

Council Cares FAQ

GSCSNJ does not want finances to be a barrier to girls' participation in Girl Scouting. However, the amount of assistance we can award is dependent upon our annual budget. Council Cares is available to help members who truly would not be able to participate in the Girl Scout program without this financial assistance. Although funds are limited, financial assistance (Council Cares) is available in the following ways:

- **Membership Registration Fee Assistance** - Waiver of a portion or the entire \$12.00 membership registration fee may be approved by the Leadership Development Specialist serving your area. Forms are not required for this assistance, and parents or troop leaders may verbally make this request.
- **Financial Assistance Scholarships** - This assistance for registered Girl Scouts is for Girl Scout expenses including but not limited to, council-sponsored programs, troop dues, Girl Scout insignia, uniform, and/or handbook.
- **Camperships** - Provide assistance to any girl attending day or resident summer camp if there is a need.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How is financial assistance requested?

General financial assistance is available for the GSUSA registration fee. This aid may be obtained upon verbal request to the Recruitment & Retention Specialist for your service unit. Funds may also be available for other Girl Scout expenses. For all expenses other than our registration fee, a Council Cares application must be completed and submitted to any service center, by mail or scanned and emailed to councilcares@gscsnj.org. All applications must be signed by the parent.

2. Who requests it?

The application is designed so that the troop leader fills out their portion first (listing anticipated expenses) and then the parent/guardian completes the form, signs it and submits it.

3. How do you keep personal information confidential?

If a parent submits the form directly to council (as the procedure is designed), the application and all supporting documents are kept in a locked file. Once the application is received by council, all applications are treated in a confidential manner by staff and volunteer committee members.

4. Do parents have to complete an application for every program?

NO, you need only submit a complete application once a year. If a girl needs additional assistance you can submit the cost of the desired program/trip/event letting us know you already have an application on file.

5. Should the money from financial assistance be indicated on troop financial reports?

Yes. A troop's year end financial summary should list all financial assistance received and how it was spent.

6. Why does it take so long to process an application?

When we receive complete applications it generally takes 2-4 weeks to process depending upon the volume (the guidelines state 6-8 weeks). If we receive incomplete applications the processing time depends on when the parent and/or leader returns our calls.

7. What percentage of troop expenses will Council Cares cover?

There is no set amount awarded. Each application is reviewed separately.

8. Who gets the money, the troop leader or the parent?

We send a check for any monetary awards to the troop leader along with a letter stating what was awarded. We also send a letter to the parent stating what was awarded. If the award includes shop merchandise, the parent letter will list each item and let them know that they can pick the items up at any of our shops at no cost to them.

9. What about Council Programs?

If the applicant is awarded assistance for a council program it will be included in the leader and parent letter and a list will be generated for the staff person who oversees program registrations so they know the cost of the program is being covered by Council Cares. The amount awarded for council programs will not be included in a check sent to the leader.