported by April 2 as unpaid funds will be considered troop debt, and the TCM will be held responsible for those funds.

Remember: Delinquent parents who have not paid their funds hurt the whole troop. The best way to prevent the situation is to be proactive, keep good records, and make sure to have a Permission Form for the cookie program on file for each girl.

Steps to Reporting Unpaid Funds

1. Attempt to collect all unpaid cookie funds by the established deadline. Any family with an outstanding balance after the deadline is considered past due.
2. The TCM must make three attempts to collect the balance from the family, including at least one attempt in writing. (Use the sample letter below.)
3. By April 2, submit the past-due parent information directly to the council product program manager. The following items must be submitted:
 - Product Program Permission Form must be on file

Report of Unpaid Funds Form

- All signed receipts or other documentation showing proof of product pickup.
- Documentation of all attempts to collect, including a copy of the written attempt

We are unable to accept unpaid funds reports without proper documentation.

Once the council receives the Unpaid Funds Form, we will follow up with a final notice before submitting the debt to a collection agency for further collections efforts. It is important to note that submitting the form does not guarantee full or partial collection of the outstanding funds. The troop is still responsible for making their final payment to council.

Sample Letter:

Dear _____,

Your Girl Scout, _____, was given permission and participated in the Girl Scout Cookie Program. My records indicate that \$_____ is outstanding and was due to the troop by March 19, 2021. Please contact me to make payment within one week. If payment is not received, your information and outstanding balance will be submitted to the council for further collections action, including third party collections, legal action, and/or other attempts to collect the funds. If you have questions concerning this matter, please contact me at _____.

Zero Tolerance

GSGCF has a zero tolerance policy for misuse of girl funds; any adult accepting responsibility for handing money is accountable for its proper use and safekeeping. Unresolved debt will be referred to a collections agency and misuse of funds may result in legal action and termination of volunteer service. In order to minimize risk of loss, TCMs should regularly collect payments from caregivers throughout the program and make prompt deposits into the troop's bank account. Please provide weekly/monthly financial updates to families for full transparency.