



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.*

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

Service Unit Team

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 development opportunities
- Maintaining Girl Scouts as an inclusive and open environment for all members and families
- Welcoming new volunteers and building 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

We are in this together! Staff and volunteers work together to achieve success across our council. As the Service Unit Team, you are the hub of information connecting council staff to the volunteers in your service unit.

Council Communication:

We're here to support you and help your service unit succeed, and it all starts with staying connected and working together. Here's what you can expect from us as we communicate, collaborate, and support you throughout the year.

- We will send regular updates to service unit team members. Keep an eye out for the monthly Service Unit Update and other email communication.
- 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

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 relevant Service Unit chats and meet-up events
- 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.

Additional Support roles:

Many service units need more support to execute their plans at a high level.

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](#)
[GSUSA Navigating Conflict with Confidence](#)

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
- Encourage volunteers to complete all required training, such as [New Leader Training](#) and [Girl Scouts Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Training](#)
- 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 and promote them to members in your service unit and/or on gsEvents
- 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

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](#)
[Event Coordinator Training](#)

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

Creating a Welcoming Environment

At Girl Scouts, we create engaging, meaningful experiences that empower members to lead and grow into their full potential. At the heart of this work is something simple yet powerful: embracing differences and celebrating them every day.

This work can be challenging, but it matters. When we celebrate diversity, we create inclusive environments where every member feels valued, respected, and seen. That sense of belonging is what allows youth to thrive. It is also how Girl Scouts builds leaders who go on to create more equitable communities.

By modeling inclusivity through the way we connect, adapt, listen, and learn, we strengthen our entire community and ensure every Girl Scout has the opportunity to fully participate, contribute, and lead.



If you ever feel unsure about how to handle a sensitive topic or need help navigating differences, it's okay to ask for support. Reach out to our council team at Info@GirlScoutsToday.org.

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

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.



Scan here to check out the gsLearn dashboard and explore trainings.

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 in December)
- Troop Travel and Overnight Training
- Behavior Management for Girl Scouts
- 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.

Volunteer Essentials

Information, policies, and procedures to guide volunteers. Access in the VTK or at 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 GirlScoutsToday.org/Resources

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 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 in the course:

[GSUSA Volunteer Toolkit – Demo/Service Unit Access](#)

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
- Provide a money manager report

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:

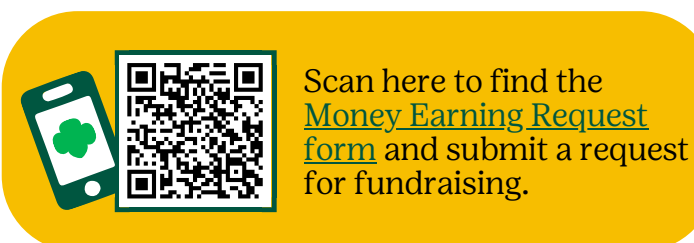
- Whenever possible, purchase supplies, equipment, goods, and services with the service unit debit card. We encourage your service unit operations director to provide a money manager report at leader meetings
- Only authorized account holders approved by Girl Scouts should have access to funds
- Keep 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.



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

Events and Experiences Team

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

Member Support

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

Product Program Team

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

Volunteer Development

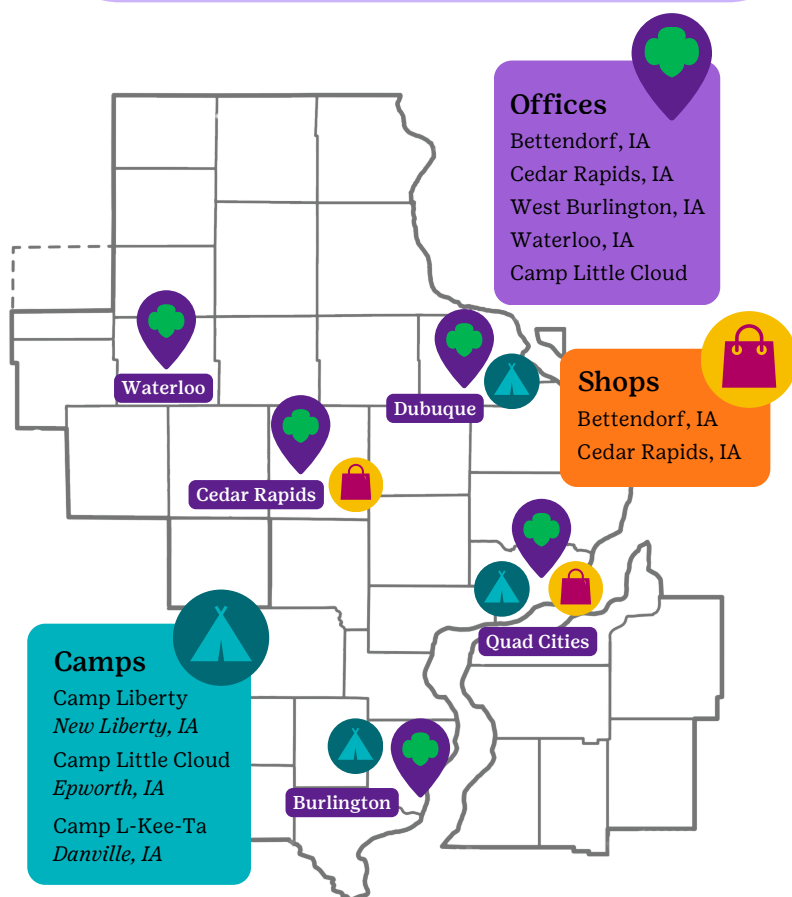
Provides top-notch training and support for volunteers in all service unit and troop roles



Scan here to find shop hours, products, schedule a pick up, ship items to your home, or schedule a pop-up shop.



Scan here to visit the Service Units page on GirlScoutsToday.org



Emergency

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

Marketing

Share troop photos and refer media inquiries to Marcomm@GirlScoutsToday.org

For general information or assistance, contact our offices at Info@GirlScoutsToday.org or 800-798-0833.



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