

Service Unit Banking Guidelines



gsnccp.org/troop-banking

A Guide for Co-Leaders and
Account Signers
2023-2024

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Financial Policies

Girl Scouts – North Carolina Coastal Pines abides by the policies and standards of Girl Scouts of the USA (GSUSA) and complies with applicable Internal Revenue Service (IRS) requirements.

Each service unit has an established bank account (or multiple bank accounts in instances where the service unit has need for more than one account, each with a distinct purpose) with Truist bank (formerly BB&T bank). These accounts have been 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 within the service unit area.

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. As such, all signers should be reviewing banking activity regularly. Receipts for all purchases made from the account should be retained for the service unit's records for two years.

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 service unit purchases. The council prohibits troops and service units from applying for credit cards or utilizing PayPal, Venmo, Zelle, Apple Pay, Google Pay and similar accounts. Cheddar Up is the only authorized online payment platform for service units at this time. Cheddar Up accounts must be set up via the council's centralized process and managed by an authorized service unit bank account signer. Service units may use Cheddar Up to collect debit/credit card payments and electronic check payments from troops, parents, or volunteers. For more Cheddar Up information, [please click this link](#). The Cheddar Up document can also be found on the Troop Banking website at: gsnccp.org/troop-banking (scroll down to "Resources" → select "Cheddar Up FAQs").

Security of service unit funds is necessary to safeguard service unit 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 or more frequently during periods of heavy banking activity. All bank statements and financial records should be kept for a minimum of two years.

The Service Unit Annual Finance Report must be submitted to the council on an annual basis. This report is a summary of the service unit's financial activity throughout the year (May 1 – April 30) and should be shared with all service unit volunteers upon completion.

Debit Cards/Online Access

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

Online banking can be set up for each service unit bank account with assistance from the council. If a service unit does not currently have online access, they can email troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org to request this be set up. Service units should use the online banking system to view their account balances, download transaction history, and print copies of checks and statements. Due to limitations in the online banking software, there will only be one user ID/password established per service unit account. Since all signers are responsible for maintaining the service unit account, the user ID and password for access to the account should only be shared with each authorized signer. This will facilitate monitoring the account activity and help to prevent cardholders/signers from inadvertently overdrawing the account. To reduce fees, copies of cancelled checks are not provided by Truist. You can request that check images be printed on your statement for an additional monthly fee.

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 can be changed by an authorized signer once logged in to the online banking account, or by contacting the council at troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org.

If you are locked out of online banking or have forgotten your password and need a password reset, send an email to troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org and the finance department will contact Truist on your behalf. You WILL NOT be able to use the "Reset Your Password" function on the Truist website. Please note that this process could take up to three business days to complete.

Ordering Checks

While service units are not required to have checks, many find they are necessary for conducting service unit business, including reimbursing volunteers.

Service unit checks should not have a personal address or names printed on them because they are the property of the service unit, not the individual signers. It also provides the service unit with more flexibility as authorized signers change over time. For this reason, checks ordered for the service unit should have the council's mailing address of 6901 Pinecrest Road, Raleigh, NC 27613 printed on them.

Checks can be ordered directly from the bank, from a check printing company, or by contacting the finance department at troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org. Be sure to request that the checks are shipped directly to a designated bank account signer.

Sample check:

_____ Service Unit
Girl Scouts North Carolina Coastal Pines
6901 Pinecrest Road
Raleigh, NC 27613

1936

DATE _____

PAY TO THE ORDER OF _____ \$ _____

_____ DOLLARS

FOR _____

⑆000000186⑆ 000000529⑆ 1000

Security Features Details on back

Fund Management

Service unit funds are intended to benefit all troops in the service unit area and should be used to further the Girl Scouts mission within the program year, unless the service unit has a long-range plan for spending the funds.

All money received from troops, parents or volunteers 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. change needed for an event. If a cash withdrawal has been made, a clear record must be kept of the use of funds along with any applicable receipts or documentation.

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 a service unit debit card. All expenses should be paid for by service unit check/debit card. Signers are responsible for any fees or charges for overdrawing the account. Blank checks should never be pre-signed and debit cards should not be used by anyone other than the person to whom they are issued.

If there is an instance where a signer paid out of pocket for a service unit expense and needs to be reimbursed using service unit funds, those reimbursements should be approved and authorized by a signer other than the payee. Receipts are required for reimbursement. **Under no circumstances** should a service unit check be written to and signed by the same person.

Accepting Check Payments

Service units can choose to accept checks as a form of payment from troops and parents/volunteers. If a service unit accepts checks as a form of payment, the service unit may receive a check that is returned because of “not sufficient funds” (NSF checks). Best practice would be to have a phone number and copy of the payer’s driver license for checks \$20 or more from individuals.

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 a 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 fee can be charged to the payer to cover bank service charges on the service unit account. The fee should be the same amount charged on the service unit bank statement.

Step 4: If the NSF check exceeds \$30 and the service unit has followed the steps listed above without results, send the actual NSF check to the council’s Finance department with the service unit name, treasurer’s name, payer’s name, payer’s 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.

Truist Account Fees

Although Truist does not charge a monthly service fee, bank fees will be charged for overdrafts, returned checks, deposit corrections, and additional requested services on the account (for example, if you request to have check images included on the account statements). These fees are appropriate fees for the bank to charge based on their standard agreement. It is important that you review your service unit bank activity at least monthly, and more often during times of heavy financial activity.

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 service unit must submit a request for a new bank account.

Budgeting and Record Keeping

Service unit members should collaborate in the preparation of an annual budget at the start of the program year. Service unit managers and treasurers as well as other stakeholders should be included in the process. Questions to consider:

- What types of activities will be planned for troops in our area?
- What types of activities will be planned for volunteers in our area?
- What are the costs associated with these activities?
- How will the service unit fund these activities?

The annual budget should be used to guide the service unit's activities, but the budget may evolve over the course of the program year as opportunities arise and/or priorities shift. Service unit managers and treasurers should collaborate throughout the year to ensure that necessary funds are available to meet the service unit's goals and to adjust the budget if needed.

All disbursements and deposits should be recorded in a checkbook, electronic spreadsheet, or personal banking software. For your convenience, the Service Unit Financial Worksheet (an Excel spreadsheet for tracking your transactions) is available for download on the [Service Unit Teams page](#) on our website. The bank statement should be reconciled to these records monthly. Financial checks and balances should be in place to help prevent misuse of 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 and review the bank statements.

Authorized service unit bank account signers should work closely with service unit event directors to ensure that income and expenses related to an event are managed appropriately and that receipts and records are retained. The Area Event Director Forms Packet available for download on the [Service Unit Teams page](#) (click on the option for Area Event Director to find the packet) on our website includes a proposed budget worksheet and final report for tracking event-specific income and expenses. If there is an instance where a volunteer or troop paid out of pocket for a service unit expense and needs to be reimbursed using service unit funds, those reimbursements should be approved and authorized by a signer other than the payee. Receipts are required for reimbursement.

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

All cash payments should be receipted. A written receipt must be provided to the person who makes a cash payment to the service unit. The written receipt should show:

- Date
- Name of the individual from whom the funds were received
- Amount received
- Purpose for which the funds were received

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

Changing Signers

Service units must follow the council's centralized process for changing or adding bank account signers. The service unit should complete the [online application](#) to update signers that can be found on the council's website at gsnccp.org/troop-banking (scroll down until you see "Open or Update a Troop Bank Account" → select "update your banking information here"). The form will ask for contact information for all signers, clarify which signers need debit cards, and confirm which signer should receive monthly mailed statements. Each signer must have a current background check on file as well as a current Girl Scout membership. Staff of the council are not authorized to be signers on a troop or service unit account.

The council will then process the application and provide a new signature card to the account signers. When the signature card has been received, all signers must sign it and submit it back to the finance department by mail or a high-resolution scan. Once the signed card has been received by the council, it usually takes 3-5 business days for the requested changes to be made by Truist. Until the signature card is updated by the bank, all existing bank signers will continue to have access to service unit funds.

Whenever there is a change of signers on the account, the password to the Truist online banking account must also be changed for security purposes. One of the remaining signers should change the password and share the new password (as well as security question answers) with the new account signer(s). Alternatively, a password reset can be requested when completing the council's application to update signers or by emailing troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org.

IMPORTANT – Those signers continuing with the service unit should collect and destroy debit cards from any person(s) who are no longer involved with the service unit or acting as signers on the account. They should also request that the bank deactivate the debit card. For assistance with this, contact troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org.

Annual Reporting

Service units are required to submit the [Service Unit Annual Finance Report](#) by **June 1st** each year. The report can be accessed online and reminders will be shared with service unit treasurers and managers each spring. The annual report covers financial transactions which took place from May 1st 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 in accordance with our mission.

Please note that funds due to service units (i.e. for area awards/recognitions, or disbanded troop funds, etc.) will not be processed until the Service Unit Annual Finance Report has been completed and received by council. The Service Unit Annual Finance Report is important for Girl Scouts to maintain its 501c(3) status. If you have any questions while completing the form, please reach out to troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org so we may assist you in staying in compliance.

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

<p>Revenues or Incoming cash receipts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Adult Recognition Funds ReceivedFinancial Assistance to Troops ReceivedOther Council Support ReceivedCamping Funds ReceivedRecruitment Event Funds ReceivedOther Activity/Event Fees ReceivedDonations to the Service UnitOther Income
<p>Expenses or Outgoing payments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Adult Recognition ExpensesFinancial Assistance to TroopsCamping ExpensesRecruitment Event ExpensesOther Activity/Trip/Event ExpensesDonations Made by the Service UnitOther Expenses

Fraud

Unfortunately, fraud happens even within Girl Scouting. Please follow the practices outlined in these guidelines to help prevent unauthorized use of service unit funds.

If a volunteer suspects that service unit funds are being mismanaged, first discuss the matter with the service unit managers, focusing on the facts and documentation. If there is a possibility that a bank account signer has mismanaged funds, contact the council finance department at 800-284-4475 or email at troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org.

Notify the bank immediately at Truist Bank's 24-hour fraud hotline at 1-800-226-5228 if a debit card has been lost or stolen or if fraudulent or unknown charges have appeared on your account. Bank statements should be reviewed, at a minimum, once each month to ensure all activity is correct and to identify fraudulent charges immediately. Truist Bank *may* refund fraudulent charges to your account, but only if the fraudulent charges are reported within 30 days of receiving the bank statement on which the fraudulent charges appear. For additional guidance in these situations or if you have any trouble reporting the fraud to Truist/, please contact troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org.

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 in a timely manner (at a minimum, monthly), the likelihood of recovery of the funds diminishes. Truist has provided further clarification on the Fraud Reporting Process. Please see below for these outlined steps in reporting fraud to the bank:

1. Please login to online banking at least once per week, as a preventive measure against fraud.
2. **If you see any suspicious activity, please report this activity to troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org immediately.**
3. Please note that if you have access to online banking, you can block or freeze a debit card that has been stolen/compromised.
4. **Please report fraud within 30 days** or it may be difficult to dispute with the bank.

Please make every effort to be proactive and establish good financial procedures and controls. Good financial management allows the service unit 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.

Please email a photocopy of the check or description of the items donated to development@nccoastalpines.org or mail to our Raleigh Service Center c/o Development Office at 6901 Pinecrest Rd, Raleigh, NC 27613. Please include (as applicable) your contact information, the service unit name, location of service unit, the name of the donor or organization making the gift, their address, and a sentence about the project for which they have made the donation to allow the council to customize the tax receipt for the donor.

The council can also process a donation directly and pass it through to a service unit's bank account, if preferable. The same information as above is required to process these gifts. Receipts will not be issued for donations under \$250 unless processed directly through the council.

Nonprofit Don'ts

Because of our special status as a 501(c)(3) charity, any funds of the service unit must be used to achieve our mission and cannot be used to benefit a single individual. There are certain things we cannot do with Girl Scout funds. These include, but are not limited, to the list below. However, if you have any questions regarding these, or whether you can use service unit funds for a specific purpose, give us a call or send us an email. You can reach the council Finance department at 800-284-4475 or at the following email address: troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org.

Nonprofit Don'ts (not an all-inclusive list):

- A. Funds cannot be used for personal gain, or what the IRS calls "private inurement." Some examples include:**
- 1. We cannot use service unit funds for gasoline.** This is because gas in your car could theoretically be used for service unit use AND personal use. The IRS tax code prohibits personal use of service unit funds.
 - 2. We cannot use service unit funds for personal expenses** (for example, an Amazon Prime membership). This is for the same reason as #1 above; the tax implications could be for business and personal use.
 - 3. We cannot use service unit funds to purchase alcoholic beverages.** While IRS rules do not strictly prohibit alcohol as a business expense, as a youth-serving organization, there is the perception of impropriety if funds are used for alcohol. To prevent this perception, Girl Scouts does not allow funds to be used for alcohol.
- B. Funds cannot be used for lobbying or political campaign activities. When acting in their official capacity as a Girl Scout volunteer, some examples of prohibited activities include:**
- 4. Meeting with legislators or their staff to discuss specific legislation**
 - 5. Urging the public to contact legislators to propose, support or oppose legislation**
 - 6. Campaigning for or against candidates for elected office.**

As always, feel free to email troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org with any questions regarding this list. It is by no means all-inclusive, meaning there may be other items that are not acceptable uses of service unit funds. If you are unsure of an item, please contact us.

Refer Questions To

We hope this guide has clarified where to get help when specific banking questions and concerns arise. When in doubt, please contact the council's Finance department for assistance at troopbanking@nccoastalpines.org or 800-284-4475. We are here to help.

Due to the unique structure of our service unit bank accounts (which are established under the council's tax ID number), many common questions and concerns are best directed to council's Finance department for resolution. For example, we can easily assist you with:

- Getting the status of a change of signer request
- Unlocking your online banking account or requesting a password reset
- Ordering checks from the bank (we can ensure the most competitive pricing)
- If your debit card expired and you haven't received your replacement
- If you are not receiving mailed bank statements, or need to update the statement mailing address

Some common banking issues that can generally be resolved by visiting your local bank branch include:

- Help resetting your debit card PIN number
- Assistance activating a debit card
- Addressing an error on your bank statement
- Getting information on a fee the bank assessed your account

The Truist/ 24-hour hotline, 1-800-226-5228, is most helpful for reporting a lost/stolen debit card or fraudulent charges. Please also let the council finance department know so we can ensure your issue is completely resolved.