



# **Troop Banking Guidelines 2017-2018**



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# Maintaining a Troop Bank Account

## Financial Policies

The Council abides by the policies and standards of Girl Scouts of the USA and complies with applicable IRS requirements.

Every Troop is required to have a bank account. The account must be established under the Council's federal tax ID through the Council's centralized process. All bank accounts require a minimum of two unrelated adult signers who are currently registered members of Girl Scouts and have successfully completed the required background check.

All money collected, or earned, in the name of Girl Scouts must be deposited in the established bank account and thereafter used for the purpose of providing the Girl Scout Experience to girls in the troop.

All signers are responsible for safeguarding and maintaining sufficient funds to cover payments drawn on the account. As with any bank account, signers are legally responsible for all account transactions.

Volunteers who misuse or misappropriate funds may be released from all Girl Scout positions. The Council may file criminal and/or civil charges if deemed appropriate.

The Council allows up to two (2) debit cards for each account to be utilized for troop purchases. The Council prohibits troops and service units from applying for credit cards or utilizing PayPal accounts.

Security of troop funds is necessary to safeguard troop assets. The bank account should be reconciled regularly, preferably monthly. Authorized signers must have access to the bank account records and should review transactions monthly. All bank statements and financial records should be kept for a minimum of two years.

Annual Troop Financial Reports must be submitted to the Council on an annual basis. This report is a summary of the troop's financial activity throughout the year (May 1 – April 30) and should be shared with girls and parents/guardians upon completion.

When a troop disbands, leaders must complete the Troop Disbanding Form to provide information about the disposition of their funds. The council Finance Department will close all bank accounts of disbanded or inactive troops. The council will manage disbanded troop funds, including disbursement of funds for girls continuing in other troops within the council.

## Opening a Troop Bank Account

The unique structure of Girl Scout banking, coupled with a continually changing banking environment have made it necessary for Girl Scouts-NC Coastal Pines to use one bank for troop banking. Accordingly, bank accounts are established through the Council with BB&T bank. This centralized system ensures that all troop accounts are set up consistently, which is important because of the volume of troop accounts in our jurisdiction and the risk of errors in the account set up. Troop accounts will be opened in the name of the troop as follows: **Girl Scouts-NC Coastal Pines Troop # xxx**.

After a troop account is set up, all transactions between the troop and the Council will be processed electronically. If you do not have a BB&T branch in your area, please contact the Finance Department team at 800-284-4475 or 919-782-3021.

Please allow at least **10 business days** to open the new account.

### Start the Process

1. Each signer must be a registered adult volunteer and have a current membership with GSUSA.
2. Staff of the Council are not authorized to be signers on a troop or service unit account.
3. Each signer must have a current approved background check on file with the Council.
4. The troop must first complete an online application form on the Council's website to report contact information for the authorized signers. Debit cards can be requested at this time. Each troop is required to have at least two (2) unrelated signers listed on their account and can have a maximum of four (4) signers. The Finance Department reviews the application and forwards it to the bank for processing.
5. Once finalized by the bank, the Finance Department notifies the signers by email that the account has been set up. The email will include further instructions on how to complete the account set up process.
6. To finalize the account setup, the troop leader must visit the bank branch to show proof of identity and sign the signature card. Please allow 10-14 business days after you receive the email confirmation for your new troop account packet to arrive at the branch. Contact your designated branch in advance as some require all signers be present together to sign the card.

**NOTE: The Council will fund each new troop account with \$20 which will be deposited into the account at the time the account is opened.**

### Debit Cards/Online Access

The troop may obtain debit cards to be used for deposits and payments. The Council authorizes a maximum of two (2) debit cards per troop. The debit cards will be in the name of two of the signers on the account.

Online banking will be set up automatically. Login information and instructions will be sent separately once the troop account is set up. Troops should use the online banking system to view their account balances, download transaction history, and print copies of checks and statements. There will only be one user ID/password established per troop account. Since all signers are responsible for maintaining

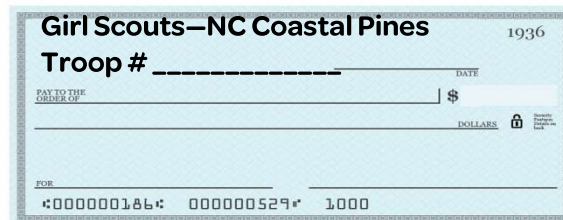
the troop account, the user ID and password for access to the account should be shared with each authorized signer. This will facilitate monitoring the account activity and help to prevent cardholders/signers from inadvertently overdrawing the troop account. To reduce fees, copies of cancelled checks are not provided by BB&T. You can request that check images be printed on your statement for a fee of \$4.00 per month.

Passwords should be changed whenever there is a change in signers on the account or there is a possibility that your ID or password have been compromised. Passwords CANNOT be changed on the [BB&T](#) website. If you are locked out of online banking and need a password reset, send an email to [troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org](mailto:troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org) and the Finance Department will contact BB&T on your behalf. Please note that this process could take up to three business days to complete.

## Ordering Checks

While troops are not required to have checks, they may be convenient for conducting troop business, including reimbursing volunteers. Troop checks should not have an address printed on them because they are the property of the troop, not the individual signers. It also provides the troop with more flexibility as authorized signers change. Checks can be ordered directly from the bank when your account is opened or from a check printing company. Currently, the cost for checks through BB&T is \$12.05 per **basic** set. Be sure to request that the checks are shipped directly to a designated signer of the troop.

### Sample check:



Troop funds are for the benefit of all girls in the troop and should be spent in the year the funds are earned, unless the troop has a long-range plan for spending the funds. It is important to note that the funds belong to the troop as a whole. Per IRS guidelines for charitable organizations, troops are prohibited from keeping separate individual girl accounts. All funds expended should benefit **all girls in the troop**.

## Fund Management

All money received from parents or cookie customers should be deposited as soon as possible and should never be held in a personal checking account. For security reasons, we do not recommend keeping cash in a house or vehicle. It is critical that all authorized signers are in communication with the other signers before spending funds to prevent overdrafts on the account. There may be timing issues with the online balance since there can be delays in posting transactions to the account in the banking system. Cash withdrawals should only be made if absolutely necessary – i.e. cookie booth change, tips for taxis or hotel services.

Each account signer should make sure that there are funds in the account to cover the amount of the

transaction before writing a check or making a purchase with the troop debit card. All expenses should be paid for by troop check/debit card. Blank checks should never be pre-signed and debit cards should not be used by anyone other than the person they are issued to. If there is an instance where a signer paid out of pocket for troop supplies and needs to be reimbursed using troop funds, those reimbursements should be approved and authorized by a signer other than the payee. Receipts are required for reimbursement.

## **Paying for Product Sales**

The Council will initiate an electronic transfer from the troop's bank account to pay the Council for product sales transactions (i.e. Cookie and Fall sales programs). It is important that adequate funds are available. The specific dates that Council will draft the troop accounts are included in product sales calendars and training materials and the troop will receive reminder communications during the sale.

## **Accepting check payments**

A troop can choose to accept checks as a form of payment from customers and parents. If a troop accepts checks as a form of payment, the troop may receive a check that is returned because of insufficient funds. Best practice would be to have a phone number and copy of the payer's driver license for checks \$20 or more.

Tips for Collecting NSF Checks:

**Step 1:** Immediately notify the payer to request re-payment as quickly as possible. It is sometimes best to request a cash payment or cashier's check.

**Step 2:** If you are redepositing an NSF check, first contact the payor's bank to ensure funds are available to cover the amount of the check.

**Step 3:** If funds are not available, send a letter to the payer requesting payment. A sample letter is included in the additional resources. A fee can be charged to the payee to cover bank service charges on the troop account. The fee should be the same amount charged on the troop bank statement.

**Step 4:** If the NSF check exceeds \$30 and the troop has followed the steps listed above without results, send the actual NSF check to the Council Finance Department with the troop #, leader's name, driver's license number, if available, and contact information. The Council will submit the check to a collection agency and will reimburse the funds if the agency successfully collects the funds.

## **BB&T Account Fees**

Although BB&T does not charge a monthly service fee, bank fees will be charged for overdrafts, returned checks and additional services on the account. These fees are appropriate fees for the bank to charge based on their standard agreement. It is important that you review your troop bank activity monthly and more often, during cookie sales or times of heavy financial activity.

Check orders	\$12.05 per set
Check images per month (in statement)	\$4.00
Non-BB&T ATM transactions	\$2.50 per transaction
ATM balance inquiries	No charge
Returned check fee	\$36.00
Insufficient funds/overdraft	\$36.00
Deposits over 150 items (each check is considered a deposit)	\$0.50 per item over 150 combined items
Dormant Account fee	\$7.50 per month after 1 year, of inactivity

**IMPORTANT** – Your account will be closed if it maintains a zero balance for more than 60 days. If an account is closed, it cannot be reopened. The troop must submit a request for a new bank account.

## Budget and Record Keeping

Each troop should collaborate in the preparation of an annual budget at the start of the program year. Girls should be included in this process, if age appropriate, to enhance their financial literacy skills.

Questions to consider:

- What types of activities will be planned?
- What are the costs associated with these activities?
- How will the troop fund these activities?
- Will fund-raising activities be required?
- What are your goals for the cookie and fall sale?

Troops may need to create multi-year budget plans for costlier travel trips. Troops may agree to charge members of the troop a nominal dues amount to support Girl Scout troop activities. This amount should be carefully thought out by the leaders and communicated and agreed upon with the parents and guardians.

All disbursements and deposits should be recorded in a checkbook, electronic spreadsheet or personal banking software. For your convenience, an Excel spreadsheet for tracking your troop transactions is located on the troop banking website. The bank statement should be reconciled to these records monthly. Financial checks and balances should be in place to help prevent misuse of troop funds. A person other than the one preparing the bank reconciliation should review the reconciliation each month. Best practices provide that separate individuals manage the account and receive the bank statements.

There should be a clear separation of personal and troop funds. No personal expenses should be paid from the troop account and no troop money should be deposited in personal bank accounts. Signers are

responsible for any fees or charges for overdrawing the Troop account.

All cash payments should be receipted. A written receipt must be provided to the parents, guardians or other volunteers.

Under no circumstances should a check be written to and signed by the same person.

A file should be maintained with bank statements, all cookie records, and records supporting all financial transactions for at least two (2) years after the end of the program year. Troop financial records should be shared with and made available to girls and guardians throughout the year to maintain transparency.

## Changing Signers

Troops must follow the Council's centralized process for changing troop account signers. The troop leader should complete an online application to update signers that can be found on the Council's website in the Troop Banking section (volunteers → troop banking). To complete the request, the following information is required: name, address, email address and phone numbers of all authorized signers. Finance will then process the application. Until the signature card is updated by the bank, all existing bank signers will continue to have access to troop funds.

Each signer must have a current background check on file as well as a current Girl Scout membership. The Council Finance Department will mail the new signature card directly to the troop leader. Once received, all the new signers must sign and mail it to the Council using the postage prepaid envelope provided. Council will then transfer it to the appropriate BB&T bank. Please allow 10 business days for processing new signature cards after it is received at BB&T.

**IMPORTANT** - When debit card holders are no longer involved with the troop, the debit card should be cancelled immediately with the bank and the signature card should be updated.

Whenever there is a change of signers on the account, the password to Online Access must also be changed. One of the remaining signers should request a password change through an email to the Council (troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org) and share the new password with the remaining leaders. This can also be done on the signature card change request. The leader should collect and destroy any debit cards from person(s) who are no longer signers on the account and request that the bank discontinue access for those debit card(s).

If the troop is not banking at BB&T, please contact the Finance Department at 800-284-4475 or 919-782-3021 for assistance.

## Annual Reporting

Troops are required to submit the Troop Annual Financial Report (TAFR) by June 1st directly to Council using the Volunteer Toolkit in "MyGS". The report is on the "Finance" tab of the Volunteer Toolkit. The annual report covers financial transactions which took place from May 1st through April 30<sup>th</sup>. Troops established during the year should report their finances starting in the month organized through April



30th. These reports will be reviewed by the Council Finance Department to ensure policies are being appropriately followed and funds are being utilized to benefit girls.

**Please note that funds due to troops (i.e. for wider-opportunities, donation pass-thru or incentives) will not be processed until the TAFR has been completed and received by Council.**

Troop financial records should be shared with and made available to girls and guardians throughout the year to ensure there is transparency in the Troop's financial activities. The revenue and expense categories included in the annual report are listed below. Please use these categories in managing the troop's finances.

**Revenues or Incoming cash receipts:**

GSUSA Membership Dues collected

Troop dues collected

Activity/Event Fees collected

Fall Product Sale funds collected

Cookie Sale funds collected

Money Earning Projects

Donations to the troop (not OCD)

Other Income

**Expenses or Outgoing payments:**

GSUSA Membership Dues paid to Council

Activities/events/trips

Fall Product Sale paid to council

Cookie Sale paid to council

Recognitions/Awards

Troop Supplies

Donations made by troop

Other Expenses

## Disbanding Your Troop

A troop may disband when there is a leadership change and there are no longer any leaders registered in a troop. If a troop disbands, it is important to make final decisions about the use of the troop's remaining funds after bills have been paid and have cleared the account. Considerations might include:

- Holding a final gathering to celebrate the troop's friendships and accomplishments.
- Donating funds to a charity based on the troop's area of interest. Funds can also be donated to the local Service Unit or the Council. Some common areas of need in Girl Scouting: financial assistance for girls for uniforms, registration fees for membership camp, travel, events, or for day camp, a favorite resident camp or Gold/Silver award projects.
- Transferring funds to another troop for the benefit of the girls continuing their Girl Scout experience.

The Council Finance Team must close all disbanded Troop bank accounts. Please complete the Disbanding Troop Funds Report on the Council website to communicate when a Troop account can be closed. The Council will automatically close troop accounts if there are no currently registered members and/or the account has been inactive for a significant period of time.

Funds remaining from disbanded troop accounts will be distributed as follows:

- For girls continuing with Girl Scouts in another troop, the funds will be transferred by Council to the new troop(s).
- If no girls are continuing, remaining funds up to \$250, less a \$20 fee used to fund new troop accounts, will be transferred to the local Service Unit.
- Funds over this limit will be used by Council to fund financial assistance for all girls.

Funds transferred to the Service Units should be used to further the Girl Scout mission in their area.

## Fraud

Unfortunately, fraud happens even within Girl Scouting. Please follow the practices outlined in these guidelines to help prevent unauthorized use of troop funds. The Troop funds belong to the girls and should be treated as such. If a Leader or parent within the troop suspects that troop funds are being mismanaged, first discuss the matter with the Troop Leader, focusing on the facts and documentation. If there is a possibility that the Leader has mismanaged funds, contact the Council Finance Department at 800-284-4475 or 919-782-3021 or email at [troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org](mailto:troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org). If the situation involves cookies, the Product Sales staff person should be notified as well. The key to successful recovery of funds and resolution of financial problems is documentation and timeliness. If the records are poor and the bank statements have not been reviewed consistently, the likelihood of recovery of the funds diminishes. Please make every effort to be proactive and establish good financial procedures and controls. Good financial management allows the troop to focus its energies on the Girl Scout Experience, which is our shared mission.

## Donations

The Internal Revenue Code (Sec. 170 (f)(8)) requires that Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines acknowledge single donations of services, goods, materials, equipment, or money with a value of \$250 or more. Therefore, troops, groups, geographic units, community or Girl Scout volunteer representatives must report all donations with a \$250 value or greater to the Council office within 30 days of receipt.

# Additional Resources

## Refer Questions to:

### Local Bank Branch

- Not receiving bank statements
- Debit Card Issues
- Reset Debit Card Pin Number
- Errors on Bank Statements
- Check orders

### Main Bank

- Lost/Stolen Debit Card  
1-800-226-5228 – **BB&T** hotline

### Council Finance Department

- Status of new account/signature changes
- Unresolved issues with local bank
- Reset online banking password
- Suspected fraud on account
- Email Questions:  
[troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org](mailto:troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org)

## Sample NSF Check Notification Letter

Date

Debtor's Name

Debtor's Address

Dear Debtor's Name,

You are hereby notified that your check dated MM/DD/YYYY, in the amount of \$\$\$, has been dishonored.

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 6-21.3, you have thirty (30) days from receipt of this notice to tender payment in the full amount plus a processing charge of \$25.00 authorized under G.S. 25-3-506. Unless this amount is paid in full within thirty (30) days, we will initiate collection procedures.

Payments are to be made payable to Troop #### by either certified check or money order only. If there are any discrepancies, please call me at:

(###) ###-####.

Thank you,

Membership Staff's Name

County Name, Membership Director/Specialist

Cc: Troop Leader's Name