

Fiscal Year 2020 Direct Appropriations Request

Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee

What services does your organization provide to the residents of Davidson County?

Girl Scouting builds girls of courage, confidence, and character, who make the world a better place. We are committed to this mission through exemplary programs, camps, and other activities that are both educational and enjoyable. Our innovative programming focuses on four main components: entrepreneurship, outdoors, life skills, and STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and math). Girls learn about and enjoy the outdoors, help their communities, and participate in a variety of activities that will help them become the leaders, artists, scientists, innovators, philanthropists, and entrepreneurs of tomorrow. In addition to the traditional programs provided by Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee, there are two programs designed specifically for lower socioeconomic, underserved girls. L.E.A.D. (lead, empower, achieve, discover) provides an authentic Girl Scout experience in a non-traditional troop setting that is curriculum-based and led by teachers at their schools, and Troop 6000 which provides a comprehensive Girl Scout troop experience for homeless girls or girls in other unstable housing situations. Troop 6000 is also curriculum-based, but with the added components of social/emotional learning and ACEs (adverse childhood experiences) awareness.

How many residents are you currently serving and how do they benefit?

Girl Scouts serves 14,687 girls and 6,896 adult volunteers across 39 counties in Middle Tennessee. In Davidson County there are 3,926 Girl Scouts and 1,437 adult volunteers (mostly troop leaders). L.E.A.D currently serves 1295 Girl Scouts at schools including Apollo Middle, Glenview Elementary, Fall-Hamilton Elementary, Glenclyff Elementary, Cameron College Prep, STEM Prep Middle, Smith Springs Elementary, Glengarry Elementary, Knowledge Academy High School, Lakeview Elementary, Paragon Mills Elementary, Antioch Middle, Tusculum Elementary, Robert E Lillard Elementary, Ida B. Wells Elementary, Cockrill Elementary, Gateway Elementary, Bellshire Design Elementary, Robert Churchwell Elementary, Chadwell Elementary, Neely's Bend Middle Prep, Shwab Elementary, East End Prep, Amqui Elementary, KIPP: Kirkpatrick, KIPP: Nashville College Prep Elementary, Warner Elementary, Tennessee School of the Blind, Dupont Hadley, Inglewood, Nashville Classical, and Smithson- Craighead.

Troop 6000 serves 45 girls at three different locations including Safe Haven Homeless Shelter, Salvation Army, and the McGruder Family Center. Troop 6000 currently has 15 adult volunteers who serve as troop leaders. Girls who are part of the L.E.A.D. and Troop 6000 programs all come from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and most often would not be able to participate in an extracurricular activity because of many barriers including the inability to pay any type of fees, transportation, and parental involvement. In traditional Girl Scout Troops the troop leaders are frequently the girls' parents. The parents of girls from L.E.A.D. and Troop 6000 are generally unable to commit as troop leaders because these obstacles would be just too difficult to overcome. For many of the girls, participating in Girl Scouts is their first experience in an extracurricular program. These programs are essential in filling the academic and social gaps that can impede a girl's progress. All fees including program expenses, uniforms, supplies, snacks, badges, and field trips are subsidized through funding from Girl Scouts.

How much funding are you requesting from Metro?

Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee respectfully requests \$15,000 to support the L.E.A.D. and Troop 6000 programs for underserved girls in Davidson County.

If funding is awarded, how many additional residents will be served and how will they benefit?

Funding would help to subsidize the formation of at least two more L.E.A.D. troops and one more Troop 6000 troop serving approximately 30 more girls. The community service projects that all Girl Scouts create and implement would serve Nashville residents, therefore, the more girls Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee is able to serve, the more service projects can be created and utilized by Nashville residents. Collaboration with other organizations is often integral to a project's success and Girl Scouts is always willing to work with other organizations particularly when there is a common goal to serve disadvantaged girls. For example, in the last year Troop 6000 Girl Scouts partnered with Urban Housing Solutions to make small emergency kits to be given to homeless people in Nashville. The kits contained small toiletry items, but also included handwritten notes from the girls telling the recipients that someone cared about them. Troop 6000 is also in the process of creating "mini libraries" at two homeless shelters so that residents and their families may enjoy books to read and to improve their literacy skills. There is also a more intangible, long term benefit, but one that is important nonetheless. The sooner these underserved girls can receive intervention regarding academics, life skills acquisition, and personal investment in their communities, the more likely they will be equipped to break down barriers and eliminate the cycle of poverty that has mired families for generations. Girl Scouts doesn't just empower girls in the moment. Girl Scouts empowers girls so they may plan for a healthy, successful future.

In addition to serving more residents, are there other community benefits Metro funding would help you achieve?

Serving more girls in L.E.A.D. and Troop 6000 is always a goal, but it isn't just about the number of girls. These programs allow for building new partnerships and furthering collaboration so that a collective approach can be implemented in order for all those in need can be served. Girl Scout participation in L.E.A.D. and Troop 6000 allows for some burden to be lifted from parents who are navigating their own issues so they may forge better lives for their families. Recently a long time funder of Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee was celebrating an anniversary. L.E.A.D. staff suggested to the troops that making cards would be a nice thing to do to say Thank You. The girls took this task very seriously and made a lot of beautiful cards thanking this organization for their support. One card stood out. A little Girl Scout wrote, "Thank you for making it easy on my mom." We all hope we can make a difference. The words in this card validated this hope with something quite meaningful.

How would you use this funding to help create a more equitable Nashville, where all residents have an opportunity to participate in the city's success?

The L.E.A.D and Troop 6000 Programs help to level the playing field with regard to an underserved population of girls who could easily fall through the cracks without direct intervention from educational and empowering programs like Girl Scouts. If a girl *wants* to be a Girl Scout, she *can* be a Girl Scout. No girl is ever turned away because of the inability to pay for this extracurricular activity or because of any other barrier they may face. Girls who participate and engage in the high quality activities this organization has to offer learn leadership skills, the value of teamwork and friendship, and create sustainable community projects, thereby propelling them toward a healthy, successful future in which they are invested in themselves and their communities.

Nashville has experienced and will continue to experience significant change and growth. Hopefully most of these changes will benefit its citizens, but unless all citizens are impacted in a positive way and share in the good fortune, then boasting of these successes rings hollow. The more educational opportunities we provide for the youngest members of our community especially those who are from vulnerable populations, the more able and likely Nashville can be defined as equitable for all of its residents. The benefits of Girl Scout participation shape girls who have a sense of belonging to their community and the desire to give back to their community thus, creating a path to a more equitable landscape for all who call Nashville home.

Additional Information about Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee

L.E.A.D. Program and Troop 6000

- L.E.A.D. Staff created a literacy program for summer 2018. Attached are the results of three literacy camps. Goals for summer 2019 are to increase the number of participants and the number of sessions offered.
- Pre and post surveys were created to measure L.E.A.D. Girl Scouts' perceptions about school, friends, family, healthy behaviors, academics, and college plans. Girls are indicating they want to learn more about math and science, healthy behaviors, and how to apply for college. The post survey will be administered at the end of the school year and results will be analyzed for positive or negative changes in the survey categories.
- Troop 6000 was offered a "day of summer camp" at Girl Scout residential camp, Camp Sycamore Hills in Ashland City in spring 2018. For most of the girls it was the first time to be in this kind of outdoor setting and the first time any of them had ever seen a live horse. They groomed the horses and even got to take a trial ride. Other activities included hiking and rock-climbing. They were a little afraid to attempt rock-climbing, but when it was over they were all happy they tried. One girl said, "I never knew I could be that brave."
- Girls were offered the opportunity to go to "sleep-away" camp, but collectively they said they weren't ready for that commitment. While this might have seemed like a step back, Troop 6000 staff and volunteers evaluated this response as honest and brave. The girls felt empowered to make the decision that was right for them.
- At present, the Troop 6000 Girl Scouts have decided they are ready to try "sleep-away" camp. In March 2019 they will participate in one full day and one night at residential Camp Holloway in Millersville. We are confident that one activity will be sitting around a campfire making s'mores and telling stories.