



Service Unit

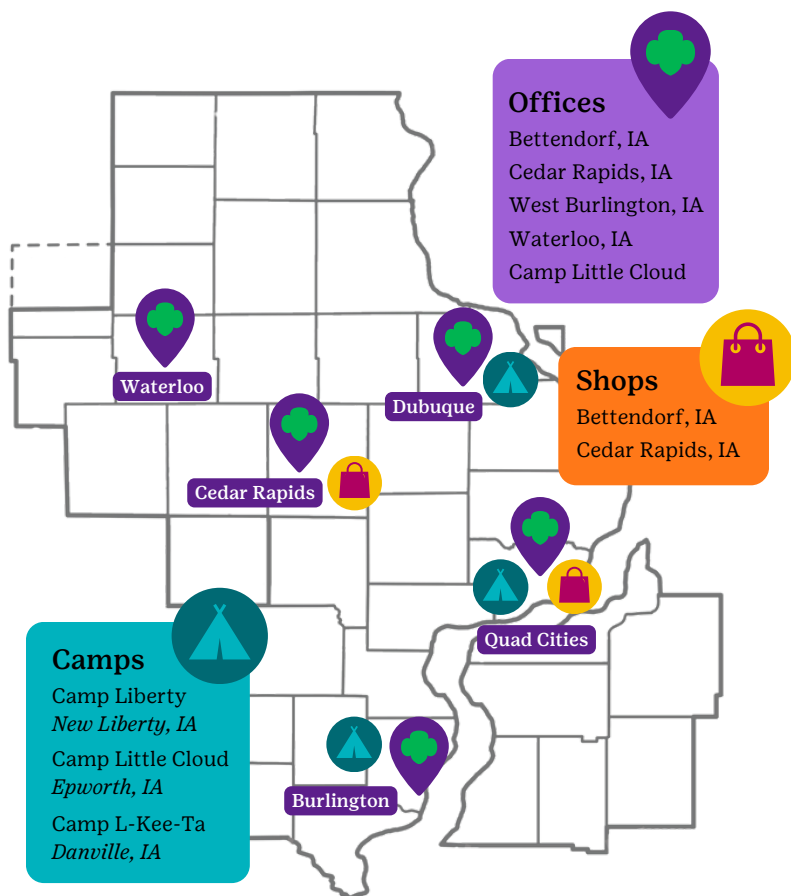
# Team Guide



Everything a service unit director needs to successfully support their service unit members.

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### The Girl Scout Promise

On my honor, I will try:  
To serve God\* and my country,  
To help people at all times,  
And to live by the Girl Scout Law.

### The Girl Scout Law

I will do my best to be  
honest and fair,  
friendly and helpful,  
considerate and caring,  
courageous and strong, and  
responsible for what I say and do,  
and to  
respect myself and others,  
respect authority,  
use resources wisely,  
make the world a better place,  
and be a sister to every Girl Scout.

*\*Members may substitute for the word God in accordance with their own spiritual beliefs.*

### Emergency

Call 563-328-4718 to report an emergency after business hours.

### Marketing

Share troop photos and refer media inquiries to [Marcomm@GirlScoutsToday.org](mailto:Marcomm@GirlScoutsToday.org)

For general information or assistance, contact our offices at [Info@GirlScoutsToday.org](mailto:Info@GirlScoutsToday.org) or 800-798-0833.



Visit our council offices, shops, & camp properties! Scan here for a full list of our hours & locations.

# Service Unit Team

Each Girl Scout is part of a local service unit, a geographically-based division of Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois.

Service units are managed by teams of council-appointed volunteers. Service unit teams provide critical support to troop leaders, families, and youth Girl Scouts.

## The purpose of a service unit:

- Serve as a local communication center for the council
- Provide direct support to volunteers
- Provide quality local experiences for youth Girl Scouts
- Grow community connections and visibility



**Each service unit has a shared goal:  
to best serve the needs of its Girl Scouts.**

Each year, your team will complete a plan of work that outlines your goals with your Community Engagement Manager. Service unit team members contribute to these goals by:

- Volunteering in a variety of roles and recruiting other volunteers
- Keeping positive, relevant, and consistent communication
- Attending the Service Unit Retreat and other development opportunities
- Maintaining Girl Scouts as an inclusive and open environment for all members and families
- Be welcoming of new volunteers, and build a welcoming environment for all volunteers
- Recognizing Girl Scouts, families, and troop leaders for their dedication and accomplishments
- Hosting events where members can make new friends and learn new skills
- Coordinating Fall Product and Cookie Programs
- Ensuring the Girl Scout Movement has a visible community presence
- Supporting new membership recruitment and renewal campaigns
- Having fun with fellow Girl Scouts



# Service Unit Structure

The service unit leadership team is composed of three service unit director roles, each with a focus on an area of responsibility. This model is designed to better distribute the responsibilities of the service unit while being flexible enough to fit the needs of the team. Each service unit is unique and the structure of your team is flexible. You may have several more people with service unit roles that fit into your team. This is just one example of how many service units divide tasks.

## All Service Unit Directors:

- Meet with the Community Engagement Manager for plan of work and mid-year check-in
- Attend the service unit retreat
- Support membership recruitment and renewal
- Rotate hosting leader meetings

Service unit directors are appointed for a three year terms of service. Assessments will be completed at the end of that three year term to consider any gaps, challenges, or opportunities for growth that may result in re-appointment or a change in leadership.

Many service units need more support to execute their plans at a high level. These are additional suggested roles to further distribute tasks:

## Suggested Training:

GSUSA Service Unit Training Series (Effective Meetings, Goal Setting & Planning, Developing & Growing the SU Team), and Looker for Service Units

## Service Unit Operations Director:

Provide leadership and management oversight for the service unit and troops, including communication and finance oversight.

## Operation Directors:

- Distribute the Service Unit Update monthly
- Share information about upcoming meetings and activities
- Ensure all members have access to communication resources
- Ensure service unit bank account has two unrelated and approved signers
- Support volunteers with troop finance questions

## Additional Operations Support roles:

- Money manager
- Registrar

## Suggested Training:

Money Management for Service Units

## **Service Unit Membership & Volunteer Support Director:**

Provide support on engaging new and potential members and supporting renewal efforts. Connect with new volunteers and welcome them to the service unit.

### **Membership & Volunteer Support Directors:**

- Welcome new volunteers to the service unit
- Support recruitment efforts and create strong school relationships
- Host year-end celebration or recognition event for adult volunteers
- Manage volunteer awards and recognition

### **Additional Membership/Volunteer Support roles:**

- Recognition coordinator
- School organizer

### **Suggested Training:**

School Organizer Training, Volunteer Awards and Recognition

## **Service Unit Program Director:**

Plan and host events and work with community partners to cultivate a positive experience for Girl Scouts. Provide support and guidance on events and the Girl Scout Program to leaders and volunteers.

### **Program Directors:**

- Create events
- Coordinate community service
- Manage committee for volunteer-led camp
- Host service unit bridging and year-end celebration for troops
- Share your service unit's photos and achievements by emailing [marcomm@girlscoutstoday.org](mailto:marcomm@girlscoutstoday.org)

### **Additional Program Support roles:**

- Event chair or committees
- Volunteer-led camp committee
- Service unit product manager (Fall and Cookie Programs)

### **Suggested Training:**

GSUSA Volunteer Toolkit

# Building Your Team

Service unit teams thrive when a group of dedicated volunteers with diverse backgrounds and skills come together. As managers of other volunteers, you can entrust other volunteers in the service unit to help, too. If you have the right person in place, your role as manager will become much easier and your team can efficiently achieve success.

Most of our service unit volunteers started as troop leaders with a goal of giving back to their community. By promoting volunteers within our organization, we are able to find talent with knowledge of and commitment to the Girl Scout mission. We strive to encourage and champion their ambitions, while we help them grow their knowledge, experience, and skills that can help them in their Girl Scout role, their career, and their personal lives.

To help identify volunteers that have potential for service unit roles, spend time getting to know them, their interests, and skills. Consider how to help bring other volunteers into support roles that play to their strengths, or help them expand skills that may help them in a future role. If a volunteer has a lot of interest in events, they may not be ready to take on the role of event coordinator or service unit program director, but consider asking them to chair or co-chair a specific event to mentor them for a future role, or ask them to be part of a committee, and use delegation strategies to help your service unit achieve its goals.

## Successful Delegation

- Maintain regular communication
- Embrace other ideas and viewpoints
- Let the volunteer take responsibility
- Create clear expectations
- Set priorities

## Pitfalls to Avoid

- Placing volunteers in roles they dislike
- Choosing "warm bodies"
- Not addressing poor results
- Utilizing the same volunteers continuously
- Trying to answer every question

To get you started, here are some tips on recruiting superstar volunteers:

1. Familiarize yourself with the requirements needed for each of the volunteer positions.
2. Consider the skills and abilities of individuals in your Service Unit. Give some thought to additional skills an individual may want to develop that could apply in their career.
3. Make a personal request with a specific job in mind.
4. Consider recruiting former troop leaders, lifetime members, alums, and community members.

# Volunteer Appreciation

Once you have your volunteer team in place, it's important to keep them motivated by:

- Building your team's relationships
- Provide training opportunities and support when needed
- Encourage volunteers to do things that connect to the mission and why they choose to volunteer
- Express gratitude frequently and celebrate accomplishments

By doing this, you will keep your volunteers connected to the movement and their community and they will feel appreciated and valued for the work they do.

We wouldn't be able to serve the thousands of youth Girl Scouts across our council without the support, dedication, and commitment of our Girl Scout volunteers like you! If you know of any volunteers who go above and beyond their role description, please nominate them for an adult award, or informally recognize them through a small token of appreciation or shout-out—they'll appreciate the recognition!

## Volunteer Awards

Volunteer Awards are available to formally recognize the exemplary service of Girl Scout volunteers who go “above and beyond” the expectations of their volunteer position. Anyone can nominate a volunteer for an award, including service unit or troop volunteers, community members, youth troop members, and their caregivers.



Scan here to view award criteria or to nominate an outstanding Girl Scout volunteer for an award.

## President's Award

Recognizes a service unit team that surpasses team goals and results in significant, measurable impact toward reaching the council's overall goals.

## Informal Volunteer Recognition

Thanking and celebrating your fellow service team volunteers and troop leaders doesn't need to be time-consuming or expensive. Most people love a simple and heartfelt thank you note with a personalized message. Other ideas include:

- Social media shout-outs
- Giving a small or homemade gift
- Bringing snacks to a leader meeting
- Sharing positive feedback
- Promoting them to new roles

## Don't forget to:

- Recognize leader's day on April 22nd
- Host a year end celebration for all troop leaders and volunteers to say thank you for all their hard work this year
- Distribute awards in a special way to recognize award earners

# Council Support

## We are in this together!

Staff and volunteers work together to achieve success across our council. There are a variety of staff that supports you and your team all year long.

### **Community Engagement Manager**

Partners with service units to support volunteers and grow Girl Scout membership

### **Service Unit Director Mentor**

A volunteer mentor with years of experience as a Service Unit Director

### **Product Program Team**

Trains and supports Service Unit Product Managers to support troop leaders during the Fall Product and Cookie Program

### **Girl Experience Team**

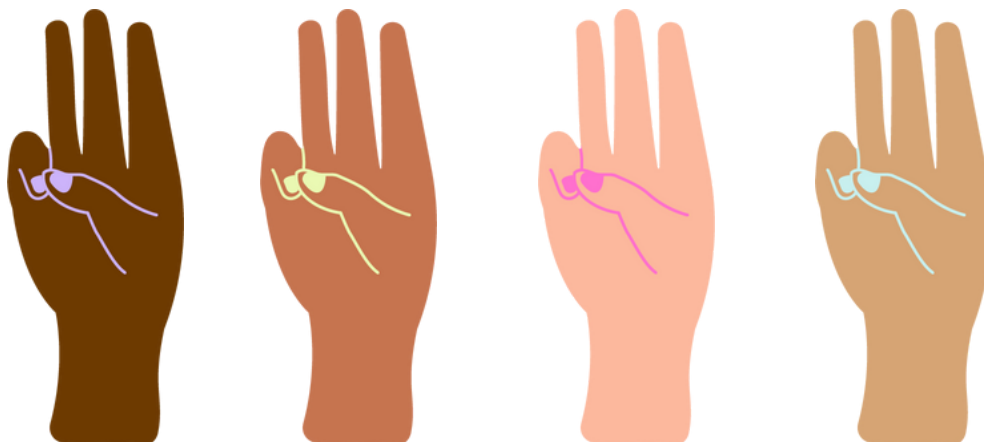
Provides program events for members, offers guidance and support for service units as they plan events and connect with community partners

### **Volunteer Development**

Provides top-notch training and support for volunteers in all service unit and troop roles

### **Member Support**

The go-to team for Girl Scout basics; they respond to [Info@GirlScoutsToday.org](mailto:Info@GirlScoutsToday.org) inquiries, answer the phone and website chat requests





As the Service Unit Team, you are the hub of information connecting council staff to the volunteers in your service unit.

### **Council Communication Expectations:**

- Sending regular updates to service unit
- Team meeting with your team to ensure we are all making progress on our shared goals
- Being available for support and questions
- Being open to feedback, and working to address challenges your service unit encounters

### **Service Unit Communication Expectations:**

- Share communication with leaders in a timely manner, and with consistent delivery
- Listen when a volunteer has concerns or questions, and follow up with them – don't be afraid to get extra help to support them
- Reach out to new volunteers right away to make them feel welcome and included
- Make an effort to deliver information to leaders in a way that reaches everyone
- Maintain a positive attitude and tone
- Share challenges and conflicts with your Community Engagement Manager
- Share successes with the council marketing department by emailing photos to [Marcomm@GirlScoutsToday.org](mailto:Marcomm@GirlScoutsToday.org)



# Your Year at a Glance

Use this calendar to make plans for your service unit. Use the blank spaces to customize your calendar.

## August

- Create your plan of work with your CEM
- Set leader meeting schedule and location
- Support renewal and recruitment efforts
- Submit service unit finance report by August 31st

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## November

- Give back to your community with a service project
- Wrap-up Fall Product Program

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## September

- Welcome new volunteers to leader meetings
- Host volunteer training for the Fall Product Program
- Ensure youth and volunteers participating have active memberships

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## December

- Meet with your Community Engagement Manager for your mid-year check-in
- Host a leader meeting to cover area-specific cookie information and distribute samples
- Verify years of service for volunteer awards

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## October

- Launch a new membership year on October 1st
- Support Fall Product Program
- Celebrate Juliette Gordon Low's Birthday on October 31st

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## January

- Host a Cookie Rally to prepare Girl Scouts for the Cookie Program
- Promote volunteer award nominations
- Support Cookie Program
- Promote summer camp registration launch

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## February

- Submit volunteer award nomination by February 1st
- Celebrate World Thinking Day February 22nd

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## May

- Host a bridging ceremony and year-end celebration for Girl Scouts
- Host a volunteer appreciation event
- Distribute volunteer awards
- Rally troops to renew their memberships

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## March

- Celebrate Girl Scout Week with Girl Scouts' Birthday on March 12th, as well as other special days, like Girl Scout Sunday, Sabbath and Jummah
- Attend our council's Annual Meeting
- Wrap up Cookie Program

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## June

- Host a volunteer-led camp or outdoor event
- Recruit volunteers for open service unit roles for the upcoming membership year

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## April

- Celebrate volunteers for Girl Scout Leader's Day on April 22nd
- Encourage volunteers and High Award recipients to attend a council-wide award celebration and Journey the World

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## July

- Complete Plan of Work and evaluate your year with your Community Engagement Manager
- Prepare your service unit finance report to be submitted by August 31st

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# Girl Scout Program

Our program centers around the Girl Scout Leadership Experience to achieve essential outcomes for members:



**A Strong Sense of Self**  
*Confidence in themselves & their abilities*



**Positive Values**  
*Acts ethically, honestly & responsibly*



**Confidence to Seek Challenges**  
*Try things even if they might fail & learn from mistakes*



**Healthy Relationships**  
*They communicate their feelings & resolve conflicts constructively*



**Community Problem Solver**  
*Contribute to the world in purposeful & meaningful ways*

All our programs are designed with a research-backed curriculum that centers around fun and friendship. To create engaging experiences, we focus on four core program areas to spark interest in inspiration.



**Outdoors**



**Entrepreneurship**



**STEM**



**Life Skills**

As members participate in STEM, the outdoors, life skills, and entrepreneurship, they will....

- Discover who they are, what they care about, and how they can use their talents.
- Connect with other people locally and globally, to make a difference in the world.
- Take Action to do something to make the world a better place – our mission!



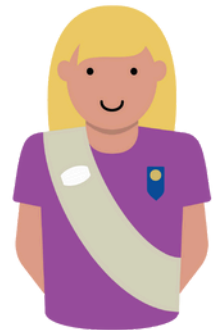
**Daisies**  
**K-1**



**Brownies**  
**2-3**



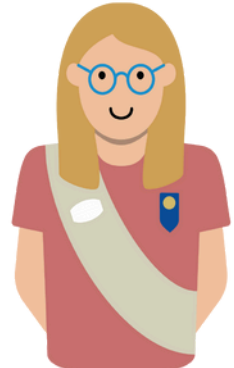
**Juniors**  
**4-5**



**Cadettes**  
**6-8**



**Seniors**  
**9-10**



**Ambassadors**  
**11-12**

Your first priority is to create a welcoming and inclusive environment that supports the physical and emotional needs of all members through:

- Hosting a variety of engaging and educational activities
- Connecting Girl Scouts to a variety of experiences
- Mentoring troop leaders to create enriching experiences for their troop
- Help Girl Scouts take the lead, take charge, and realize their potential

Council creates the Girl Scout Leadership Experience by:

- Leading the Fall Product and Cookie Programs
- Maintaining camp properties and outdoor experiences
- Hosting summer camp
- Developing training and offering volunteer support

As a volunteer in Girl Scouts, you know first-hand how much kids need to be heard, respected, and understood to fulfill their potential. And that's why Girl Scouts for generations have enjoyed our program because we celebrate who they are as individuals.

To continue our tradition of inclusivity, we expect our volunteers to:

- Learn all troop members' names and correct pronunciations, including caregivers
- Embrace the cultures and identities of troop members and respect differences
- Respect diverse gender expressions and make conversations about pronouns matter-of-fact and positive in tone
- Include members with different abilities by understanding their needs and modifying activities – this can be for Girl Scouts with disabilities, learning differences, and neurodiversity
- Commit to practicing anti-racism and share feedback that can create more inclusive council policies and procedures

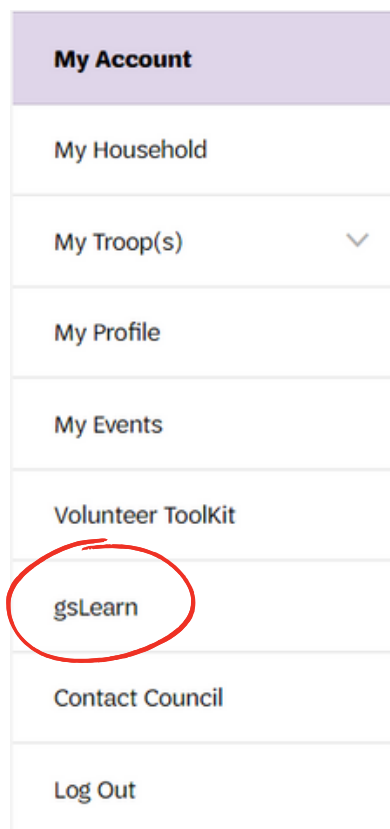
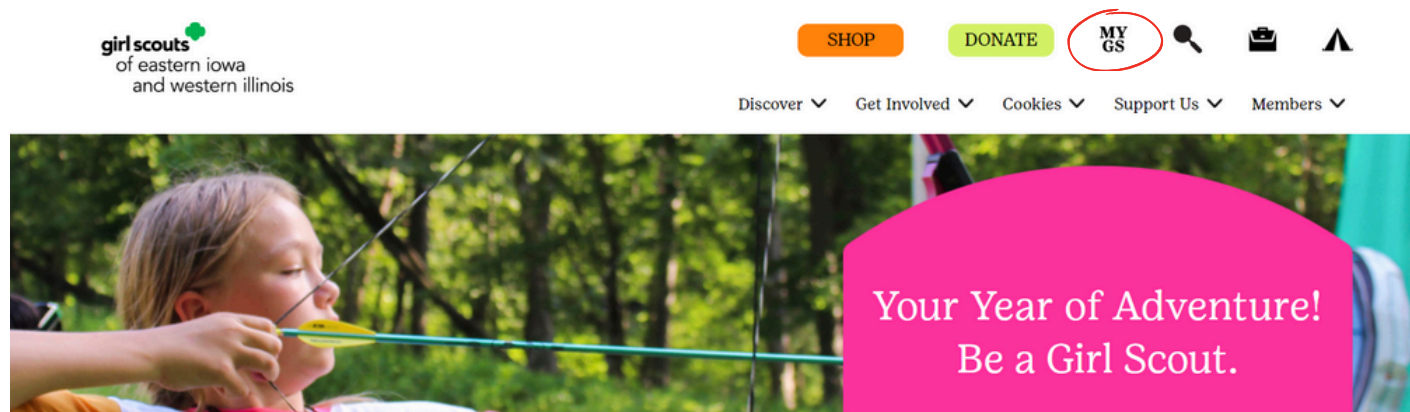
If you need help with navigating differences or if subjects come up that you are uncomfortable with, it is okay to let the Girl Scouts, parents, and caregivers in your troop know. Then, reach out to our council team for guidance. Email [Info@GirlScoutsToday.org](mailto:Info@GirlScoutsToday.org) and a team member will follow up to support you! Family diversity will be embraced, respected, and normalized at Girl Scouts. We make room for children, adults, and families to have the choice and opportunity to share their full selves with pride.



# Volunteer Systems

## gsLearn

We want to prepare all volunteers for success. To do this, we offer on-demand training courses through our official learning platform, gsLearn. To access this amazing resource visit GirlScoutsToday.org and log in under MyGS. Choose gsLearn on the left-side menu.



We ask all Service Unit Directors to take the training courses under the Service Unit Director 101 Learning Path relevant to their role and responsibilities. In the content Library search "Service Unit Director" under Learning Paths. Service unit trainings include topics from money management for service units to volunteer awards to general topics on leadership and volunteer management. If you have suggestions for future training topics, reach out to [AdultLearning@GirlScoutsToday.org](mailto:AdultLearning@GirlScoutsToday.org).

### In gsLearn, volunteers can also find:

- New Leader Training, from basics of What Girl Scouts Do, to safety, finances and planning meetings with the Volunteer Toolkit
- Fall Product Program Training (starting in September)
- Cookie Program training (Starting mid-December)
- Troop travel and overnight training
- How to lead new badge content
- High Award information

Our team frequently updates gsLearn with training opportunities. We will promote new virtual and in-person training with the Troop Leader Update, emailed on the third Wednesday of each month.

## Looker

Service unit directors, product managers and registrars have access to a membership reporting tool called Looker. This online tool provides access to current (within one business day) membership information for your service unit's members. This tool allows you access to:

- Rosters with your service unit's member information.
- Rosters of who have recently joined or taken on a new role in the last two weeks in your service unit.
- Information and details for the troops in your service unit.
- Training completion reports for your service unit volunteers.
- Membership numbers and statistics for your service unit.

To access looker, log in using your email address at <https://girlscouts.looker.com> or contact [info@girlscoutstoday.org](mailto:info@girlscoutstoday.org) if you encounter any trouble with access. For more information on how to use Looker, check out the Looker for Service Units training in gsLearn.

## Volunteer Toolkit

If you have been a Girl Scout Troop Leader before, you have probably heard of the Volunteer Toolkit (VTK). Good news! The VTK isn't just for troop leaders! Service unit directors and event coordinators can access it to plan events and view badge requirements.

Another important part of using the VTK as a service unit director is helping troop leaders navigate it, and understanding the benefits of using this system. This digital planning tool will cut down on planning time for volunteers, and provide step-by-step instructions to lead meetings with confidence!

With the VTK, Troop Leaders can also:

- View troop rosters and contact information
- Explore meeting topics and plan activities for the entire year
- Register for local events hosted by the council
- Print step-by-step activity guides and shopping lists
- Renew memberships
- Track attendance and badge achievements
- Communicate with families
- Track and share financial information

You can learn more about how to use the Volunteer Toolkit for service units in the Service Unit Director 101 learning path in gsLearn.

# Welcoming New Leaders

Being a new troop leader is exciting! At the same time, it can also be a bit overwhelming. It's important that new leaders have a solid foundational knowledge so they can confidently deliver fun, safe, and meaningful experiences to their Girl Scouts.

When new leaders join Girl Scouts, they are connected to their Community Engagement Manager to help them get started. To give them a strong start, they take New Leader Training on gsLearn before they start meeting with their troop. When you find out about new leaders in your service unit, reach out to:

- Introduce yourself and explain your role
- Invite them to the service unit leader meeting
- Tell them about upcoming events or activities
- Add them to the service unit Facebook group
- Ask if they need recommendations for where to open their troop bank account or locations for troop meetings

New volunteers might feel unsure of where to start. Building connections within the service unit can help leaders by adding another layer of support. Experienced volunteers can serve as mentors, and offer guidance when it is needed. Service unit volunteers helping with mentorship may benefit from reviewing the New Leader Training learning path in gsLearn to brush up on some of the details of what resources are available.

## **Here are some ideas to make sure new leaders feel welcome:**

- Sending out a reminder text a few days before the first leader meeting, and ask if they can make it
- Supply treats or a token to give to new leaders as a welcome gift
- Meet them for coffee
- Send a welcome note to them in the mail

# Leader Meetings

Service units host in-person or virtual meetings for team members and troop leaders throughout the Girl Scout year. Service units can meet monthly, every other month, quarterly—it's up to you and your team to determine a frequency that works best for your service unit. Each service unit should plan to meet at least four times per Girl Scout year. Leader meetings are a valuable opportunity to share updates, generate ideas, and build relationships.

## How to host a successful leader meeting:

- Arrange a meeting space (school, community building, business with a meeting room, etc.)
- Follow your agenda
- Create a welcoming environment by designating someone to sit with new leaders and welcome them to your Service Unit
- Remember that these meetings are supposed to be fun as well as informative, so try incorporating activities, prizes, or changing up the location
- Consider hosting leader appreciation events in place of traditional leader meetings, especially during Volunteer Appreciation Month in April

Leader meetings should last approximately one hour, depending on what you need to cover. Some meetings may fill a full agenda while others may be shorter; focus on covering relevant information. This is a sample agenda and may not be reflective of all leader meetings you host throughout the year.

### Welcome

- Review the agenda and timing
- Introduce yourself
- Thank leaders in attendance
- Share troop “wins”

### Topic 1: Service Unit Update

- Go over council updates shared by council staff

### Topic 2: Updates from the service unit

- Go over what your service unit team is currently working on
- Request support from other volunteers as needed
- Promote upcoming activities or community events like parades

### Topic 3: Discussion Items

- Share any items that need discussion in your service unit

### Topic 4: Training

- Provide training for Product Programs, new badges, conflict resolution, traditions, etc. during this time

### Wrap-up and Questions

- Summarize any action items
- Open the floor for additional questions
- Announce next meeting date, time, and location

# Financing & Fundraising

Each service unit must have a checking account. This account must be used solely in support of the Girl Scout program. Purchasing supplies and requesting reimbursements correctly for service units is an essential part of managing your bank account.

Follow these guidelines to keep the process easy for you and your service unit:

- Whenever possible, purchase supplies, equipment, goods, and services with the service unit debit card. We encourage your service unit operations director to provide a money manager report at leader meetings
- Only authorized account holders approved by Girl Scouts should have access to funds
- Keep detailed records of purchases for three years, and be prepared to share them in the event of an audit of the account
- Submit your service unit finance report by August 31st each year
- Each account must have 2 unrelated and background checked signers, and must be approved by Girl Scouts of Eastern Iowa and Western Illinois
- All bank signers must take Money Management for Service Units course in gsLearn
- Service unit bank account information should be reviewed each year, and updated as needed

It is also important to only use the service unit bank account for appropriate service unit expenses, including but not limited to:

- Supplies, goods, and services purchased for service unit use
- Service unit events and field trips
- Volunteer recognition (i.e., leader recognition awards and pins)
- Purchase of food for service unit meeting

## Fundraising

Service units earn funds in a variety of ways. Remember that fundraising activities must be approved in advance and follow all the guidelines.



Scan here to find the Money Earning Request form and submit a request for fundraising.





## Key Contacts

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Council**

Info@GirlScoutsToday.org

800-798-0833

### **Emergency**

Report an emergency after business hours.

309-764-8833

### **Marketing**

Share troop photos and refer media inquiries.

Marcomm@GirlScoutsToday.org

### **Email**

The Troop Leader Update will be emailed the third Wednesday of every month. The Service Unit Update will be emailed the last Thursday of every month.

### **Volunteer Toolkit**

The Volunteer Toolkit (VTK) is a digital resource that supports Troop Leaders, making the process of running a troop easier and more efficient. Access the VTK at GirlScoutsToday.org by clicking MY GS.

### **gsLearn**

Access training and resources on gsLearn at GirlScoutsToday.org by clicking on MY GS.

### **Volunteer Essentials**

Information, policies, and procedures to guide volunteers. Access in the VTK or at <https://www.GirlScoutsToday.org/Resources>

### **Safety Activity Checkpoints**

Everything you need to know to be prepared to keep girls safe during activities. Access in the VTK or at <https://www.GirlScoutsToday.org/Resources>

Notes:

