

Girl Scouts of the Jersey Shore
Girl Scout Leadership Experience Program Committee
Best Practices Guide

Tips and Tricks on How Do I Plan and Run an Event?

For anyone interested in running a regional or community event, this best practices guide will help in assisting you in hosting a fun, exciting and successful event.

If there has been an event you are trying to host that has been done in the past by someone else in your community, reach out to that person for contact information, feedback, and any paperwork they may have from the event. Make a Pinterest folder for the event that you can use for next year, or hand to the next person. To do this visit www.pinterest.com.

Girls want to participate more on a local level than on a council or regional level. The following outline is meant as a guide. Always feel free to reach out to other leaders or the GSLE team for help.

There are 6 basic areas to review

What type of event will you be hosting?	What?
What level of Girl Scouts will it serve?	Who?
Where will the event take place (venue/virtual)?	Where?
When will the event take place?	When?
What will be the cost?	How Much?
Where do I get help?	How Do I Manage?

Things to consider when hosting an event

Choosing the type of event you would like to run is the first step. Any time you are getting groups of Girl Scouts together, this is an event. This includes parades, community events, and Girl Scout activities.

- Will you be running this event by yourself or will you have help?
- Who is the main point of contact for event registration?
- Do you want to take registration or DoubleKnot (online registration)?
- Is this event targeted for the community, surrounding communities, or the region?
- Is this event for fun, part of a Gold, Silver or Bronze Award?
- Is this a money earning event (prior approval required)?

What level of scouts will the event serve?

The goal of GSLE is to serve all girls, although usually not all girls will be served at the same activity. Take a close look at what will be offered at the event to decide what levels will be age appropriate. If the event is not age appropriate for older girls, you may be able to give service/leadership hours for the older girls. (See Shore Things for training opportunities)

Where will the event take place?

As soon as you decide on an event, you should look into booking the venue. Please note...any time that a contract needs to be signed, you must direct it to council. **Do not sign any contracts, unless you are directed to do so. If your event will be virtual an ite is still required.**

Once the venue is chosen submit a building usage form for a school or community building as soon as possible as many other organizations are also using these venues. Many places require proof of insurance. It may take a month or more to get approval.

Tips on how to set up event space and registration

When setting up your space, it is helpful to have a room plan to accurately coordinate the set up. A registration table is a must. An older girl or assigned parent can easily handle this table as long as your attendance list is available. Be sure to have a highlighter available to highlight the troops/Juliette as they check in. The registration table will double as an evaluation table at the event.

If you are doing a timed event that involves stations, such as a craft event, a room plan is essential to align with the event schedule and attendance. This will keep everyone on track. A good idea is to have an announcement when it is time to change stations.

Even for virtual events you will need someone to check in the registered girls and to assist with breakout rooms.

When will the event take place?

Depending on the event, many are seasonal and may compete with other organizations. Please make sure to get your information to the GSLE committee 2 months prior to the event. It is recommended to check with the local schools when choosing a date to minimize school/scout conflicts.

Also, take note of religious holidays or activities, school closings, and school sponsored events to ensure you have the best turnout for your event. Remember that troop leaders need time to talk to their girls and then get back to you. Keep in mind troops do not meet every week so it may take a few weeks before they can respond to you.

What will this event cost to run?

A budget is essential for a successful leadership experience. Every event, no matter how small, needs a budget. Not only is it required for your Intent to Event (ITE), but you'll need this information for running this event and future events. Take a look at all of the potential expenses (crafts, DJ's, badges, food, beverages, space rental, paper goods, table covers, signs, etc.). Take the total estimated cost by the minimum amount of girls attending. **Do not base your budget on the hope that your event has maximum attendance.** You can always do more to make an experience extra special if money allows, but you don't want to use your troop funds to cover the difference!

Where do I get help?

Planning an event is a lot of fun, but there can be a lot of moving parts and help is sometimes needed. A good place to start is asking if anyone in your community or region has organized a similar event, or feel free to contact your GSLE committee or council Volunteer Troop Support Director with any questions.

Registration

Option A: When you handle registrations, all registration will come to you (home or community meeting) and you handle depositing checks in to your troop account, purchasing supplies, and completing paper work.

Option B: When registrations are handled at council, all registration will be handled through DoubleKnot. Please note there is a credit card processing fee that needs to be taken into account when determining the cost of an event. **Council checks are only processed twice a month (the 15th and 30th) your request for funds from registration must be submitted two to three weeks prior to one of the dates if you wish to have the check in a timely manner.**

Approval from GSLE committee for your event

To get approval for your event from the GSLE committee, submit an **Intent to Event application (ITE)**.

An Intent to Event application is required for all community/regional events, trips, etc. Forms are available on the council's website. To locate the ITE form visit, – www.jersyeshoregirlscouts.org. In the top right corner on the GSJS home page, click forms, then use the keyword search using "ITE" to form the online submission. Follow your regions procedure for submitting your ITE and flyer.

In addition to the application, include a flyer that includes a registration form. Leaders appreciate having a flyer to download and give to their girls.

Once your event is approved, you may need to post the event on your community regional Facebook page. An Intent to Event application should be completed for all “leadership experiences” at least two months prior to the event. (GSLE committee will do their best to approve all events submitted less than two months.) Following policy for the Intent to Event not only allows for publication on the GSJS website, but allows your event to be covered by the GSJS Insurance policy.

Your responsibility continues as you monitor registration (whether the registration comes to you or through DoubleKnot), to ensure your minimum number of participants is met. You may need to cancel the event or open registration to additional areas.

Additional tips

Purchasing Materials

Before purchasing materials there are a few things to consider. First, ensure the allocation of funds will cover the cost of the venue. Second, would be waiting to find out how many girls are attending the event, as not to order more than once. (Shipping costs can be pricey) This is why it is so important to give yourself enough time to order supplies (S&S World Wide, Oriental Trading, etc.) The last items to be purchased are food and beverages. Consider having extra materials to cover damaged goods, last minute additions to the number of participants, or if a girl challenges with her project.

Is a patch included in the event price?

If you decide to provide a patch you can order them through council. If you get more than 100 participants, it would be in your best interest to order from www.AdvantageEmblem.com. Usually, there is a discount for ordering large numbers of patches.

Assembling Materials

It is recommended that you assemble everything in advance. Zip lock bags are a handy way of keeping items organized and can be handed out at registration. For craft events, a sample craft will make the event more enjoyable and social. Please keep in mind time goes by fast when doing crafts.

Assistants

The host of the event should be the manager of the event. This is why it is important to have a committee. Committee member/volunteers can be troop leaders, parents of girls attending or

older Girl Scouts. They can do simple tasks like handing out supplies or monitoring a station. You want to be sure to go over with your volunteers the procedures for the event. Make sure you are available to assist your volunteers with issues that may occur. By having the help during the event makes for an enjoyable event. An assistant would be needed to help with:

- Registration/Evaluation
- Food/Beverage table (if applicable)
- Work stations
- Paper towel patrol (cleaning up messes as they occur)
- Monitoring (someone to walk around and assist troops as needed)

Towards the end of the event, round up your helpers to assist clean up. Remember, a Girl Scout always leaves an area better than she found i

Evaluation Forms

Evaluation forms are essential for future events. When making an evaluation form, remember that you are looking to see what can be improved for the following year. Try to have as many circle type questions as possible, as troops and girls are often in a hurry and you want their input. Try yes/no type questions and rate 1 thru 5 type questions. Feel free to add space at the bottom for comments or suggestions. It is suggested not include a space for their name or troop number you will get more honest answers this way.

Event Paperwork

After the event, remember to update the event folder. Including the evaluations and any paperwork. Make sure the folder has the contact name and phone number when applicable. Place your notes inside for next year.

Did the venue work for the event?

Would it have worked better somewhere else?

Should you have had a smaller group/lower maximum?

Would the event have worked better with more girls?

Was the event enjoyable for all the level of scouts you included?

Did your budget accurately reflect actual costs?

How many adult assistants did you need?

Were older girls included? How many?

What would you want the next event organizer know?

If you are not given an event folder, please start one!

Thank you for hosting a Girl Scout event!