Executive Summary

As part of its commitment to expanding access to the Essential Girl Scout Experience (EGSE), GSNorCal undertook a focused effort to understand needs and barriers to access for girls and families from low-income backgrounds. In the first stage of this effort, GSNorCal engaged Bright Research Group (BRG) to make strategy recommendations around messaging, data, and ways to approach increasing access to the EGSE. Based on the learnings from this phase, GSNorCal engaged Resource Development Associates (RDA) to support GSNorCal's Increasing Access Key Project by conducting a community needs assessment of East San José and Antioch along with a review of best practices to inform the development of a pilot model to ensure all girls have access to the EGSE. GSNorCal grounds this work in a **commitment to equity and a commitment to investing in the communities served.**

> **What is the Essential Girl Scout Experience?**
> The EGSE is the threshold for all Girl Scout experiences, for all girls. Through the EGSE, all girls follow a path of **sisterhood**, **supportive adults**, and **special experiences,** which are known to achieve Girl Scout Leadership Outcomes. The EGSE is rooted in best practices for positive youth development, helping girls develop internal and external protective factors, reducing risk factors, and contributing to individual and community-level resilience.

Along with conducting a literature review of best practices, GSNorCal and RDA gathered feedback and information from a diverse array of community members, partners, staff, volunteers, and funders:

Listening sessions with girls and families in Antioch	Phone calls with community leaders and providers in San José and Antioch	Listening sessions and phone calls with GSNorCal staff and volunteers	Phone calls with funding partners

The community assessment highlighted effective strategies and challenges surrounding community engagement, partnerships, program content, staffing, funding, and implementation logistics. Following the assessment, GSNorCal's Pilot Advisory Group met to review community assessment findings, develop a pilot process to address those findings, and to vet the final program implementation model. The group established **seven goals for the pilot model**:

1. Enable long-term Girl Scouts participation by meeting families' needs
2. Attract, support, and sustain volunteers
3. Leverage partnerships with complementary community organizations and leaders
4. Compel outside funder organizations in alignment with organizational strategy
5. Implement ongoing measurement and continuous learning to test and adapt pilot
6. Contribute to community capacity building
7. Build GSNorCal's organizational, staff, and volunteer capacity to deliver the EGSE
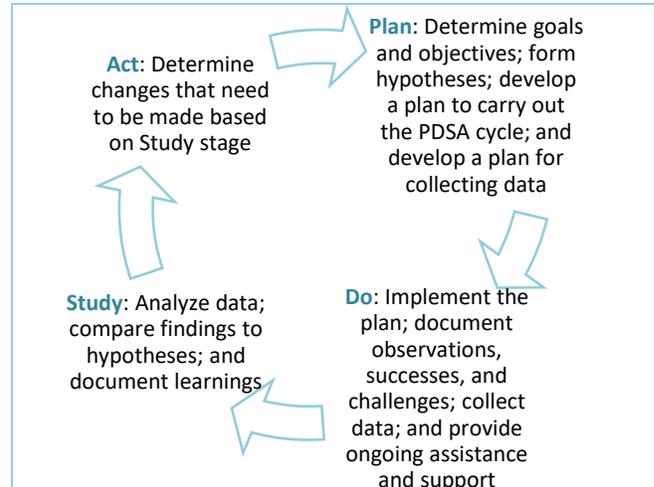
GSNorCal will use the following framework to implement a series of **pilot delivery strategies intended to identify the most effective methods for delivering the EGSE to girls and families** in the communities of focus.

The framework is grounded in a Plan-Do-Study-Act (PDSA) cycle to enable an agile, data-informed rollout of these pilot delivery strategies. It outlines a detailed initial start-up cycle and guidance for subsequent ongoing PDSA cycles. The plan also provides recommendations for process and outcome evaluation to explore how the strategies were delivered and the extent to which they achieved the pilot goals.

GSNorCal will use the following initial PDSA cycle as it begins developing and implementing the pilot delivery strategies:

Plan: Determine goals and objectives; form hypotheses; develop a plan to carry out the PDSA cycle; and develop a plan for collecting data

Do: Implement the plan; document observations, successes, and challenges; collect data; and provide ongoing assistance and support

Study: Analyze data; compare findings to hypotheses; and document learnings

Act: Determine changes that need to be made based on Study stage

PLAN	• Outreach activities to further identify community assets, wants, and needs • Implementation Plan to articulate delivery strategies, and funding, staffing, and communications plans
DO	• Implement the Essential Girl Scout Experience at up to three troop sites using pilot delivery strategies • Begin collecting data to inform continuous quality improvement and eventual evaluation • Engage community members to understand what's working and what needs improvement
STUDY	• Review continuous improvement data to identify resource, staffing, funding, partner and community engagement, and data quality needs • Begin identifying areas where Girl Scouts programming can address community needs
ACT	• Implement adjustments such as staffing, partner engagement, and resource allocation • Engage community members and partners to identify where they can contribute to these adjustments

GSNorCal will **identify up to three delivery strategies in each community of focus**. The strategies will use different combinations of site, staffing model, types of investments, and levels of community readiness. Throughout the cycle, staff will work with community partners to collect data to measure the success of these strategies, inform strategy refinements, and support formal evaluation to inform future efforts to expand access to the EGSE for other communities and age groups.

The resulting framework reflects GSNorCal's understanding that **pilot implementation is challenging work requiring a long-term investment in a community grounded in collaboration and reflection**. Developing a sustainable and effective approach to increasing access to the EGSE will require commitment and a balancing of resources; however, GSNorCal possesses the community insights and partnerships necessary to transition programs that do not align with long-term goals of increasing access to the benefits of Girl Scouts. The agile nature of the pilot framework will support implementation through data-informed measurement grounded in a positive youth development framework.