

Girl Scout destinations

Travel for Girls 11-18

INFORMATION PACKET Girl Scouts of Connecticut

QUESTIONS?

Staff Advisor

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What is a “destination”?

A “*destination*” is any travel experience, regardless of distance or length of time, which provides a girl 11-18 with an opportunity to expand her personal experience beyond her everyday scope.



GIRL SCOUT destinations ON-LINE

GIRL SCOUT *destinations* 2012 is totally online. All destinations events will be posted on the GIRL SCOUT Web site at www.girlscouts.org/forgirls/travel/. The Web site will not only contain information about all of the national and international destination choices, but it will also contain additional travel information including:

- The application and reference forms, which you can download
- Tips for writing the application essays
- Tips for choosing a personal experience

If you do not have computer access at home, you can access the Web site at school, a public library, or a local community center. You can type your application responses on-line and then print the document; or you can download it to a computer or disk to work on at another computer; or print the document and fill it out by hand or typewriter. If computer access is a problem, please contact the Council for assistance.



APPLICATION PROCESS

How to fill out the application

The application process was originated in order to help prepare girls for the many applications they will write throughout their lives, especially as it pertains to life after High School and applying to institutes of higher learning.

1. There will be “early” and “late” application times, thereby giving a girl two chances to apply for a destination. All applications will be mailed by GSOFACT to the event sponsors at the same time.
2. Should a girl miss the council deadline, implying that her application will not arrive to the event sponsor by December 1, 2011, she may apply for “late” acceptance if the event sponsor receives her application by February 17, 2012. The application process will be completed and finalized by March 1, 2012. No applications will be accepted or processed after March 1, 2012.
3. Girls will complete one application for each of the **FOUR** events they intend to apply for. An essay and two letters of reference are required, unless otherwise noted within the event description on the web site. A girl can use the same references for each event she applies for. However, each destination requires its own essay.
4. A girl can submit up to FOUR applications. If a girl is accepted to more than one event, and she is financially able to attend more than one event, she may. However, she will only receive council funding assistance for one event. Financial Assistance applications are found in the forms library at www.gsofact.org.
5. Because this means that a girl could be accepted to 4 events, but only be able to afford to attend 1, the **event sponsors will require an immediate non-refundable deposit of between \$50 and \$200 to secure her spot in an event.**
6. There will be deposits due after acceptance no matter if a girl is selected for “early” or “late” acceptance. The deposit will be towards the event fee. The deposit will not be over and above the stated event fee.

A general timeline for the selection process for 2012 follows:

November 18, 2011	All early applications due at the Program Services Department in North Haven by 4:30 p.m.
Thanksgiving 2011	All applications are en route to event sponsors from the applicants' home council.
December 1, 2011	All "early" applications received by event sponsors.
January 16, 2012	All applicants notified of their status.
February 1, 2012	All deposits holding a participant's spot are due to the event sponsors for "early" applications. Participants notify GSOFACT of their commitment to attend the destinations.
February 17, 2012	"Late" applications received by event sponsors.
March 2, 2012	All additional applicants notified of their status.
March 16, 2012	All "late" applicants' deposits due to the event sponsors. Participants notify GSOFACT of their commitment to attend the destination. Selection process closed and ended

Tips:

- **Type or neatly print your application** – Reason: if a sponsoring council receives an enormous number of applications, you want your application to be easy to read.
- Be mature in answering the application questions. Do not say you want to go because "it sounds like fun". Say something about how the event will be an educational experience or document past experiences that qualify you to attend the event.
- When writing your essays, tailor each one specifically to the event you would like to attend.
- Create a rough draft of your application and then have several people review your application so that you may receive suggestions for improvement. You want to sound like you are one of the best choices for your selected destinations. Be sure your application is complete with all required signatures.
- When the application is completed, retain a copy for your records. The original should be hand-delivered or mailed to be received by the Council in North Haven **by November 18, 2011 at 4:30 p.m.**

References

Applicants are required to have two letters of recommendation:

References may **not** be a relative, friend of the family or a peer. Your references can be a Girl Scout adult who has worked closely with you such as your advisor, an event leader, a camp counselor, or trainer. You can also choose an adult who has worked with you in the community, such as a teacher, religious instructor, supervisor, or employer. Reference forms are available online with the destinations application.

1. Choose your references wisely. Choose people outside your family who know you well. Choose someone who has known you for a period of time. For example, if your destination focus is on canoeing, it might be a good idea to have an adult who has known you for 3 years and has been on a canoeing trip with you to fill out the reference form.
2. Discuss with your references the skills you need for your event and the reasons why you are applying for your desired events. Inform your references about the content and requirements of the event you are applying for so that they are prepared to write you a great recommendation!
3. Give each reference a photocopy of the reference form along with a stamped envelope addressed to:
Attn: Debbie Braun, Girl Scouts of Connecticut Program Department, 20 Washington Avenue, North Haven, CT 06473. It is your responsibility to make sure your references are sent to the Council office.
Call each reference a week before the application deadline to see if they have filled it out and mailed it. Please ask your reference to type or neatly print their remarks on the reference form. You will want the selection task force to be able to read all of the wonderful things your reference says about you.
4. You may use the same reference form for multiple applications. It is a good idea to ask for 3 references to ensure that at least 2 arrive by the deadline.

Registration in Girl Scouting

We cannot mail your application if you are not a currently registered member in Girl Scouting. It is your responsibility to be sure that you are registered.



Application and References Deadline

ALL original applications and references must be received at the North Haven Service Center located at 20 Washington Avenue, North Haven, CT 06473 no later than 4:30 p.m. on November 18, 2011.

Please bring or mail original applications; do not fax. Be sure to retain a copy for your records.

SELECTION PROCESS

If you are selected to be a participant, return the form to accept or reject your participant status immediately. Also, upon receipt, please notify the Girl Scouts of Connecticut *destinations* staff advisor, Debbie Braun (contact info on page 1) of your participant status, and whether or not you are going to attend the event. This is very important if you want to receive financial assistance for your trip. Later, you will receive a participant packet from the sponsoring council with more information about your destination.

If you are selected as an alternate, you may choose to stay an alternate or submit applications to additional destinations.

FUNDING & MONEY EARNING ACTIVITIES

“How much money will I need and how will I earn it?”

The event fee listed in the book is only part of the destination expense. The event fee includes meals, housing, and program fees. The cost of airline tickets is not included in the event fee. Therefore, you will need to contact a travel agent, go online, or call around to different airlines to find the cheapest airfare. Make sure you plan your arrival and departure times according to the host Council’s requested time frame. Also, some events ask for special equipment (i.e. backpack), so you will need to add that to the total cost of your destination.

Do not be discouraged if the total cost of the destination is not in your family’s budget. There are several ways to fund your trip. However, you must act now.



Saving money for your trip

Even though you have not been selected for a Girl Scout destination yet, assume that you will be selected. If you are not selected this year, you can apply money you saved this year to the destination you attend next year. The following are ways you can earn money.

- Get a part-time job
- Offer to babysit for neighbors or Girl Scout leaders

- Ask family members to give you cash for your birthday or for special holidays, instead of presents.

Earning Money for Your Trip - Girl Scout Product Sales Program

As a member of Girl Scouts of Connecticut, you may take part in the fall product sales (magazines, nuts and candies) and the winter Cookie sale. If you are a member of a troop speak to your Leader and troop mates about your plans. Explain that you would like to earn additional funds through these product sales that will be used for your destination. If you are not part of a troop and would like to take part in this program, please contact the Program Department at program@gsofct.org. We will guide you through the process.



Money-Earning Activities (MEA)

If you hold a money-earning activity, you must obtain the Girl Scouts of Connecticut approval for your money-earning activity by filling out the MEA Troop/Group or Service Unit Application (Form #5650). The application and instructions are online in the Forms Library at www.gsofct.org. After approval, you may begin your money-earning activity. Please send the MEA form to the Program Department in North Haven for approval.

Financial Assistance

The Girl Scouts of Connecticut Council has limited funds budgeted to provide some financial assistance to *destinations* participants. The amount awarded to each participant is based on financial need and the number of girls attending a destination in the year you apply for this money. To apply for financial assistance, you will need to fill out a Request for Financial Assistance For Girl Members (Form #5210) and return it to the Program Department in North Haven. Applications should be submitted after acceptance to a destination. The application is online in the Forms Library at www.gsofct.org. If you are selected for more than one destination, you may only receive Council contribution for one of your trips. **In order to be eligible for a scholarship, you must participate in both Fall Product Sales and Cookies Sales.** You will be notified by mail of the amount you are awarded.



PREPARATION FOR YOUR TRIP

GIRL SCOUT destinations PARTICIPANT'S RESPONSIBILITIES AFTER THEIR EVENT

Presentations

As a Girl Scout *destinations* participant, you need to make yourself available to speak at events, meetings, and workshops. Making more girls and adults aware of Girl Scout *destinations*, will enhance the experience and spirit of Girl Scouts for others. Your presentation should include a 5-minute speech and either a portable display board or slides from your event.

If you received financial assistance from the Council or your area and service unit, it is your responsibility to repay their kindness by making a presentation about your event. Through your troop advisor, service unit manager, your area chairman, or your Girl Scout *destinations* adult advisor, you can set up times to speak about your unique experience at meetings or events.

After you return from your destination, you will be asked to share your destination experience with Girl Scouts who are interested in applying for the following year. These *destinations* workshops are held for the Girl Scouts as well as their parents. Please be prepared to make a 5-minute presentation on your event.

Photographs & Articles

All participants are asked to send the Council 1-2 photographs from their event along with a brief paragraph about their experiences. Ideas for an article can include activities during the event, advice for younger Girl Scouts interested in Girl Scout *destinations*, favorite moments at the event, and/or whether you enjoyed the trip. These photos and articles may be posted on our website, published in our e-newsletters, used for presentations at meetings, events, etc.

