



## EPIC Troop Program Summary

Girls Scouts – Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas respectfully requests \$8,442 from Texas Rural Communities, Inc. to support the EPIC Troop Program in Cass and Bowie Counties.

Girl Scouting is a tradition in many families. With over 59 million alumnae nationally, you are certain to encounter a woman business owner, a women doctor or a woman scientist who discovered her first interest at a Girl Scout Program or Troop Meeting. Girl Scouts - Diamonds is the only girl led organization that supports over 10,000 girl members who are developing leadership and life skills and teach them to invest in their communities. The EPIC Troop Program will impact girls that need us most, especially girls who reside in low-income households, racial minorities and single parent homes. Parents with limited resources do not the ability to introduce their children to quality programs. Your generous investment to the EPIC Troop Program will provide the resources to establish 6 EPIC Troops (100 girls and 20 adult volunteers in Cass and Bowie County at no cost. The EPIC Troop Program is designed financially sustain the troop after the first year of participating in the program.

Thank you for allowing Girl Scouts – Diamonds to present our funding needs. It is through the support of our local foundations, corporate partnerships and friends that we can develop invest in our girl to help shape the future women leaders.

## Contact Information

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## Organizational Description

Girl Scouts is a premier voice for girls and a leading expert on their growth and development. Founded in 1912 by Juliette “Daisy” Gordon Low, Girl Scouts is the only girl-centered organization in the world, with more than 59 million alumnae members in the United States today. From our willingness to tackle important societal issues to our commitment to diversity and inclusiveness – Girl Scouts is dedicated to every girl, everywhere.

For over 100 years, Girl Scouts has offered leadership and character development programs designed especially for girls. In 2008, six regional councils merged to form the Girl Scouts – Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas Council. This combination of resources created one high-functioning council, retaining all local properties and camps, and strengthening our ability to provide girls equal opportunity to effective leadership development in the 74 counties in Arkansas, three counties in Oklahoma and two in Texas within our council’s jurisdiction.

Today, Girl Scouts – Diamonds of Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas proudly offer our girl members and communities access to two wilderness camp properties, two urban camp properties, and six regional offices in population centers across the state of Arkansas, engaging over 10,000 girls and 3,500 adult leaders in our mission to build girls of courage, confidence and character, who make the world a better place.

## Program Description

### The Need

In Arkansas, 13% of K-12 youth are responsible for taking care of themselves after school. Currently, 45% of children in Arkansas are not enrolled in afterschool programs but would be interested if such programs were available in their communities (1). Per the National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center, out-of-school hours are shown to be a peak time for risky behaviors by juvenile girls, including drug, alcohol, and tobacco usage, as well as sexual activity. In 2015, approximately 4,000 Cass and Bowie County kids were on their own during the hours after school (1).

With the increase of crime in our state, many communities are concerned about the lack of recreational activities for youth and how that lack creates opportunities for negative behaviors. Parents are working to provide for their families and many girls reside with only one parent and cannot afford afterschool programs or are not available to pick up their children from school. In fact, 79% of parents surveyed in Arkansas agree that afterschool programs help working parents keep their jobs (1). Quality out-of-school programs are needed to support working parents, prevent our youth from engaging in risky behaviors, provide opportunities for girls to learn new things, meet positive peer and adult influences, and build their self-confidence.

### EPIC Troops Program

Girl Scouting in Arkansas took roots in July 1927 when the White Oak Troop of Arkansas became the first registered Girl Scout troop in the state. The Girl Scout Movement spread quickly throughout Arkansas, and there were more than 200 members in six registered troops in Pulaski County in 1929. Girl Scouts Troops are traditionally created by adult volunteers who are stay at home moms, however, over the years Girl Scouts -Diamonds has experienced a decline in volunteers which has decreased the number of active Girl Scout Troops. In Arkansas, 62.7% of women are contributing to the workforce, compared to less than 30% in 1970's.

1. Afterschool by the Numbers in Arkansas March 2015 2. United States Census Bureau "Quick Facts"

In our modern era, we need to ensure that the traditions of Girl Scouting are a part of our communities so we can continue to invest in girls to become our leaders of tomorrow.

The EPIC Troops Program was created to help increase our adult and girl membership by allowing volunteers and girls join a troop with no financial obligations. Girl Scouts - Diamonds is committed in serving girls that needs us the most, especially those in low-income, racial minorities and single parent homes. EPIC Troops are led by staff members at after school programs, Boys and Girls Club, and youth community centers where economic instability is high and afterschool opportunities are limited for girls in grades k-12. Once the troop is established staff cultivate relationships with interested parents who transition to volunteers within our organization. We support new volunteers with trainings and provide them with a new troop kit. Kits contain a Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting badge book, a Journey leadership curriculum set, uniform pieces and Girl Scout tote bag for each girl, and a \$50 starter fund for snacks for meetings, event fees, or troop supplies. These kits remove financial obstacles to start a troop, enabling more volunteers and girls to participate in the life-changing leadership experiences of Girl Scouts and its myriad of enriching experiences, such as mentorship with caring women, team building with peers, and innovative programs and learning opportunities. EPIC Troops will bring Girl Scouting back in small communities, like Cass and Bowie County, and allow girls to invest in their communities through take-action projects.

Girl Scouts is the only program available that is a unique and effective program specifically designed for girls. Currently, EPIC Troops are established in 3 counties and we are seeking funding to expand to areas with the greatest need. We will utilize local newspaper, radio and television station to help promote our program success as well as our recruitment efforts. In addition, we will use our website and social media outlets to engage community involvement and support.

Our plan is to establish at least 6 EPIC Troops (100 girls and 20 adults) for the 2016-2017 membership year. Below is a program budget outline:

Description	Number of Participants	Amount
New Troop Kit Girl's Guide to Girl Scouting badge book, and Journey leadership curriculum set.	6 Troops at \$107	\$642
Annual Membership for Girls 2016/2017	100 at \$15	\$3,000
Annual Membership for Adult Volunteer 2016/2017	20 at \$25	\$1000
Program Supplies Girl uniforms, event fee and supplies	100 Girls	\$2,000
Healthy Snacks for troop meeting for 9 months	6 Troops	\$1,800
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$8,442</b>

Girl Scouts – Diamonds has strong funding sources with local United Ways, foundations, corporations and individuals who support our programs. We regularly identify natural funding partners to help supplement our program specific budgets. In case of a deficit, the EPIC Troop Program is supported by our general operating budget; however, funds from grants from our supporters, such as, Texas Rural Communities, Inc., allow us to create new troops specifically in Cass and Bowie County. Girl Scouts – Diamonds would be grateful to receive the total request of \$8,442. If Texas Rural Communities Inc., is not able to fully fund our request we will gladly accept a smaller amount. If awarded, 100 percent of the funds received will remain in Cass and Bowie County and none will be used elsewhere.

Girl Scouts – Diamonds will measure the success of the EPIC Program in the following ways:

- Improved retention of the troops receiving financial support
- Improve girl experience satisfaction rates
- Improved volunteer experience satisfaction rates

The retention measure will be determined by comparing re-registration number of the EPIC Troops with other troops not receiving financial support, as well as prior years' retention rates. Satisfaction rates are determined through end of year surveys sent to troops leaders, girls and adult guardians.

On behalf of the girls we serve and the volunteers we support, thank you for considering our request for funding. Your gift will provide the resources to continue our girl programs and provide resources to discover and develop unique opportunities to infuse Girl Scouts into our communities. It is through community investors, like Texas Rural Communities, Inc., that we can serve a need to help shape the future of our youth.