

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Q: Why are we changing bakers now?**

A: Our existing baker contract came to its conclusion at the end of the 2023 cookie season. Typically, at the end of each contract, we conduct a thorough business evaluation of the two GSUSA licensed bakers: ABC Bakers and Little Brownie Bakers. This has been our practice for many years and hope to do this at the end of our next contract.

After several months of conversations, Little Brownie decided not to respond to our request for proposals which ended our partnership. Following the decision by Little Brownie, we worked with ABC Bakers to negotiate the best possible contract for GSNMT.

Here's why we believe the ABC partnership will offer the best experience for our girls, families, and volunteers:

- Demonstrated ability to consistently achieve greater than 90% on-time, in-full delivery
- Processes and investment to support council growth — and supply chain challenges
- Enthusiastic, responsive customer service and better online software experience for volunteers.

We believe that ABC is best positioned to build and deliver more positive cookie experiences in the years ahead. We are committed to a sustainable partnership and excited about the future of our cookie program!

### **Q: Is this happening because of the supply issues last season?**

A: This was a planned contract evaluation following the expiration of our current contract at the end of the 2023 Cookie Program. While our vision was to engage talks with both bakeries, Little Brownie's reaction was due to recent supply issues and their own inability to meet customer expectations. They did not feel they could meet the demand and dropped several councils including councils larger than ours.

ABC has demonstrated a comprehensive plan to preemptively address supply chain issues, with contingencies in place to support a growing Cookie Program for

all councils. Additionally, ABC demonstrated the ability to consistently achieve excellent on-time delivery metrics and partner with our delivery agents.

**Q: Will we have different cookies?**

With ABC Bakers, we will have popular top sellers, a couple new names, and three new cookies! Cookie customers will enjoy their favorite Thin Mints®, Trefoils® and Adventurefuls®. Names will change for some since each baker holds different name trademarks: Peanut Butter Patties® (formerly Tagalongs®), Caramel Delites® (formerly Samoas®), and Peanut Butter Sandwiches (formerly Do-si-dos®). And we'll welcome to our lineup the ever-popular Lemonades® and Toast-Yay!™ cookies, along with the delicious gluten-free option, Caramel Chocolate Chip.

The cookie packages look similar, with the same art and colors on the packages, so girls and customers can easily identify them. The Caramel Chocolate Chip is sold in a resealable bag.

Cookie recipes are different between the bakers, so while they are similar, customers should expect slightly different flavor and texture. In a professional test of all Girl Scout Cookies by a third party, Contract Testing, Inc., ABC Bakers cookies won out overall on quality and taste!

**[Learn more about ABC Bakers' Cookie Lineup](#)**

**Q: Is the price of cookies changing?**

A: Neither baker has been immune to increasing costs associated with labor, transportation, ingredients, and logistics, nor has Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails been immune to the current inflationary market. Our council continues to experience increases in costs of facility maintenance, supplies for operations and programs, technology, gasoline and transportation. The result is a major increase in the cost of cookies, which will need to be passed on to consumers.

To ensure our troops are able to finance their adventures and council is there to support them, we are increasing the price from \$5 to \$5.50 for our core varieties and from \$5 to \$6 for the gluten-free cookie. This decision was made after we met with ABC Bakers.

What does that mean for the girls? The GSNMT Product Program Advisory Committee has made a recommendation that more money be used towards our Cookie Rewards lineup. With this increase in funding, our Product Program team will work on a plan that makes rewards like experiences and trips more accessible

to girls who participate in the Cookie Program, as well as increasing the variety of rewards for younger girls and older girls.

**Q: Who made the decision to change baker partners?**

A: Little Brownie's action made the decision for our council. We are grateful to our GSNMT Product Program Advisory Committee, a group made up of well-qualified volunteers that represent our membership across the council's jurisdiction, for their guidance and recommendations to help the Product Program team make decisions and develop materials for the upcoming cookie season so your troop has a successful cookie program.

**Q: Is ABC prepared to support additional councils including ours?**

A. Not only are they prepared, they are enthusiastic! ABC shared specific metrics with our council that show they are ready to handle a large increase in their inventory to support our council, while still having room to grow their existing council partnerships, with plenty of buffer. Their team has already started working through a transition plan to support us every step of the way, from training and resource development.

**Q: Has GSNMT worked with ABC Bakers in the past? If so, when was our last contract with them?**

A. GSNMT last worked with ABC Bakers in 2003. Girl Scouts of the Desert Southwest, our sister council to the south, has been with ABC Bakers over the past couple of years and they say great things about them. They will be an ABC council as well so all of New Mexico will have the same cookie line-up.

**Q: Will Girl Scouts still use Digital Cookie®?**

A: Yes! Digital Cookie is a GSUSA platform that all councils will be using in the 2024 Cookie Program. Digital Cookie is getting an update with new features and a slight makeover. Overall, Girl Scouts should anticipate a similar experience on their digital storefront.

**Q: Will the number of cookies in a box change?**

A. Neither baker is changing their cookie count per package. ABC has the same or more cookies per package as the comparable cookie from Little Brownie Bakers.

**Q: Will ABC Bakers provide Raspberry Rally?**

A. As a GSUSA pilot program, Raspberry Rally was evaluated by GSUSA with feedback from councils and it was decided not to include this cookie in 2024 line-up. In fact, GSUSA heard from councils that the top priority currently is stability

of the core Girl Scout Cookie varieties so no new cookies will be introduced and the current lineup will remain the same through the 2025 cookie season.

**Q: Will the mascot still be the axolotl?**

A: GSUSA has worked with both bakers to align the theme and mascot for next year, so YES, Girl Scouts will still be invited to “Own your Magic” with the axolotl. Check back this October for the full reward lineup including an adorable, snuggable Axolotl!

Troop Volunteer Questions and Answers

**Q: Will we still use eBudde? What platform will we use to manage the sale?**

A: Smart Cookies will be replacing eBudde. Both sites have similar functionality but look different and have different language. We are updating all our materials, training, and videos to help volunteers learn the new site with the full support of the ABC team. Including virtual sessions with ABC on how to use Smart Cookies in the new year. Data moving from Digital Cookie into Smart Cookies will be similar to eBudde; look to the trainings in December for the specifics. All the materials, resources, and training will be available to volunteers, Girl Scouts, and caregivers starting in December. You will be supported every step of the way.

**Q: Will we lose access to eBudde?**

A: Yes. As our contract closed, we lost access to eBudde. The Product Program team has historical information and 2023 sales reports if you need them. This includes reports needed for reward distribution and financial reports. Access to eBudde is closed but please reach out to the Product Program team at [customercare@nmgirlscouts.org](mailto:customercare@nmgirlscouts.org) if you are looking for a report.

**Q: Will our Initial Order Cookie Pickup change?**

A: No, ABC is committed to using our same delivery agents. Some small changes may be put in place by council, but most troops should expect to have the same cookie pickup experience they have had in the past.

**Q: Are we offering additional training?**

A: Yes, lots! We highly recommend attending the virtual Q&A sessions after completing your online training or attending your service unit meetings. GSNMT will continue to offer our virtual office hours and other virtual training throughout the season. As always, all our training will be recorded and shared online through gsLearn for easy review. Training and additional materials will be refreshed and

available in a timely manner so that cookie volunteers will get all the support they need.

**Q: How will we know how much to order by flavor?**

A: The historical information we have and recommendations from the baker's data will appear in the training and available as a handout. As in the past, the numbers we share are estimates and troops should use their best judgement and order conservatively. You can always attend a Cookie Q&A or virtual office hours to get help in placing your cookie order.

**Q. When should we expect specific information and resources for the 2024 Cookie Season?**

A. The Product Program team is already hard at work planning out the next season! There is still a lot for us to plan and learn with the support of ABC Bakers, which we will do this fall. Caregivers and troop volunteers should expect our updated materials in December.